Towards A Greater Understanding of Resilience Within the Professional Practice of a Coach

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Abstract

Career resilience is a concept that since the 1990's has been associated within career coaching practice, as a proactive set of behaviours which provide protection against the vicissitudes of the employment market. Revisiting the concept at a time of economic downturn, the author critiques the limitations of the protection model of resilience when working with individuals who have lost access to their own resilience as a result of career setback and disappointment. It also acknowledged that the recent attention given to developing resilience capacity in order to prevent loss of resilience has ignored the issue of recovery from loss of resilience. A comparative case study of 2 executives, who recognised their own loss of resilience, was conducted through narrative methodology. Data was collected through a combination of repeated written narratives and 10 hours of individual coaching. The materials generated were thematically analysed. The results of that analysis are potential models relating to the process of change in the construction of a new narrative, the role of the coach within that process, and the systemic relationship between the two. The value of written narrative and the limitations of the use of narrative are explored, along with consideration of the value to the study of the writings of the researcher in exploring her own resilience.

Contents

Chapter 1:

Aims and Objectives

1.1 Aims of the Project

The project developed from my desire to understand more about resilience and ways of working with resilience issues in the context of career. The realisation that my own work on career resilience undertaken in the 1990's, was inadequate for working with issues I was being faced with as an executive coach led me to revisit the issue. I wanted to separate out career resilience as a set of behaviours which provided protection against the vicissitudes of the employment market, from resilience as the loss of access to adaptive capacity. The needs of clients who had lost that flexibility in the face of difficulty were very different to those who sought to retain employability. I was aware that my understanding was inadequate for supporting the rebuilding of resilience, and I saw this project as a means of developing my skill set.

As a coach of many years' experience, I observed the activity of coaching becoming commoditised. The scale of new entrants, from very diverse backgrounds, whose offers appeared very similar to potential clients, was making it increasingly difficult to differentiate my offer. I wanted to use this project to create the space to develop new ideas and products that would increase my market value. This approach would mirror one I had used in earlier periods of my career, where research into areas of work related to career, women, and management, resulted in written and other outcomes which deepened my expertise and raised my profile. It would allow for another recurring theme

of my career, the sharing of findings with other professionals. The project was as much about my own career resilience as that of my clients.

I wanted the project to be a marker of my own career. While work has always been a central part of my identity, I have lived my career in roles which were not central to organisational career paths, and for 16 years I have been self-employed. I have lived career outside of conventional signifiers of career success. I wanted to have a symbol of my achievements, through undertaking a project which was directly linked to areas of work which have been central to my sense of self efficacy. A symbol which told me that my career was successful.

As a result of this project, I believe I can evidence that I have met my aims in that I have developed frameworks which are being used in client work, have developed workshops for coaching professionals, am being invited to speak regularly at professional events on aspects of this work, and have co-authored a publication where I input materials on resilience for HR professionals. A book is also in prospect. It has enabled me to bring together my learning from diverse working experiences in the service of developing a differentiated professional profile.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 Understanding Resilience

When my work on the DProf began, it seemed self-evident that the differentiation of my professional service would be focussed on my work in developing managers to coach within their roles. This had been the focus of a book I had written, a DVD I had prepared, and had provided much of my work in the previous 2 years. I had also conducted a small scale longitudinal study of the impact of the work in a UK University. However, I noticed that my motivation in relation to the project was wavering. The project sat in a 'should

do', rather than 'want to do 'space, and the reading and thinking I needed to do, stayed unexamined. At the same time, I noticed in my executive coaching work that I was encountering able individuals who were struggling with the demands of their roles. In a climate of recession those roles were experiencing stresses, which had not been previously present, and they were seeing career certainties being removed. The feelings of inadequacy about my own work, and my concern for them led me to the idea of resilience as a subject of interest. I began the project with little previous knowledge, of the subject, other than career writings of the mid-1990's.

A key objective of this project was to extend my understanding of what resilience is, so that I could develop a perspective which had not been addressed within careers literature.

1.2.2 Authenticity as a Researcher

It was important to develop a way of conducting the research which was congruent with both the area of interest and myself. An earlier working experience in a UK Business School, working alongside an occupational psychologist had introduced me to large scale quantitative studies. I had been uncomfortable in that work with the validity that was attached to statistical processes over human experience. While such studies produced the data from which I could have completed a PhD, I was unable to commit to that model, and so withdrew from the programme. My failure to complete a doctorate had remained a scab, which I periodically scratched, but I was unwilling to return to the only model of research I had used extensively. Discovering the DProf as an alternative route, opened up the possibility of researching in the service of my work, and in alignment with my own strengths. While I did not know at the outset what that would look like, I was clear that finding a methodology that felt authentic to who I am, was an important objective if the project was to drive itself.

1.2.3 Written Outcomes

Writing has been a recurrent theme of my work, whether writing a national newspaper column on people issues in organisations, writing for women's magazines on issues related to career, co-authoring academic papers and books, or writing books, both co-authored and under my own banner. From the beginning, it was an important objective that the outcome of any work should be published material that could be shared with both professional and non-professional audiences.

1.2.4 Sustaining a Career

Recession had impacted on my revenue stream, as public sector organisations withdrew funding from external coaching, and looked to develop internal capability. I had fallen prey to the small business pit-fall, of over reliance on a small number of clients, who provided a steady income stream with little marketing effort. When key individuals left, those revenue streams rapidly dried up. I was also mindful of becoming the 'elder' and seeing young talent in the field of coaching stepping into territory that I had once seen as mine. I had watched colleagues withdraw from work at this stage, or become narrow in their thinking, relying on knowledge and experience which became increasingly mis-aligned with need. I want to continue working, and to do so on the basis of continuing to add value. That meant a willingness to both let-go, and to let-in. I saw this project as a means of letting in new learning that would sustain my career. It would allow me to reference what I had learnt in the service of what I now wanted to learn.

1.2.5 Research Objectives

In relation to the project work, this study asked of me that I:

- Read the literature on resilience and career resilience critically in order to develop a position that could be brought to the design of the project (Chapter 3).
- Investigate a range of qualitative methodologies in order to find one or more that would generate rich data for understanding the regaining of resilience. (Chapter 4).
- Use a means of analysing data that was appropriate to a small case study project (Chapter 5).
- Bring myself into the study, not only as the coach-researcher, but also through examining my own experience of the loss and regaining of resilience (Chapter 6).
- Triangulate, through looking at the data through different lenses (Chapters 7, 8 and 9).
- Develop potential models to be further tested out in my own work, and in others' research. (Chapter 10).
- Apply the learning in my own practice, and show how it is being shared with others. (Chapter 11).

The aims and objectives throughout this project were research led, personal and professional. These three strands were continuously interwoven with learning in one thread supporting the other two. As a consequence, as time developed the project became richer, denser and more important to me. In the space between the achievements of research led aims and objectives is the development of myself as an individual and as a professional.

In presenting this project, and the research objectives, it is tempting and more elegant to present a seamless piece of work which followed logic, and ran smoothly. This was not the story of this study, and so in the next chapter I lay out the narrative of the project as one of emergence rather than planfulness.

Chapter 2

The Research Narrative

In the previous chapter, I laid out the aims and objectives of the project. In doing so, there was a self-imposed editing process. In the desire to present the work with the lucidity of an academic article, I was signalling a researcher who had control of the outcome from the start. In doing so I omitted the story of how the project developed. In this chapter, I want to bring into the open the reality of living the project

2.1 Reconnecting to Career

In starting out on the DProf, I was able to take stock of an entire career, and to recognise the role that career coaching had had from my first role after graduation. I had subsequently moved away from career as a primary focus, but in reflecting on my achievements, I noticed that while I remained engaged with the topic, my perspective on it had changed through working as an executive coach. I was now working with individuals over longer periods of time, and often with them during times of difficulty. I saw careers being impacted by events over which they had little control, and I saw the effect it had on their confidence and sense of purpose. Where previous recessions had a bounce back, this one had no end in sight, and individuals reported feeling a loss of connection to what they were doing and where it was leading. The space afforded me to reflect on my own career, required in the first piece of written work, highlighted that my original idea of extending current work on internal coach development into a project linked to the development of sustainable internal coaching capacity would not sustain me, and that I should follow my energy and return to a career issue, but address it through the lens of who I now was as a coach.

2.2 Initial Proposal (May 2011)

Owning that the issue of career related to the impact of disappointment and setback engaged me, led me to the topic of resilience through a particular coaching relationship, which I report on more fully in Chapter 6. Working with one individual whose resilience had been impacted to the point of illness, showed me that the model of career resilience I had promulgated in my own work was limited. It addressed what to do to retain marketability, rather than how to regain resilience when events had taken away confidence, or were driving the individual into actions which were designed to avoid facing reality. This realisation led into reading on resilience drawn from psychology and psychiatry. I looked at the numerous commercial resilience questionnaires, and extrapolated the recurring themes in all of their work. I was collecting data on what had been established, but without knowing what I wanted to establish.

At this stage the project was conceived as a study of the loss of career resilience and the process of recovery. I knew that I wanted the project to be working with individuals as they went through the process of recovery, rather than a post event account given through interviews. This meant that I saw myself as part of the process. I also saw narrative as having a key role. The role of written narrative as a therapeutic tool (Pennebaker and Beall 1986) and as a means of gathering data had an instinctive appeal. I also believed that I needed to bring a model to my coaching work, something that would be tested out during the project, and that a sample size of 12 would give the project face validity. I spoke, also, in the proposal of developing tools for working with resilience issues, as a recognition of something I could offer to my peers. In preparing this submission, I was anxiously inserting supporting pieces. There was a sense of wanting to bolster my construction, but without having a sense of what I was wanting to build, or the ground that it stood on. In presenting my proposal, the flaws in my thinking were quickly exposed. I was challenged on where I

stood, and the answer was 'I did not know.' There was a passivity in my approach, which gave credence to what others had done, and which risked me using the project to reconfirm established resilience constructs. I was starting from wanting to impose a theoretical model on the coaching process, rather than using the project for new learning to emerge. I thought of myself as committed to emergence over structure, and yet, I signalled in my design that I valued structure over emergence. I saw myself as a constructivist, focussed on the meaning making of the client, and yet in my desire for certainty, I risked using prior work as the benchmark, rather than the constructions of my participants. Those criticisms allowed me to start to let go of my need to hold certainty and to reposition the study as simply one of understanding the loss of career resilience and the process of recovery within a coaching relationship. In making that shift, I became open to curiosity, to being focussed on the phenomenon I was working with, rather than on any output or input. The only element to which I remained committed was the use of written work, as a means of expanding and deepening understanding of where individuals were in relationship to their resilience.

I had, however, designed a multi-faceted process for the collection of data from both the participants and myself. As unsure as I was about other aspects of the project, I felt the design was relevant, and thorough. It was this design which the panel asked me to test out through a pilot study. That design is laid out, and explained fully in Chapter 5.

2.3 Resubmission of Proposal (August 2011)

In resubmitting my proposal, my thinking had been developed through the challenges presented to me, and by experimentation with professional colleagues. I put together a webinar on career resilience to test out early thoughts with experienced peers, and discovered that they were largely wedded to resilience as a set of actions which provide market protection, rather than having a concern with the 'being' of resilience. Their

response gave me confidence that there was a gap to be filled, that would be of value to my profession. I came to realise that my work was in understanding what was missing that made that individual feel unresourced, so that coaching could focus on that gap, rather than trying to evaluate their data against earlier work. In making this shift, my argument for a large sample fell away. In arguing for a set sample size, I was, unwittingly, focussed on being able to replicate quantitative means whilst arguing I was a qualitative researcher. I was assuming that I would look for recurring themes across participants, with the focus being on resilience gaps. By positioning the study as one of understanding the particular loss of resilience and its regaining within a coaching relationship, my focus changed. Looking at each participant as a singular account, with an interest in the process that was at play did not ask that I found a large number of participants. It also allowed me to let go of the idea of testing a model. In my first submission, I had challenged the assertion that practitioner researchers " generate knowledge in context, rather than seeking to establish a universal truth" (McLeod 1999:13). I had seen the outcome of the project as the validation of a generalizable model. Very quickly, I realised the inappropriateness of this ambition. The tentative model I developed in my first submission was put to one side, and I repositioned myself as simply being interested in what played out in the coaching conversations. At this point I did not know how many would be 'enough', but I decided to use the pilot both as a means of testing out the process, and seeing what was generated within it.

2.4 Pilot Study (September 2011 to January 2012)

The pilot study was completed during the period when I had not yet found a consultant. I began it from a sense that I needed to do something that would help me understand more of what I was doing, and saw it as a starting point. I identified 2 suitable participants, and followed the process I had designed. In doing so, I became absorbed by the richness of the

data that was generated by asking individuals to write their story and to then talk to it. It opened up the texture of what loss of resilience meant to them, in ways which went beyond the categories given in psychometric instruments. I was able to become lost in the coaching work, so that thoughts of applying a model, or testing out a technique were absent. I was able just to be with the participant, and the need for certainties fell away. In particular, the pilot allowed me to recognise that tools and techniques were not a part of this project. I had embarked on the project with the knowledge that most of the approaches to resilience had been developed through the work of positive psychologists, with a strong focus on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Reivich et al 2011). I had interpreted distinctiveness in terms of defining a new tool or technique, and had specifically undertaken a development programme in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) before beginning the pilot work, partly because it was an approach unknown to most coaches, although used in clinical work. However, once the work began, I realised that the issues were not ones of applying techniques but of being mindful to where the individual was in their own process of regaining resilience, and matching against need. As an experienced coach I had a large enough toolkit of means of helping individuals. I did not need more. I needed to use what I had in the best service of that individual, by judging how and when to use those approaches. The pilot study allowed me to let go of the expectation of generating new tools.

The process of undertaking the pilot had through reflection on action, refined the project into gaining a greater understanding of the process of regaining resilience within the professional practice of a coach.

2.5 The Analysis Gap (January – May 2012)

Once the pilot was completed, consultant sessions began. I came to the first session anxious about what to do with the data I had generated. Having collected it, I was still unsure how to handle it. Rather than directly respond to the expressed need, through offering advice on means of data analysis, I was encouraged to hold back, and consider my own position on resilience, not through reading, but through drawing on my own experience. I was attracted to that challenge, and committed to a series of psychotherapeutic sessions with the sole purpose of understanding my own resilience. Those sessions, and stories which I told within them; the insights that emerged and the value of that process in relation to being an insider researcher are written up as Chapter 6. What this experience added to my thinking was the recognition that loss of resilience is linked to the loss of an identity which is important for a stable sense of self, and that the 'faux' resilience of simply coping in order to survive, comes from not addressing that need. This was an important recognition, as it offered a lens through which to look at their narratives: what in their identity was threatened by present circumstances, and was the need to reinstate that identity, or to find another that they could call on?

2.6 Confronting the Data (May 2012 – December 2012)

Looming over the consultancy sessions was how to deal with the data I had generated. In the first proposal submission, I had spoken of phenomenology as my chosen methodology. I had chosen it because it allowed for an in-depth understanding of phenomena, and Moustakis (1994) separation of nomea as the perception of the event and noesis as their explication of their perception resonated. It mapped with the structure I had designed for the participant's narrative, in that I was asking them to describe what had happened, how it was impacting on them, and how they saw the future as a consequence. However, I struggled with the transcendental model of analysis (Moustakis ibid) and my ability to sit in

the spaces it demanded. I realised I needed a more structured approach and looked to Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith 2004; Smith et al 1999). I sought out an IPA researcher as a possible consultant, but rejected the methodology after a discussion with her. The focus on depth of analysis of the phenomena of resilience, separate from its relationship with my work led me to reject it. I also could not 'bracket' myself as though I was bringing nothing to the process, when I was positioning myself as part of it. I was wanting do more than understand the present; I was wanting to be part of the process of moving beyond.

As I struggled with how I could deal with the data, I initially looked at grounded theory. My reading of the work of Strauss and Corbin (1990) presented me with a model of complexity, which I was unsure I could manage, particularly when considering a large sample size and a mass of data. In an attempt to make the process more manageable, I looked at the work of constructivist grounded theorist Kathy Charmaz (2000). She seemed to offer a version that could be seen as grounded theory stripped back, and therefore accessible. However, it would still be predicated on the premise of developing theory, and I was unsure if I would be able to make that claim. In a discussion with my adviser on working with that data, thematic analysis (Boyatzis 1998) emerged as a more honest means of describing what I was wanting to do, and it provided me as a novice qualitative researcher with a "foundational method for qualitative analysis" (Braun and Clarke, 2006:81).

2.7 The Pilot That Wasn't a Pilot

Applying a thematic analysis structure (Braun and Clarke ibid) of line by line coding, identification of concepts and clustering of concepts into themes, and eventually meta-

themes, I was able to make sense of the material. It allowed me to analyse 10 hours of coaching from each participant with a focus on their relationship with their resilience; to then examine the data from a coach perspective focussing on my role, and to also analyse the narratives written throughout the period of contact. In writing up those findings, the question 'is that enough' loomed? My initial question of how large a sample was needed: a question I repeatedly asked my consultant, disappeared when I looked at the data. I was able to see that my project was as McLeod (McLeod op. cit.) had suggested, the generation of knowledge in context. I had produced two case studies which while looked at singularly, could also be examined comparatively. While a case study approach had not been in my mind at the outset, the more I read on case study work (Zainal 2007) the more it felt appropriate. This study is exploratory; it is attempting to add to understanding on career resilience, by extending the focus beyond the doing of it, to the regaining of it. Robert Yin the most prominent of the academic advocates of case study work positions case studies as particularly relevant for exploratory studies (Yin 1989) for answering 'how' questions, (Yin 2003), for empirical enquiry into a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context (Yin: ibid), and exploring issues using a range of methods for collecting data because there are no standardised techniques (Yin: ibid) By positioning the study as a comparative case study of 2 individuals going through the process of regaining resilience within a coaching contact, I could not present my outcomes as generalizable, but I could offer a design that others could replicate, and present outcomes that others could test out in their own practice Removing from myself the expectation of producing a grand theory, allowed me to acknowledge that my work opened up a new perspective on working with career resilience issues, which enhanced my own practice and which could be offered to others for them to consider and to develop further.

2.8 Implications of the Research Narrative

In laying out the tentative, uncertain path I followed in developing this project, I never lost sight of my overall aim which was to develop something distinctive which would contribute to career coaching work. I knew from the outset that this would come through understanding the loss of career resilience 'in the moment', and that my need was to understand what would help them to move forward in a sustainable way. What I did not realise at the outset, was that my learning would come from stripping away those things which I thought I needed to be legitimate, and trusting my instincts in designing the research project rather than following others.

There is in this account a parallel process with those 2 individuals who shared their journey with me. In working with them, I was asking them to let go of an identity which they thought they needed to be resilient, and to trust themselves to access other identities which would be of more value in dealing with uncertainty. In the same way, I came with an identity borne of working within a Business School, where I thought I knew what doing research should look like, even though it did not sit comfortably with me. I thought I needed to replicate that model, and it was only when challenged that I began to trust that I could stand on ground which was mine, and that in doing so my confidence in the project would grow.

I was caught by the belief that there was a 'right' way to do a DProf, which positioned it as an edited PhD, rather than understanding its distinctiveness. When I tried to copy what I saw as the precepts of a traditional doctorate, I wrong footed myself, in the same way that my participants thought there was a 'right way' to do their career, and were wrong footed when their actions did not bring security. 'Doing it right' for them started from accessing

other selves, and realising they could create their own sense of security. In the same way 'doing it right' for me, was about accessing my own presence, and trusting my own way of working.

Finally, this narrative, signals the lack of linearity in the project learning journey. It is a journey of ebbs and flows, of testing out and letting go, of revisiting and readjusting, of allowing new ideas in and a reluctance at times to let go of what I thought a project should be. My participants experienced those same ebbs and flows, as will be seen in the findings reported in Chapter 10.

Having laid out the project, as my research narrative, in the following chapters 3 – 5, I describe in more detail the use of literature in developing an understanding of resilience and my relationship with it, the journey towards selecting a methodology, and the methods used to generate and manage the data.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

Introduction

In my first proposal submission, I acknowledged the limitations of my understanding of the resilience literature, and I was asked to interrogate that literature in order to develop a position in relation to it. This chapter presents both the breadth of my reading and how it influenced my thinking on working with the loss of resilience.

The starting point is writings on resilience within the careers field, in order to expose the limitations of the prevailing models being used within careers work. The lens then widens into the literature on resilience within psychology in order to examine diverse perspectives on the extent to which resilience is a trait, a set of protective factors, or a learnt process. This opens up questions as to whether resilience is innate or developed over time, requires extraordinary abilities or is a part of normal human adaptive experience and grows with age. The review also looks at the relative paucity of the work which addresses resilience in adults, and in particular adults in the context of organisational life. The review highlights that while identifying what resilience is has exercised researchers; and looking to build resilience is a current focus in management development, far less attention has been given to understanding the process of how adults regain resilience

3.1 Career Resilience Literature

I began by looking at the literature on career resilience to see how it dealt with issues such as loss of confidence, self-efficacy and feelings of lack of agency. The writings were consistent. Career resilience is an individual strategy developed in order to deal with the vicissitudes of the organisational and wider business context. Resilience is the outcome of being career self-reliant, (Collard et al 1996) and is marked by the ability to adapt to

changing circumstances even when those circumstances are disruptive (Collard et al ibid). Resilience is self-protection. An additional motivation for acquiring career resilience was identified in an alternative view of resilience as "developing the knowledge and skills required to make a visible and personally motivated contribution to the organisation." (Brown 1996: 1). Resilience is important not just to the individual in terms of their employability, but also ensures their work is organisationally valuable. Implicit in these views is the belief that protection comes from adopting proactive behaviours. It is not accidental that such definitions appeared in the 1990's, as they coincided with an acceptance of the end of the relational psychological contract between the individual and their employer (Herriot and Pemberton 1995; Briscoe et al 2006). The notion that the organisation had an investment in the living out of the individual career was being replaced by a view of the contract as being a transactional exchange of skill for reward. In this new contract the individual has to continually prove their value to earn their place and to retain their market value. That message influenced my own work in terms of designing and running career workshops which spoke of Me plc.: every individual responsible for themselves and ensuring they retained their employability.

This shift in the employer/ee career relationship was taken up by journals across a range of professions (Koonce 1995, Giardano, 1997, Frost, 2008). One journalist wrote that a career self-reliant person is "self-sufficient, adapts easily to change, continually upgrades their knowledge and takes responsibility for their own career management. They are also committed to the success of their organisation" (Contract Journal 2004: 35). Nowhere in these views of resilience was there any consideration of it as a quality which could be lost; rather it is a career advantage to be acquired. This view was mirrored not only in my own career self-help book (Pemberton 1995), but in those of others (Purkiss and Royston Lee 2009, Katz, M, 2007).

In 2006 a study was published which challenged the view of resilience as a learned set of behaviours. It argued (Chiaburu et al 2006), that while being proactive is a proven advantage in career success, the relationship with career self-management is mediated by the degree of career resilience available to an individual. The extent to which the individual can be proactive is defined by the amount of resilience they have available to them. Rather than pro-activity delivering resilience, their study argued that possession of resilience was a measure of the degree to which proactivity could be accessed. One of the few empirical studies which addressed the contribution of resilience in dealing with workplace changes (Grzeda1999), evidenced, in a quantitative study of individuals who had been made redundant, that individuals who self-reported high career resilience behaviours of self efficacy, risk taking, tolerance of ambiguity, accepting responsibility for personal behaviour and the need for autonomy (London 1993, Noe et al 1990), showed a greater openness to changes in job duties, skills and function. The study argued that resilience behaviours support a flexible approach to job search. However, it was limited by being on based on retrospective assessment of intention. It did not capture how they were feeling in relation to those behaviours during the time of change.

Returning to the issue of career resilience after a gap of several years, when the weakness of the UK economy had made it an issue of relevance for my client base, I began by looking at how the career resilience development offer had changed. A 2011 internet search of organisations offering programmes labelled as career resilience workshops, provided evidence that the prophylactic model still prevailed. One exception was the UK based Career Counselling Services which in response to economic downturn launched a career resilience workshop positioned as a "practical workshop which will enable participants to develop their abilities to deal with setbacks, manage change and create and stay in control." (CCS 2011). It is distinctive because of its acknowledgement that potential

participants will be experiencing difficulty rather than wanting to learn how to avoid it. The workshop signals a shift from resilience as avoidance of difficulty through protective actions, to self-management through difficulty, through addressing thoughts and beliefs.

One reason why resilience as self-management through difficulty has received little attention is, I believe, because career theory has paid relatively little attention to the adult experience of career. The focus has predominantly been on the process by which individuals make initial career decisions, focussing on the match between individuals and the demands of the job (Holland 1997), or the process of maturation by which individuals move through stages of experimentation towards a stable sense of self which is then enacted in their work practice (Super 1957, Super 1980). Once a stable choice is established career was seen as a steady state until late career decline. The idea of maturation as the establishment of a stable work identity, which was supported through continuity of employment, was tenable for much of the 20th century. Particularly for those who were well educated, there was stability in the labour market, and opportunity through expanding organisational structures. Technology, globalisation and economic downturn have challenged that model and career theory has been in catch up.

Recent developments in career theory have challenged the assumption of stability in both the individual and their environment. Chaos theory, it has been argued, provides a more useful model for the 21st century (Bright and Pryor 2005; Pryor and Bright 2011). Career theory is criticised for being deductive, ignoring the complex dynamics between an individual and their environment, and the importance of unplanned, chance events. A prerequisite to adopting a chaos approach is an acceptance that career development is subject to a wide range of influences, which continuously change at different paces and demand adaptability (Bright 2003). Accepting this shift, the practice of career coaching

has also begun to be challenged. Savickas (2011) takes from this chaos, the necessity for a constructivist approach to career, where the individual will be required to repeatedly deconstruct and reconstruct their career story in response to both internal and external change. The coach's role is to help the individual understand the patterns of their story. In terms of my thinking about the project, this recent work is important. My own thinking on career had been shaped by early theorists at a time when I was largely working with young adults. My practice was now in working with those whose careers were often unpredictable, and this was particularly true in working with senior leaders. Changes of strategy, government policy, the arrival of a new CEO or involvement in a visible failure all had career implications. I was working with them to help them develop a story to take out into the world, and to create a new story for their next career stage. They were having to reconstruct their careers and I was a partner in their doing so.

3.3 Adult Life Stage Theory

While career theory has only recently paid attention to the adult experience of career instability, life stage theory acknowledges change over the adult life cycle. Levinson et al (1978) presented adulthood as dividing into 6 predictable discrete stages, with the passage through those stages predicated on stability within both the economy and family. Change is seen as a factor of adult life, but it is largely linked to age norms (Sheehy 2006) and has a sense of progression against societal expectations. Building on the work of Erikson (1959) in identifying developmental stages throughout childhood, the focus of life stage theorists has been on transition points, rather than dealing with difficulty within life stages.

An exception to the life stage approach is Hudson and McLean's (1995) model of success in adult life This offers a recurring cycle incorporating a goal focussed phase, but accepts the inevitability of disillusionment, and a move into feelings of being trapped, escape from

which can only come from accepting a period of 'cocooning' (Hudson and McLean ibid: 57). Here, the individual takes emotional time out to heal and reflect. It is from this withdrawal phase that regeneration and new goals are born. His exhortation that in 'cocooning' the individual needs to let go of what is not working, and take on new skills and attitudes in order to move on, is an important addition to the life stage thinking, but it still does not explain how individuals achieve those aims. In the UK Judith Leary Joyce (2009) follows Hudson's model, but with the encouragement to her readers to enact behaviours predicated on proactivity e.g. invite opportunity, embrace change, take responsibility, and get focussed. Both these approaches are premised on the individual facing existential issues in relation to the meaning of their career, rather than the impact of an unwelcomed event. Using the Hudson model in my own work with disillusioned successful individuals was useful, but it did not work with those who were still focussed on the goal when setback happened.

A recent addition to the adult career literature are accounts of recovery from setback from successful business leaders (Redmond and Crisafulli 2010; Sonnenfeld and Ward 2007). These acknowledge the importance of facing the reality of their situation as a precursor to recovery, and the place within it of emotional support. Their accounts are powerful, but they are limited by being post event narratives. The story they tell is shaped by the knowledge of the eventual outcome, and their positioning of themselves within their account against that knowledge. Their stories were however, compelling to read, and opened up the idea of allowing individuals to tell their stories as they were happening, in order that I could understand more of the process of recovery.

My readings in the career field had revealed the limitations of career theory in dealing with issues of setback. Career theory is beginning to accept the value of a constructivist

approach, but that shift has not been reflected in new thinking on resilience. If I was going to develop my own work in that area, I needed to be more familiar with the literature drawn from psychology and psychiatry.

3.4 Resilience Theories

3.4.1 Trait

Within psychological literature, resilience has been viewed in diverse ways in the last 40 years: as a personality trait, as a set of protective factors and as a learnt process in response to adversity. Resilience was initially conceived as a trait "a personality characteristic that moderates the negative effects of stress and promotes adaptation" (Wagnild and Young 1993:165). The importance of traits being that they are "relatively enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that reflect the tendency to respond in certain ways under certain conditions" (Roberts 2009: 140). Having access to a personality trait of resilience offers a template for dealing with difficulty, so that the adversity does not destabilise. It argues that individuals will innately differ in how they respond to life difficulties, dependent on the degree of resilience within their personality. For clients, and client organisations, resilience is often conceived as something which individuals either have or do not. For organisations, it makes the use of psychometrics in selection processes attractive. For individuals it can become a badge of honour, boasting of their resilience in response to times of high pressure. A support to the trait view has been given force in recent work (Kim-Cohen and Gold 2009) which focuses on the availability of serotonin transmitters (5-HTT) and monoamine A(MAO) to moderate responses to maltreatment, since these hormones boost feelings of wellbeing. Neuroscience has also highlighted the role of neural plasticity in resilience (Cicchetti and Curtis 2006), since neuro-plasticity supports the learning of new skills, and therefore

adaptability. From this perspective, some individuals may be better hardwired for resilience than others. The belief in resilience personality traits has informed the design of psychometrics such as Connor and Davidson's resilience measure (CD RISC) (Connor and Davidson 2003) used in psychiatric settings, and a range of commercially available psychometric resilience questionnaires being used within UK organisations (Adaptiv Learning Resilience Factor Inventory, Robertson-Cooper i- resilience, Organisational Health Resilience Assessment Questionnaire, Nicholson and McBride Resilient Quotient Questionnaire, Russell Consulting RQ, Wagnild and Young 2003 op cit). Criticism of the trait approach (Luthar et al 2000) is that it does not test how the person has faced adversity, and therefore, does not of itself predict behaviour when faced by adversity. Luthar distinguishes ego-resiliency (Block and Block 1989) which refers to the personal characteristics of the person, including general resourcefulness, flexibility in functioning and sturdiness of character, from the enactment of resilience which is a "dynamic developmental process" (Luther op cit: 546) learnt through exposure to adversity. In my work as a coach I had witnessed individuals who in day to day functioning, often in high stress role exhibited traits associated with resilience, but they were unable to access those qualities when hit by a setback which they experienced as personal.

3.4.2 Protective Factors

Child psychologists and psychiatrists in studying the impact over time of deprivation on child and adolescent development, extended attention beyond innate personality traits to factors in the environment which acted to support resilience. Most famously, this work included longitudinal studies on children in Hawaii facing multiple adverse conditions(Werner et al 1971; Werner and Smith 1977) which noted the ability of some children to lead purposeful lives despite their early life circumstances. Other studies have

looked at socio-economic disadvantage (Garmezy 1993; Rutter 1979), parental mental illness (Masten and Coatsworth 1995), maltreatment (Beeghly and Cicchetti 1994), urban poverty and community violence (Luthar 1999) and catastrophic life events (O'Dougherty et al 1997). While early studies looked to find personality traits which explained why some children did better than others, with the labelling of such children as "invulnerable", (Anthony 1974), over time the focus shifted to understanding the protective factors which acted as buffers and enabled some children to remain resilient in the face of difficulty. Those protective factors have been identified as falling into 3 categories: personality traits e.g. intelligence, resourcefulness, autonomy, positive social orientation, self-confidence empathetic humour, higher levels of self-control; family support e.g. warmth, clear and consistent rules within the family, trusting relationships, and influence of the community e.g. teachers, neighbours , hobbies involving social interaction, and in particular the availability of a close person outside the family at times of crisis (Luthar op cit, Hjemdal 2012; Oddgeir et al 2006). The argument that resilience is the product of more than personality opens up space for the development of resilience. While the researchers label self-confidence, autonomy, resourcefulness and emotional control as traits, for a coach they are not absolute qualities but developmental areas. The recognition of the importance of support at times of difficulty both provides a role for the coach, and provides evidence of what may be missing from an individual's life which makes them particularly vulnerable. Working with successful individuals who have lost resilience, I have often been struck by the lack of intimacy in their lives. Their most sustained relationships are often with people at work, and when they are struggling within work, their instinct is to withdraw from contact, so that their vulnerability is not exposed.

3.4.3 Resilience as a Process

A process view of resilience sees it as a capacity that develops over time in the context of the interaction between an individual and their environment (Egeland et al 1993). Rather than it relying on the presence of personality traits or protective factors within the environment, resilience and vulnerability can be seen as opposite ends of a continuum, and where an individual sits at any moment in time will be shaped by the interplay between protective factors and interactive processes (Rutter 1985). Resilience cannot exist untested; rather it is learnt through encountering stress and gaining confidence and competence in dealing with it. A process approach also allows for the normalising of resilience. Rather than it being seen as a superhuman quality possessed by the few, Masten refers to it as 'ordinary magic', a "common phenomena that results in most cases from basic human adaptational systems" (Masten 2001: 227). The focus is on understanding how good outcomes are achieved despite threats to adaptation.

A process model allows for the learning of adult life, and for gaining increasing competence over time. From this perspective, resilience increases with age because older adults are generally more able to regulate their emotional reactions (Lawton et al 1992), have a balanced perspective on life experience, attach meaning to their life and persist in the face of adversity (Wagnild and Young 1990).

A process approach shifts attention from the longitudinal impact of multiple stressors, such as those found in studies of children, to the processes for dealing with single disruptions within lives of relative normality. This perspective argues that even resilient adults can experience a stress reaction but it will be relatively short term and will not significantly interfere with their ability to continue functioning (Bonnano et al 2005). He has argued

that a definition of adult resilience should acknowledge it as a capacity to "maintain relatively stable, healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning" (ibid: 20-21) in the face of isolated disrupted events, as distinct from the long term effect on development reported in studies of children.

This view of resilience loss as a temporary interruption, wherein the individual may continue to function in many areas of their life, is different to burnout, a syndrome with which it is often confused. Burnout is characterised as a chronic, debilitating form of strain consisting of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and lack of personal accomplishment (Maslach 1976, 1982; Maslach et al 1996). It is frequently associated with high achievers who act out an addictive personality through seeking out environments which reward excessive commitment to work, and adopting compulsive behaviours to the point where they damage psychological and physical health. Only at the point of collapse does the need for self-examination of personal drivers and behaviours emerge (Casserley and Megginson 2009). While I have worked with individuals recovering from burnout, the target audience for this project are not the 'burnt', but individuals who are experiencing an event which has destabilised their sense of self, without necessitating their total withdrawal from work.

3.5 Limitations of Adult Resilience Literature

The domination within the literature of studies of children and adolescents living in situations of multiple difficulties for extended periods of time has allowed for an assumption that learnings are generalizable across the lifespan and across different contexts. Attention to adults has focussed on particular life events such as divorce, death and chronic illness (Barnes 2001, Bonnano 2004; Rabkin et al 1993), with relatively little

attention paid to resilience within work. Studies of resilience within work contexts have primarily focussed on nursing, teaching and social care and the capacity to continue performing under prolonged stress (Collins 1996; Edward 2005; Gu and Day 2007; McGee 2006; Hall and Mooney 2011; Grant and Kinman 2012).

A recent development has been work looking at resilience and high performers. Fletcher and Sarkar (2012) in looking at the resilience of Olympic champions concluded that their resilience was formed from a combination of personality traits: positive personality, motivation, confidence and focus, protection in the form of social support, and their interaction with two key distinguishing variables challenge appraisal and metacognition. Challenge appraisal refers to the ability to reframe difficulties as within their capacity and to view them as opportunities for growth. While metacognition (Flavell 1979) refers to the ability to have knowledge and control over one's cognitions. In dealing with difficulty, they are able to apply means such as self-talk, imagery and goal setting in order to control their thought, because it is allied to a metacognition of their own ability regardless of the challenge they are facing. This allies with Taylor and Brown's work (1988, 1994) showing that the likelihood of resilience is enhanced by a tendency to view the self in highly favourable terms. Self-enhancers cope well with extreme adversity because in order to avoid feelings of vulnerability they are motivated to restore a sense of control and optimism over the situation (Taylor and Armor 1996). The value of looking at high achievers, is that those who are put forward for external coaching are usually assessed as high performers. Their ability to present as self-confident, motivated and focussed has been a factor in their career success. However, when they present for coaching, they do not exhibit the distinguishing behaviours of Olympic champions. They are often struggling with setback because it is outside of their experience, and read it as a signal that their careers are over. They are rarely familiar with the techniques which Olympians have either self-taught or been taught by sports psychologists. Fletcher and Sarkar's work (2012

op.cit), suggests that the teaching of such skills within a coaching relationship could be of value.

In looking at how business leaders in the UK managed their resilience, Campbell (2009) coined the term 'resilience engine' to describe the interaction of beliefs and attitudes, with an external goal focus mediated by the individual's adaptive capacity. That adaptive capacity was shaped by the ability to hold perspective, to support oneself and to apply a pacing model which recognised the energy resources available to them. Campbell's model, based on interviewing business leaders on their perception of their resilience positions the breakdown of resilience as stemming from lack of purpose and belief in one's own judgement. It can be seen as aligning with both a protective and trait model, while also acknowledging that there are times when resilience is not accessible.

3.6 Organisational Resilience

Organisational resilience has most commonly been addressed through allowing that resilience is an aspect of individual performance within an organisational setting. This was the focus of a comprehensive CIPD (2011) report on the evidence base for resilience as in issue for organisations to take account of. One final dimension of the literature , however, addresses the issue of organisations as resilient or fragile bodies. An early writer on the subject of resilience and its business implications Diane Coutu wrote in Harvard Business Review (2002) that organisations which show resilience over time show three characteristics: an acceptance of reality; a deep set of values, and an ability to improvise. These themes are partly reiterated in Gilbert et al's (2012) article for Harvard Business Review which spoke of a two stage approach by resilient organisations: Transformation A

when reality is faced in relation to a disrupted market place and adjustments are made to the core business, and Transformation B where something new is created to support growth going forward beyond disruption. While organisational resilience is a relatively unstudied area, both these studies position the facing of reality as central to opening up creative adaptive capacity. This same theme was found in the account of ousted business leaders (Redmond and Crisafulli op cit, Sonnenfeld and Ward op cit). It was from facing the reality of their failure that they were able to open up to new possibilities. It suggests that the coach has a role in enabling individuals to acknowledge, rather than disassociate from, blame, or deny a painful event, as an enabler of moving forward.

3.7 Building Resilience

My reading of the literature developed my position that resilience, beyond the genetic advantage that some individuals have, is a learnt process. Some individuals have learnt it by stint of the difficulties they have faced. Those whose lives have had little difficulty, and many of those deemed high achievers, have had less opportunity to learn from set-back, and so are ill equipped when they are faced by disruption. The increased interest in UK organisations in the phenomena of resilience, has raised the question can resilience be developed, and in particular can it be developed outside of or in anticipation of stressful events? Central to resilience building interventions for adults within work settings has been the work of positive psychologists. Seligman's focus on the capacity for positive human functioning, even at times of difficulty and the benefits of widening the personal lens focus to capture those experiences which support a fulfilling life, (Seligman and Cziksenthimalyi 2000, Seligman 2002, Seligman 2006, Seligman 2011) have been adopted by many resilience building programmes. His work has been further supported in Frederickson's work on the value of broadening access to positive emotions , as a means of

enhancing an individual's thought and action repertoire. Key principles of positive psychology underpin the Master Resilience Training Programme taught to NCO's and their reports in the US army (Reivich et al 2011). That mass programme, targeting over 1 million soldiers, is based on an interventionist programme initially used with children and adolescents (Reivich et al 2003), and rooted in Albert Ellis's work on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) (Ellis 1962), as a means of enabling individuals to reframe challenging thought processes so that more positive thoughts and actions are accessible. A more recent addition to the CBT resilience building approach has been the use of mindfulness as a means of building confidence, purpose, flexibility and social support (Robertson Cooper 2013).

The desire to prevent difficulty and to build resilience muscles in anticipation of stress, paralleling the protective model of career resilience, has meant less attention has been given in the literature to the process of regaining resilience. Masten and O'Dougherty Wright (2010) talk of resilience pathways and distinguish between recovery, as a temporary reduction of functioning in the face of difficulty followed by a return to normal functioning (the bounce back model) and transformation where the functioning is improved in the aftermath of adversity. An approach based on bounceback, suggest a focus on mechanisms for recovery, rather than learning that can be accessed going forward. My interest is in how the coaching relationship could be used to transform functioning, through the individual being able to better understand the source of their resilience loss.

That resilience recovery process is cyclical according to Flach (1988). He speaks of a process beginning with a fracture point at which point homeostasis is interrupted. This leads to a disruption of normal routines and a sense of chaos. At this point resilience is initiated

leading to reintegration and a new homeostatic structure at a higher level of functioning. This model can be seen as mirroring the gestalt cycle of sensation, increased awareness of discomfort, leading to mobilisation of thought, feeling or action, and resulting in enhanced satisfaction (Perls 1947). While Flach's model offers a process for recovery, it does not explain what activates the initiation of resilience.

3.8 Implications of Resilience Literature Review

The literature on resilience crosses disciplinary boundaries, so that deciding the point at which I had sufficient understanding of key literature to inform the study was difficult. I was guided by both a sense of saturation in that the same themes were being presented, regardless of the focus of the study, and by my membership of a resilience practitioners' forum. Boing-Boing, a forum established by Professor Angie Hart at Brighton University to bring together those interested in the issue of resilience from an academic or practitioner perspective, exposed me to work being done in education, social care and mental health, as well as academic researchers from several countries. The sessions were fascinating, but increasingly they drew on literature I was familiar with, regardless of the focus of the resilience project. While I continued to look for new literature throughout the project, I am confident that my reading has encompassed key ideas in this field.

Reading beyond career literature on resilience had helped my understanding of the position of career writers on resilience and its reliance on the protection model, drawn from looking at those who in early life escape the impact of adversity. Career work in its interest in equipping individuals to escape the impact of downturn or disruption, ignored the parallel literature positioning resilience as a process learnt and strengthened through exposure to adversity and a dynamic interaction with it.

The literature highlighted how partial attention to the adult experience of resilience has been, and in particular the experience of able individuals operating within work settings. Where it is being addressed is in the use of psychometric to measure resilience traits and

through largely CBT based resilience training programmes designed to prevent resilience loss.

While writers acknowledge the human capacity for recovery and bounce back (Garmezy op. cit), there is little discussion of how that process occurs. Missing from the literature are studies which focus on understanding the means by which adults regain resilience following a disruptive event. Career theory has moved from a view of career as a trait and environment matching process, whereby understanding an individual's abilities and interests and matching them with the demands of a job is sufficient, to a recognition of the chaotic and disruptive nature of career. Career thinking on resilience has not kept up with that change.

The recognition of this gap in the careers literature, confirmed my interest in exploring how an individual who was experiencing career disruption and recognised a loss of resilience could be helped within a coaching relationship. It sharpened my conviction that while certain individuals are hardwired to manage themselves through difficulty more easily, it is only a partial explanation. The process model, with its normalisation of resilience as a learnt capacity resonated with my own work. As a coach I am often using solution focussed approaches which ask of individuals that they use what they have learnt previously to deal with current difficulties, learning which is often lost to them in the moment of need, but can be accessed in a coaching conversation. A process model approach also allows for using a coaching relationship to help develop the capacity to deal with a current difficulty where it is lacking.

Owning resilience as a largely learnt process, I wanted to understand how that process of recovery could be understood and assisted within a coaching relationship. I was then

confronted with the challenge of how to find a methodology that would serve my purpose. The next chapter lays out the investigative route I followed that led me to working with a mixed methodology.

Chapter 4

Crawling Towards a Methodology: An Intuitive Approach

Introduction

In this chapter, I describe in more detail the exploratory route by which I moved towards certainty on methodology, resulting in a commitment to work with narrative. It captures the meaning making I made of my reading in the months following the submission of my proposal. It is also an attempt to be open in describing the process by which my thinking developed, and to acknowledge the intuitive path which I followed in gaining a greater awareness of how I could do the work.

Before doing so, I want to position my own ontology, as this provides the filter through which I read and responded to the literature. I have worked with the particular experiences of individuals from the earliest days of my career, using Rogerian person centred counselling skills of empathic listening, acceptance and lack of judgement (Rogers 1951), and privileging the subjective over the objective. When first exposed to research methodologies as a Masters student looking at women in education, my lens of attention was feminist. I embraced the idea of feminist research as challenging the scientific method as the only means of establishing truth, of questioning whether separation of subject and researcher created validity, or that the focus should be on establishing universal truths. Implicitly male models celebrated the scientific method and universality, and yet their work had limitations in explaining female experience. Feminist research acknowledged diversity of experience, contextual based research, experiential approaches, multiple methods and acceptance of emotion (Reinharz 1983). I had taken that stance in my Master's level study of women coming into higher education as mature students: a study

encompassing quantitative and qualitative methods. Here my interest was in the women's accounts of the critical events which moved them from seeing themselves as 'non-academic' to seeing education as their route to a better life. Returning to study many years later, the precepts of feminist research remained with me. They found an outlet as a practitioner in my coaching work, which celebrated the subjective and worked experientially. It shaped where I wanted to position myself in relation to the project. The idea of connected knowing (Belenky et al 1986) resonated. The separation out of the French 'connaitre' as signalling understanding, from 'savoir' indicating the knowing of something, positions the connected knowing researcher as coming from a position of understanding based on "intimacy and equality between self and object" (Belenky et al ibid:101). It sanctions a partnership approach to the project, where the coach works to establish equality rather than authority. It also allows that bringing oneself into the work can be a legitimate means of enhancing the quality of understanding (Oakley 1981). It positions separation and connection as two contrasting epistemological orientations, where one uses impersonal procedures to establish truth, and the other sees truth as emerging from care. Given that my professional life is predicated on care in the service of client learning, it made sense that those values should be brought into the methodology I developed, since "passionate scholarship is rooted in, animated by and expressive of our values" (Du Bois, 1983:141). It is with those values as a background that the rest of this chapter should be read

4.1 The limitations of my earlier thinking on resilience

I have described how earlier in my career I had subscribed to a view of career resilience as a set of behaviours that provided protection against a changing economic and job climate, and which asked of individuals that they define their brand, actively network, keep

developing, stay abreast of trends, and recognise when their skills are losing currency. I had developed a Career Intelligence model based on such precepts, and written a career self-help book (Pemberton op.cit.) modelling the argument for resilience as a set of actions. Working as an executive coach during an economic downturn in the next century, I was no longer convinced of this model.

The psychological readings on resilience had helped me recognise the weaknesses in my own understanding. I had become convinced that a project looking at career resilience through a wider lens could provide development to both my own work and that of fellow practitioners. It spoke to the 'me,' the 'us' and the 'them' (Reason and Marshall 1987) in that it engaged my interest, provided an opportunity to develop new materials that could be shared with practitioners, and it offered an opportunity to revisit an academic area within careers work that had received scant attention since the 1990s.

I started the search for a methodology from the premise that I wanted to understand more of what the loss of resilience meant to individuals who had suffered a career setback, so that I could develop within my coaching means of supporting clients back to balance.

4.2 Initial Explorations

My starting point was Lane and Corrie's (2006) writing that research methodology should build from purpose and perspective and from these two stances the process would emerge. Holding this in mind whilst reading broadly on methodologies, it quickly became clear that my study would be qualitative. Aside from its fit with the ontology of coaching, in a research study it would allow for gaining new perspectives through intense contact with subjects, and would put the participant's own motives and actions centre stage (Miles

and Huberman 1994). Validating qualitative over quantitative, did not, however, help narrow the field of choice. Early readings led me to ethnography (Davies 1999; Fetterman 1998; Gray 2009), with its focus on fieldwork, mixed methods and engagement with individuals over time. This had an appeal in that it would allow for working with individuals as they went through the experience of losing and refinding resilience, rather than asking for a post-event account of the experience. The more I read on ethnography, however, the more I became concerned as to the feasibility of being a 'none knowing' observer. Neither was I seeking to understand an identified group 'the unresilient', I was interested in the particular experience of clients, and gaining more texture on the experience than was offered by the use of established psychometrics, which took no account of situational factors. If I was to enrich understanding of regaining resilience within career, I wanted to get under the skin of the individual experience in a work context.

This realisation led me to readings on phenomenology. Phenomenology gave me permission to have a personal interest in what I was seeking to know, so that I could place myself within the study (Moustakis op.cit). It also encouraged the understanding of individual reality, rather than requiring large scale studies. Within my own epistemology as a coach there was an understanding of Spinelli's writing, "that which we term reality, that which is experienced by us as being reality is inextricably linked to our mental processes in general, and particular to our inbuilt capacity to construct meaning" Spinelli 1998: 2). I experienced that view of reality in the assumptions which clients often brought to their issues. Phenomenology would allow for understanding what it was like to lose resilience through working in depth with a few subjects, but its concern would not be with how individual's regain resilience, or how I as a coach contributed to that process, but rather with understanding resilience as phenomena. This was highlighted to me in a discussion

with a prospective learning consultant, with a specialism in phenomenology. She proposed an in depth study of one person's experience of loss of resilience, with no concern for how the individual might move back into balance. My desire to both be in the study as a coach and to bring learning back into my professional practice, was viewed as getting in the way of the purity of the phenomenological study A way out of this tension was seemingly offered in reading Lloyd Chapman's D.Prof dissertation (Chapman 2006, Chapman 2010), where he was able to show how he had used a phenomenological approach, allied to the testing out of his own coaching model within the research study. A possible solution could be to develop a coaching model for working with resilience issues, and to test it out through working with a purposive sample that recognised that their resilience had been impacted by current work related events. The flaw in this approach was that I did not have a model. If any model emerged, it would be as a result of working with participants, not a precursor to it.

I knew that the study would involve understanding the experience of participants, it would allow me to be an active participant as a coach, and that I wanted the study to follow the arc of the loss and refinding of resilience. To move beyond simply focussing on the phenomena of resilience, immediately raised concerns about measurement. How would I know that a participant was more resilient at the end of contact? Did this require a measure, and would including an established measure such as Warr's Measurement of Wellbeing (1980) or Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) Posttraumatic Growth Indicator (PTGI) provide triangulated quantitative legitimacy, despite arguing for the value of the subjective experience? The answer came in returning to an area that I was familiar with. In the 1990's, I had worked on the subject of the psychological contract (Herriot and Pemberton 1995) using a large scale quantitative study to recognise shifts in the contract between employee and employer consequent of business change. A more recent study by Conway and Briner (2002) of the psychological contract in action, used periodic diary entries to

capture how the individual was experiencing their psychological contract on a specific day. The idea of allowing the participant to write about their feelings and experiences in relation to their resilience, outside of face to face time with the researcher, would allow for expressing thoughts and feelings that the individual may not feel safe in expressing face to face, and for acknowledging new thoughts that came between sessions. Rather than looking for a quantitative measure, I could focus on the shifts which individuals reported in their thinking as expressed in writing. Narrative had started to come into view as a methodology for the project.

4.3 Narrative as Methodology

Narrative as a methodology sits within both interpretivist and post-modern paradigms. Postmodern, in that it accepts the contextual construction of meaning, the value of the individual perspective and the validity of multiple perspectives on any issue. (Mitchell and Egudo 2003). It also acknowledges thinking as an interpretative act, where facts and values are inseparable (Ferrier 1998). Narrative lends itself to qualitative enquiry because it allows for capturing the richness of data and complexity of meaning in stories (Mitchell and Egudo op cit). While narrative owes its origins to ethnography, it has moved away from a view of individual descriptions as describing absolute reality, to seeing language as a means of understanding individual reality, which is sufficient in itself. As I explored narrative as a methodology, both my commitment to it, and its potential value in both written and spoken forms increased.

4.4 Written Narrative

The initial idea of participant writing as a part of the study, led me to the work of James Pennebaker. His research had shown the value of reflective writing in supporting immune

system functioning (Pennebaker and Beal 1986 op.cit, Pennebaker et al 1988, Pennebaker 1990), providing protection against psychosomatic disorders, (Pennebaker et al 1987) and supporting long term health benefits (Pennebaker et al 1989). In other studies Pennebaker focussed on the function of writing not only on immune system responses, but also on the role it had it in helping cognitive processing, through transforming a painful memory from a sensory-affective component to an organised linguistic form. (Pennebaker 1997). Writing, he had shown, accelerated the speed of coping (Pennebaker et al 1990) and was in itself a therapeutic process (Pennebaker 1993). Being able to use writing as a form of confession in relation to traumatic events, was found to reduce the stress on the body and speed the process of healing. (Pennebaker 1993 ibid). This process was made evident in the more rapid finding of work by those who engaged in reflective writing (Spera et al 1994). Pals (2000) endorsed Pennebaker's work by looking at how people deal with difficult life events and concluded that in a three stage process of acknowledgement, analysis and transformation, writing had a role in speeding up the processes of acknowledgement and analysis. Adding in writing she suggested could provide new ways of thinking about the self, as distinct from asking participants to talk. (Pals 2006). What it could also add, was suggested in a study by Ulrich and Lutgendorff (2002) which showed that participants who were invited to write over a month long period in ways that both expressed their emotions and invited cognitive processing of the event reported more positive growth, than those focussing on either factual or emotional writing alone.

The case for incorporating writing in the study was further reinforced by Smyth's meta-analysis of studies on the value of reflective writing (Smyth 1998). He concluded that the value of writing was more than cathartic release, it offered the opportunity to reframe thinking, and that those benefits were most realised when the participant was writing

about a current rather than a past event, and the writing was spaced over time. I became convinced that writing had value as a means of understanding the individual in relation to their resilience, and as a means of supporting recovery. However, I also knew how unconfident clients often felt about writing about themselves. In inviting clients to write about their private career journey, as distinct from their public cv, they were often unsure how to express themselves, or how much to reveal, because their experience of writing was largely linked to the demands of education or work tasks. I concluded that if writing was to be included, it should provide them with a structure within which they wrote.

4.5. The Role of Narrative Inquiry

Wanting to provide a structure for participants to write their story prompted reading on storytelling and the role of narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly 2000). Narrative inquiry with its focus on both the descriptive and explanatory function of writing, allowed that using narrative could provide an opportunity for the individual to tell their story, and for making sense of those events. "Narrative functions to give form to the understanding of the purpose to life . . . it provides a framework for understanding the past events of one's life and for planning future actions" (Polkinghorne 1988: 11). Narrative inquiry also specifically places the researcher as part of the process of the individual, "living a life story, telling a life story, retelling a life story and reliving a life story" (Clandinin and Connelly op. cit: 71). Clandinin and Connelly's work provided a structure for the telling of the loss of resilience story that would help the participant structure their experience in cognitive and affective terms.

4.6 The Value of Narrative

What was still missing from this process was a clear sense of the role of narrative within the project, and confusion as to whether the focus was the participant story, the coaching

activity, or the value of narrative as a research methodology. I needed to step back, in order to revisit what I was trying to achieve. I needed to become clearer on the distinction between narrative as a coaching method, and narrative as a research methodology. Since my reading on narrative had primarily been focussed on studies reporting its therapeutic value, I was open to Atkinson's charge that its value is therapeutic but it has no role as a means of analysis (Atkinson 1997). In a tutorial, I was directed to the reading on narrative analysis. This provided a new starting point from which I followed my curiosity into wider reading on the role of narrative within coaching and career coaching.

I recognised that an account had to be more than an Aristotelian view of a story as requiring a beginning, middle and end, since this risked missing the internal narrative of the participants. In asking participants to describe both the event and how they understood the event, I was positioning my analysis as being interested in "how respondents . . . impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and action in their lives" (Riessman 1993: 2). Riessman's writing (1993 ibid) made me aware that my focus accorded with those of narrative analysis. I was curious about why the story was told in the way that it was, about what was included, and what was excluded from a written account that was subsequently revealed when the story was told to a listener. The psychologist William James (1890) and subsequently the social psychologist George Mead (1967) have spoken of the two selves the 'I' and the 'Me'. The 'I' is the self as subject, the person who acts unselfconsciously, the 'Me' is the self as object. In inviting a participant to write their story, I am asking them to become their own author, to objectify themselves by writing an initial narrative that signals the view of themselves which they are bringing to their resilience challenge. The putting of a difficult life experience into a narrative form is a means by which individuals can make sense of that event (Bruner 1991). It then offers the

possibility of redefinition, and of shaping a different future self. Seeing stories as more than a way of telling an event but as " the means by which identities may be fashioned" (Rosenwald and Ochberg 1992.), allows for the development of a new Me. The idea of the identity held within a story was becoming an important one for me.

The invitation to tell a story, and the structure which we place on it invites the author to choose an identity which defines themselves within it. In choosing the resilience story they tell e.g. one of abuse, unfairness or challenge, they position themselves within it as holding an identity e.g. that of martyr, victim, or brave battler. In the writing of a story, the author is implicitly invited to select an identity. However, individuals hold multiple identities, many of which are in opposition to each other e.g. victim vs. proud champion, martyr vs. asserter. They are imagoes or images of self (McAdams 1985) which the individual calls on in different situations. The individual has a multitude of identities available to them (Gregg 1991), and those identities are as much shaped by their social positioning in a situation, as it is by the personal positioning which is driven by their moral framework. (Raggatt 2006). While written narrative allows for illuminating what is threatened in their resilience story by its focus on a single identity, narrative dialogue allows for exploring oppositional voices, and how they could be used in the service or refinding resilience. For allowing a polyphonic dialogue with the multiple selves (Hermans 1996)

4.7 The Role of the Coach in Working with Narrative

Exponents of the power of writing had convinced me of the place that written narrative could have in helping an individual process and move beyond difficulty, but I was equally interested in what role the coaching relationship could play in the process of regaining resilience. Studies of dealing with life difficulties are often based on the use of semi-

structured interviews with those who are living with life traumas, to unearth the processes which they have developed to cope. Two studies (King and Milner 2000; Pals 2000 op.cit.), coded such interviews to define 2 distinct themes: the extent to which the individual openly acknowledges and examines the disequilibrating impact of the event, and the extent to which they construct a positive ending to the story that provides coherence. What particular contribution could coaching make to both those processes, or were there additional functions that were available? Magai and Nusbaum (1996) had suggested that those who embrace the negative emotional aspect of the event rather than minimising it in order to distance themselves from it, experience greater posttraumatic growth. This suggests that the coach has a role to play in encouraging the individual to confront the reality of what has happened to them, and in particular to unearth the thoughts and feelings which they may omit from a written narrative. Within therapeutic work, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) (Hayes et al 1999; Hayes et al 2004; Harris 2009) has challenged cognitive models of reframing thought as the basis of shift, and argued for acceptance and the facing of difficulty as the starting point from which shift comes organically, rather than in response to an imperative to create a change goal. Whilst programmes designed to develop resilience have been dominated by cognitive approaches to challenging issues such as lack of confidence (Reivich and Shatté 2002), my own training in ACT had convinced me of its value in this project, as a means of supporting participants to face rather than deflect or explain away the issue. Beyond, the value of acceptance as a precursor to creating a new narrative, Pasupathi (2001) and Thorne (2000) have conducted studies which suggest that talking to others has an impact on cognitive processing, in that the response of others to the telling of a story can have an important effect on how these events are interpreted. Those studies looked at the function of social support in helping the processing of difficulty. How far a coaching relationship mirrors that function or adds to it would be an important part of my interest. Zimmerman and

Dickerson (1994) in looking at therapeutic relationships argued that a narrative approach helps clients move away from problem dominated stories and toward newly constructed preferred stories. It was possible that a coaching relationship could offer the same. Within the literature, narrative is often spoken of in terms of the telling of a story to another person, although a key writer on narrative Bruner (1986) makes no distinction between narrative thought and narrative discourse. My reading suggested that the two forms of narrative serve different purposes. Understanding the distinctive purpose of each would allow for refining how written narrative is positioned within the process, and for understanding the particular function that dialogue has for enabling the individual to create an alternative story which supports their resilience.

A basic premise of narrative psychology is that individuals understand themselves through the particularity of the language they use in both spoken and written form, and it is through that language that individuals are constantly engaged in the process of creating themselves" (Crossley 2000: 10). It is, therefore, important to understand the language the narrator uses in both written and spoken accounts and what it means for them.

I am particularly interested in what in their sense of self has been breached by the event they are recounting, and how this is reflected in their language. Based on my own experience of psychotherapy relating to my own resilience (discussed more fully in Chapter Six), I had come to believe that the loss of resilience is related to the unavailability of a resource which is central to a stable sense of self. Understanding what in an individual identity has been threatened by the career event, and how that is shown in the language and metaphors used by the participant would be relevant.

4.8 Narrative and Social Sciences

Narrative inquiry had focussed me on the structure of the story, and the validity of playing what Elbow (1986: 289) called the "believing game" i.e. a suspension of the search for validity, and an entry into the "art of affirming or entering into someone else's thinking or perceiving" (Elbow ibid:289). Narrative analysis strengthened my understanding of the importance of the individual meaning of the story and the language in which it was told. Reading on narrative analysis also helped highlight why ethnography had not met my needs. The assumption in ethnography that the researcher is both receiving and then writing an account of 'reality', in which language has a clear, stable meaning, did not accord with my experience as a coach, where accounts are always partial, and the meaning of language is specific to the individual and to context.

Sociologist, Laurel Richardson's argument that "writing is a way of knowing" (2003: 499) provided a theoretical affirmation of my research instinct. She claimed the legitimacy of the individual experience in the written word as a research methodology. By placing writing within a post-modern context, where the goal is the "knowing of something without knowing everything"(Richardson ibid: 508), I could non-defensively use narrative as a means of subjective discovery, acknowledging that by its nature it is partial, local and situational, and where neither the author or the researcher can ever be fully knowing. My work would be in helping participants develop a differently nuanced view of the particular experience of loss of resilience, and its recovery. Richardson further expanded my understanding of the role of language in understanding meaning, through introducing me to a post-structuralist perspective (Weedon1987). By recognising that the subjectivity of individual language is as much shaped by historical and social conditions as by personality, it became possible to recognise the loss of career resilience in terms of historical and social models of career success. The model of success held by many of my clients was of being 'on' or 'off track' against the norms of their sector, and against a mid-20th century model of

organisational career predicated on expansion, structured progression and entitlement. When they saw themselves being derailed from that track they reacted as though it were an objective and final reality.

4.9 My Own Narrative

Richardson (1997) and Ellis and Bochner (2000) both proposed the idea of the researcher as a reflexive participant in the process, recognising that the topic of choice is not accidental, but also the way in which I write about it will be shaped by how I relate to that topic at a particular point in time. Writing as auto-ethnographers, Ellis and Bochner (2000 ibid) celebrate the researcher as an insider, with their story as much a part of the data as that of the participants. The recognition that I hold a story as much as do those I study, led me to see the value of engaging in a psychotherapeutic relationship to explore my own relationship with resilience, and to record those insights in a parallel written narrative (see Chapter Six). I became part of the research method.

4.10 Narrative Coaching

A scientific researcher would have begun their interest in using narrative through looking at its existing use in their professional activity. I came to that literature only after having read on narrative within social sciences, ethnography and educational research. In coming to the writings of my professional colleagues, I became exposed to additional literature drawn from family therapy and psychology. Narrative, however, remains an area which has received relatively little attention in coaching practice, relative to its use in social science and management education. (Reissner 2008). However, its protagonists view it as a distinct method of coaching. In the acceptance of the subjective reality of the story, as distinct from the truth of its content, it places the coach in a different position to the most

established UK coaching model GROW: Goal, Reality, Options, Will (Whitmore 2009) which seeks evidence for the truth of coachee claims, or challenges their claims in the service of establishing truth. In looking at the literature on narrative coaching, I came to see narrative as both a methodology appropriate to the subject being addressed, but also as a method for working with participants through dialogue in which the individual's narrative would have a key role. (Stelter 2009).

In Vogel 's (2012a) account of his study of 6 coaches using narrative as the focus of their work, he highlighted that narrative coaches use narrative as a basis for helping clients "make sense of the web of stories of which they are part, and to exercise more discretion in how they are influenced by and, in turn, influence them" (Vogel ibid: 2). Vogel sees the story changing, not through an act of will, such as in the reframing models of CBT, but organically, because in the process of narrative coaching there is a disruption to the coachee's normal pattern of integrating experience. Leading thinker on narrative coaching, David Drake (2007) drawing on the work of family therapy (White and Epston 1990; White 2007), highlights that while key precepts of family therapy have entered coaching work e.g. working with client strengths, and partnership working, working with narrative has been less accepted. He argues that a coach's role is important at points when the old story does not work anymore, as these are moments of potential breakthrough, when the individual can be helped to see the limitations of their existing narrative (Drake 2003,2004), and to explore potential new stories. Rather than the coach being an attentive listener, who allows the storyteller to hear their story afresh, the 2 parties create a third space between the two, where elements of the story can be worked with, and the coachee is invited to look at their story from different perspectives. Similarly, Hermans (2004) has written, "By telling their stories to the (coach) and to themselves a dialogical space is created that instigates the retelling of the story in such a way that new relationships are established between existing story parts or new elements are introduced"

(Hermans ibid: 175). In reflecting on these perspectives, in the context of the study, a distinction became clear between the writing and the telling of the narrative, as a method for gaining data, and the work of the coaching in allowing a joint examination of the narrative, so that the narrative could be seen more clearly, some distance could be created and other submerged aspects of the self could be released (Polkinghorne op.cit).

Reading on narrative from a coaching perspective highlighted the confusion of terms. Narrative can mean either written or spoken material, but implicitly in the coaching literature it refers to the spoken accounts which a coachee presents to the coach. In asking participants to write, and in positioning the written and spoken narrative as having distinctive contributions, I would potentially be developing a methodology to unearth different sources of information, which could develop the concept of narrative coaching within my professional field.

4.11 Narrative and Constructivism

The dominant career theory of the 20th century was a trait and factor model where individual abilities were matched with the demands of a role, within an assumption of stability in adult life, and in the economic environment. This model was no longer adequate for the instability of economic conditions, and variability in life patterns, and career theory is having to take account of this. The shift from logical positivism to subjective perspectivism (Savickas 1993) recognises changing life patterns, and the wider systems impacting on individual opportunity. Seeing the world as unknowable, the focus is changing to how the individual understands their world. That understanding is displayed in how they construct their reality, and is defined by Savickas (ibid) as career constructivism. "If individuals actively participate in the creation of their own reality, then

it follows that individuals create their own personal story in relation to their experiences. The use of language and dialogue is fundamental to the creation of meaning and knowledge for the personal story" (Brown and Brooks 1996: 305). The work of career coaching then becomes the re-construction of reality through dialogue (Campbell and Ungar 2004a, Campbell and Ungar 2004b). The reality of career coaching is that clients present when they have experienced a disruption to their life story, which has challenged their identity (Peavey 1995). They come with the hope of finding a new story. Constructivism seeks to fill that need by inviting individuals to bring small stories (constructions), which are then deconstructed in dialogue into a larger story, from which a future oriented story is co-constructed. (Savickas 2011 op. cit).

There is now an acknowledgement within career theory that narrative offers a means for articulating needs, goals, purposes and actions, and for recognising life patterns. (Savickas 1993 op. cit; Bujold 2004). From this perspective, the individual narrative is central to the work of a coach. A constructivist acceptance that there are no absolutes (Brott 2001; Young and Collin2004) legitimates a different way of working with career issues. Within this framework the career counsellor shifts from expert to a co-constructor (Brott ibid). Taking a constructivist approach to my project, would allow me to position myself in working with their resilience story, not in order to follow the career constructivist process (Savickas 2011 op.cit.), but to work in partnership with the client to see what emerges from the enquiry. Rather than testing the career constructivist model for the issue of career resilience, I wanted to take a constructivist stance to working with the resilience narrative, exploring if new learning emerged through following the client's lead within a coaching relationship. Where career constructivism looks to understand meaning within a clear coach defined structure, I wanted to create a more open approach, wherein I could interrogate my own process as I followed the client.

4.12 Narrative in Careers Practice

Research studies within the careers literature report the value of narrative in supporting thinking around career, although reported studies are based on work with adolescents and college students. (Thomas and Gibbons 2009; Rehfuss 2009, Grier-Reed et al 2009) making early career decisions. However, the impact of the shift towards acknowledging and working with the individual narrative is evidenced in a range of methods widely used within careers work. Exercises such as lifelines, (Brott 2004; Rogers 2012; wheels of life (Kimsey-House et al 2011), circles of life (Brott 2004 ibid), flow stories (Czikzentmihalyi 1992), the invitation to write one's own obituary as part of the creation of a possible future self (Markus and Nurius 1986) or writing a gratitude journal (Fredrickson 2009), are all based on an implicit valuing of the individual narrative as a means of understanding the subjective experience and supporting change. My experience of such tools is that while they can be labelled as enablers of narrative, they are perceived pragmatically by career coaches as tools which work, rather than their being placed within any theoretical framework.

4.12 Case Study as a Method

Having committed to narrative as a methodology I decided to position the project method as one of comparative case study. This decision emerged from examining the data I had collected and recognising that in the experience of working with 2 participants, I had achieved "detailed in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in content" (Cresswell, 1998:61). I had the material from which strong case studies could be built. I had available to me the means of presenting either two singular case studies or providing a comparison of two experiences of the loss and regaining of resilience. Having two cases produced data that could be examined from a perspective of exploring similarities and differences, rather than looking to argue for the possibility of developing a

theory. Viewing comparative case studies as a means of widening my thinking (Lijphart 1975) and seeing their value in "provoking, not proving" (ibid: 159) removed any risk of generalising from these two accounts. Additionally, given that my literature review had not unearthed previous work in this area of resilience, a case study approach had value for exploratory work which could point to where future attention should be given. It could offer explanatory work on understanding 'how' a process works (Tellis 1997). While case studies have been criticised for their lack of validity, a counter-argument is that their value is in making available reliable processes that can be replicated by others, in the same way as scientific studies have to be replicated before they are accepted. (Yin op cit 2003). Centrally, using a case study approach aligned with my own epistemology in being focussed on understanding in detail the particular experience of an individual from multiple perspectives.

4.13 Conclusion

In my search for a methodology that would meet the needs of the project, my connection with the use of narrative as a methodology was strengthened through the process of exploration, reflection and broadening and deepening my reading. I came to understand that narrative offered a means by which I could gain an understanding of what it meant to an individual to have lost their resilience and how the process of regaining resilience could also be evidenced in how they wrote, and in noticing shifts in their story. I came to see separately, that narrative is a valid method for working within a coaching relationship. Additionally, while narrative had entered career coaching practice as part of the shift from the career coach as expert to career coach as partner in developing the career story, it had not been specifically applied to the issue of career resilience. Late in the process I came to the additional realisation that a comparative case study method of two individuals would serve the purpose of this study.

In finishing this account, I can report that the narrative methodology I moved towards was one that emerged in a coaching session several years ago, where I explored my feelings about not having completed a PhD programme. The story I told myself was that my failure to engage with a quantitative study evidenced my own lack of ability. In the coaching conversation I came to realise that narrative could be a means by which I could conduct research, because it was authentic to my style and strengths: to my implicit epistemology. In the intervening years, I forgot that insight, so that this account is as much about my story of forgetting, remembering and believing, as it is about researching.

In the next chapter, I turn my attention to the model used for collecting data from my participants, and how what I had conceived as a pilot study became the project.

Chapter 5

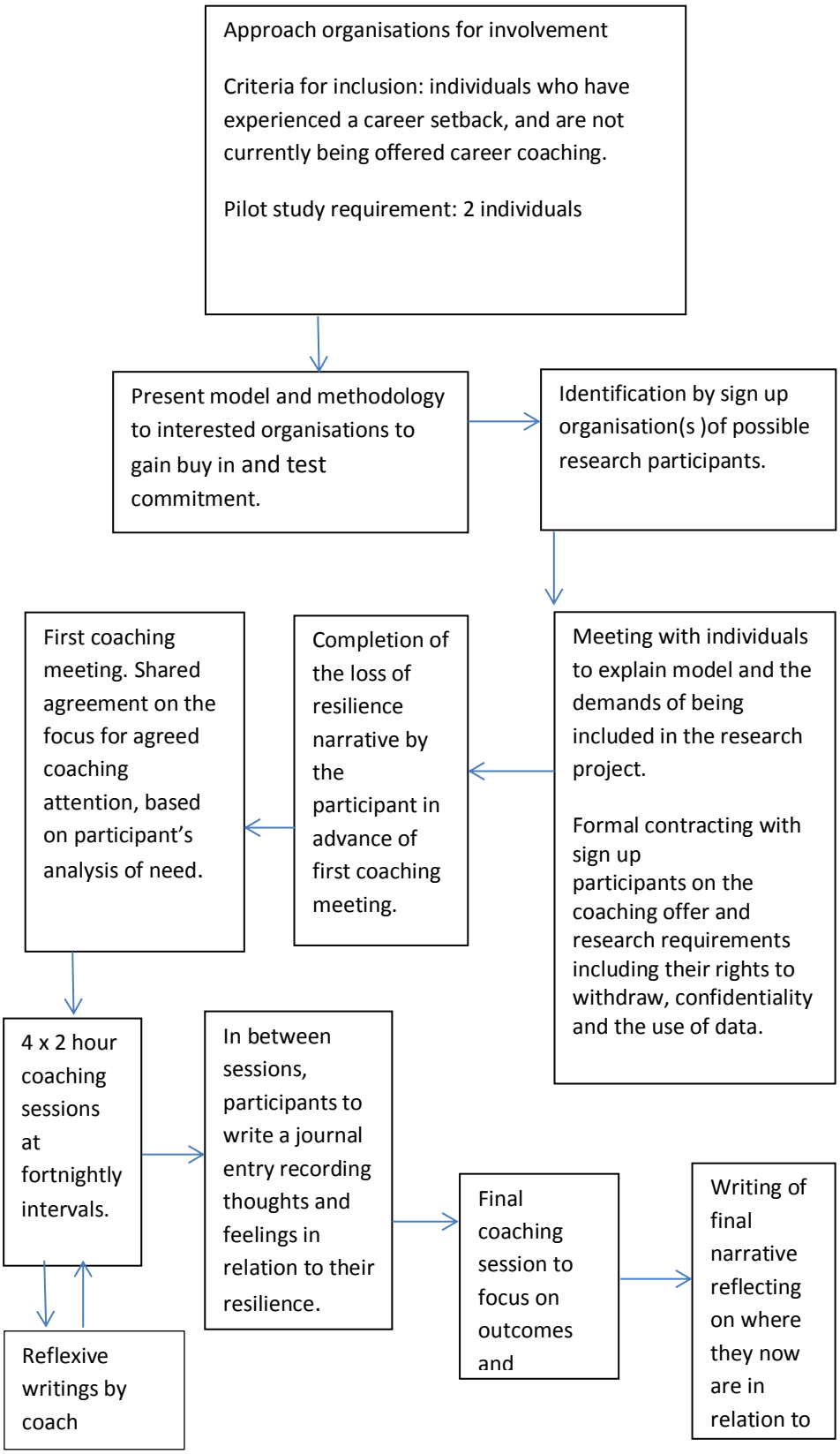
Following and Not Following Directions

Introduction

The recognition that narrative offered an authentic methodology for the project focus and was congruent with my own style as a practitioner, led to the issue of a design for collecting data and a means of analysing it. This chapter describes the design process and addresses the issue of why work completed initially for a pilot study, became the final project.

Figure 5.1 describes the process that was submitted in the proposal.

Figure 5.1: Design of Pilot Study that Became Project Study



5.1 Design of Process

Accepting narrative as the methodology meant the collection of written data. Guided by the evidence of previous researchers using written narrative that repeated narratives are of greater value to participants in helping them to reframe their stories, than one off events, I designed a process that would provide an initial narrative, to be explored in a first meeting as a means of understanding how their career disruption was impacting on their resilience, and where they wished the focus of coaching to be. The writing of a final narrative following the completion of the coaching contract would allow for analysis of the degree to which their narrative had changed. Intervening narratives would encourage participant reflection on any shifts in their self-perception, and provide material which could be brought to coaching sessions.

Alongside this, the participants were being asked to bring their narrative to a listener, and to create a space in which that narrative could be explored in the service of supporting them in regaining resilience.

For myself as both coach and researcher, it was important to reflect on what I brought to the conversations, and how I was impacted by the participant. I came with no pre-existing model of how I would coach, but with extensive experience of coaching, and with training in a range of approaches. I position my coaching approach as eclectic, enabling me in the moment to select my intervention, in response to what I believe will be of most value to the coachee. As a researcher I was interested in my purpose in choosing an intervention. Coaching sessions would, therefore, be recorded, and my own interventions would form part of the analysis, in order to examine its impact on the process.

5.1.1 Participants

Participants were identified through links with HR personnel in client organisations. Following presentations to the HR managers in both organisations, they agreed that their organisations would be involved and that they could identify individuals who were openly unhappy with their careers. They were staff who had identified themselves to HR as being impacted by events which had unsettled their view of themselves in relation to career. Neither of them was receiving internal or external coaching. They were invited to meet with me on the basis of a no-commitment conversation at which resilience as a concept, the purpose of the research and the requirements of their involvement were explained to them. A PowerPoint presentation followed by a discussion allowed for the raising issues of concern to them. Both readily identified themselves as having had their resilience affected by recent events. It was made clear that the relationship would be completely confidential, that there would be no feedback into the organisation; that their identities would be protected in any oral or written presentation of the outcomes of the research, and that they had the right to withdraw at any time. They were given consent forms to take away, so that there was a 'cooling off' period before making any commitment. Both individuals who were invited to participate decided to become involved in the project, and signed consent forms. (See Appendix. 5.1 and 5.2)

The choice of the number of participants was a subject of discussion throughout consultation sessions. I found myself being caught by a tension between the positivist and the qualitative researcher in me. When advised in the panel discussion of the proposal that I should undertake a pilot to test the design, I had originally seen these 2 participants as a pilot, before engaging in a larger scale project. I struggled with the idea of substantive piece of work being possible with just 2 participants, but as I engaged with the data, and

read on the case study method, I became confident that an in-depth study of 2 individuals could provide a valid basis for developing an exploratory model, based on this experience, that could be tested and developed further in future studies and in my own practice, without claiming that it was a generalizable model.

5.1.2 Collecting narrative material

Using a structure developed from Clandinin and Connelly's (2000 op.cit.) work on narrative with teachers, the participants were asked to write their loss of resilience story using the framework:

- What has happened?
- When did it happen?
- Who is involved?
- What is the context in which it has happened?
- How do they understand the event – what realisation or learning has it given them?
- What thoughts do they have about themselves in relation to what has happened?
- What feelings do they have in relation to what has happened?
- How do they see their future right now?

A structured written narrative was also completed a month following the ending of the coaching sessions using the framework:

- Their current thoughts about their future.
- What if anything has changed for them?
- How they now understood the event which happened to them – what realisation or learning has it given them?
- What thoughts they now had in relation to what had happened?

- What feelings they now had in relation to what had happened?
- What effect is it now having on them – what are they noticing about themselves?
- Any insights that they will help them deal with future challenges?

At the mid-point between coaching sessions, the participant was contacted by email, and asked to write how they were feeling, thinking or acting in relation to their resilience issue (s) on that day.

All narratives were returned for analysis.

4.1.3 Coaching sessions

The Role of the Diagnostic

Participants were offered 5 coaching sessions. The first: a diagnostic session was positioned as a conversation to tell their story, in order that there could be an agreed contract on where they would like the focus of coaching to be. Prior to the meeting the researcher was in possession of their written narrative, and read it with a focus on the language used within the account. In listening to and probing their story within the diagnostic session, the researcher continued to listen for their use of language and metaphor. Towards the end of the session, once the story had been more fully explored and rapport had been established, the researcher fed back key words and invited the participant to consider their relevance for their desired state:

Coach: *Before I came to see you, I wrote down some of the words which struck me in reading this.(narrative). I just want to read them to you, and, as I'm reading them, I want you to think about how you think you need to be in order to be that confident, resourceful C you would like to be.*

The sort of words that you used were:

Possible

Difficult

Disappointed

Wrong

Dispirited

Long-serving

Explicitly following

Committed

Tried to put into practice

Uncertain future

Not being able

Undermined

Am I wanted?

Very sore

Confidence and self-worth knocked

Failure to appreciate

Not as motivated

Participant C *A lot of this is defensive and passive as well, by which I mean it's do they want me? The initiative is with other people. I'm trying to put into practice. I think I'm following orders. Explicitly following that's the other thing. Failure to appreciate. All the action and all the initiative lies with other people in this summary isn't it? Things will happen because other people do it.*

. . . "I get moved and that's great and I'm really good in that job and I do really well. Then I get moved again and I do very well. That's how it was. And then that stops happening so I feel 'they' have not moved me. 'They', this is the 'they' that do this . . . It isn't happening now but I'm still perhaps in the mind-set of thinking that it does. So I've got to forget that. I've got to forget that. And it's got to be me. I have got to project myself.. . I've got to make it for myself rather than expect people to.

In both telling the story and having it reflected back, participants were able to hear it differently. They were able to stand outside the story, and identify what they wanted to work on in order to deal more effectively with their situation. Their analysis became the focus for the coaching sessions which followed.

5.1.4 Coaching Sessions 1 – 4

Coaching sessions were positioned as a fortnightly point of connection over a 2 month period. The choice of 4 sessions was based on experience that giving a finite number of sessions within a defined time frame accelerates learning and creates a motivation for movement that is not present when the numbers of sessions are not prescribed, or are extended over a lengthy period. It was made clear to participants that if further sessions were needed at the end of the 4 they could be contracted for. The choice would be theirs.

In reality work pressures meant that fortnightly sessions were sometimes not possible, but all sessions were completed in the period September 2011 to January 2012.

All coaching sessions were recorded with the agreement of participants.

5.1.5 Researcher Data

The transcription of recordings allowed for the collection of a full account of coaching interventions. This was supplemented by reflexive writings immediately after each session on the theme of the work and the coach's role within it. Materials from the sessions were brought to external coaching supervision with an accredited coach supervisor, as a means of examining the coach's practice and widening and deepening perspectives on the coaching work. Outputs from supervisions would then inform my coaching work. Recordings would be analysed separately to understand the purpose of coaching interventions, and reflexive writings would be examined for additional perspectives, that were not captured by analysis of the recorded voice of the coach.

5.2 Working with the Ethical Demands of the Methodology

The desire to research individuals at a point of career disjuncture, which purposively focuses on those for whom the experience has exposed vulnerability created a number of ethical challenges. There are inherent risks in a design which uses a combination of methods to encourage high levels of disclosure and reflection. The work was conducted within organisations, so that political issues on the implications for involvement and organisational motivations for involvement cannot be ignored. I attempted to overcome these by conducting the coaching sessions outside of the organisational premises. This was

intended to provide a sense of safety for the individual, and to avoid my having any contact with the organisational sponsor. In presenting the project to the organisational sponsor I had asked that they confirm that involvement in the project would have no implications for the individual's career, and was not being proposed as a means of encouraging them to leave their employment.

The potential risks for the integrity of this piece of work were considerable, and the common precept of ethical codes of practice to 'do no harm', only partially addressed my responsibilities.

As a starting point, the nature of the project invoked the ethics which shape coaching practice. Adhering to the precepts of the EMCC (EMCC 2011), I have a professional responsibility not to act outside of my areas of technical competence and to recognise where my limits have been reached. The initial process of exploring with a potential participant their involvement could unearth psychological issues which made their involvement inappropriate, or such issues may emerge in the process of the research. This required both that I understood the forms of support available to the individual within their organisational setting and that I could identify alternative private sources of counselling/psychotherapy. Mindful of my own competence throughout the project also required that I seek professional supervision of coaching undertaken within the research.

The extension of responsibility into a duty of care (Costley and Gibbs 2006) moved attention beyond "ensuring the physical, social and psychological wellbeing of research participants is not adversely affected by the research" (British Sociological Association 2002: 2) to an active concern for the participant's wellbeing. The negotiation of consent and the offering of withdrawal at any stage was an insurance policy, but did not address the ethics of the dynamic that was being created. I was creating a project which asked that I act as both coach and researcher, and where the skills of the coach in building trust,

rapport and empathy encourage self-disclosure and a deepening self-awareness which may not be in the interests of the individual. Recognising that "the relationship between caring and knowing is complex and involves a constant reflective process" (Costley et al 2010: 43) supported the importance of reflexivity as a challenge on my actions, and the importance of on-going reflective work by participants, feeding into the coaching process, as a means of checking the impact of the process I had created. The research was framed as a cooperative engagement, which accepted that the research process had consequences for the individuals involved which would inform the process as it developed, and which could limit or change what was achieved.

Central to the duty of care was the responsibility of 'phronesis' (Costley and Gibbs op. cit: 93) which asked that I use wisdom in my approach to the creation and use of knowledge. The responsibility of this was to act with virtuous intent and to not view participants as instruments to achieving my goal. The intended outcome of this work is my own development as a practitioner, but also that it produces outcomes which support my financial wellbeing. The danger of this duality was that I saw the project and thereby the participants as a means to an end, with the inherent danger that my treatment of both participants, and of the data was shaped by my desired outcomes. Habermas' caution that "knowledge and interest are one" (Habermas 1968: 314) was salutary, since it cautioned me to question myself as to in whose interest was the means by which the research was being undertaken, and to address that tension at every stage of the process. I sought to do this, by consciously positioning myself as the coach during the data gathering phase, and bracketing the researcher in me, until the coaching relationship was completed.

A duty of care means caring for those that are researched beyond their role as informants. The process described in Figure 1 was predicated on the implicit belief that there would be

benefit to the individuals through their involvement in terms of heightened self-awareness, increased resilience and thereby the ability to take action. However, the research outcomes may not support that hypothesis. Meeting a responsibility of care was I believed, best addressed by positioning the project as a mutual exploration, without signalling any expectation of research outcomes.

As a practitioner researcher I would be working with what the participant brought to the coaching space and must be responsive to their data, rather than looking to bring their data within the bounds of my methodology. The EMCC code (EMCC op cit) asks that I work with the coaching relationship only as long as is necessary for the client. The methodology I proposed offered a pre-set number of sessions, but these could prove too few or too many. In terms of a duty of care, I wanted to be open to sessions being curtailed or extended in line with the agreed contract of the coaching focus. This could have implications for the purity of research methodology, but it sat more comfortably within my professional practice.

5.3 Method of Analysis

5.2.1 Thematic Analysis

General reading on means of interpreting qualitative materials (Denzin and Lincoln 2003, Denzin and Lincoln 2005) had led me initially to grounded theory and the work of Strauss and Corbin (1990 op. cit.), because of its flexibility in being usable across a range of disciplines. The appeal of grounded theory for a project of this type was immediate. It starts from the lived experience of research participants, and brings the researcher closer to the issues which people experience (Glaser and Strauss 1967). It does not demand any preconceived hypothesis. It allows for the collection of data in diverse ways, and opens up

avenues for others to build on by generating theory rather than verifying it (Glaser and Strauss 1992). Its' discipline of line by line coding also acts to prevent the researcher leaping to assumptions, and keeps the focus on the subject's perspective.

The structure offered by grounded theory appeared to offer an anchor for examining the material, and taking me step by step through the analytical process. However, once the decision was made to work with only 2 cases, its underlying rationale of building theory bottom up, was removed. I could not develop theory on the basis of this sample size. I was, however, still reluctant to let go of its methods as it provided a means by which I could manage the data. I looked towards the constructivist grounded theory approach presented by Charmaz (1990, 2000 op cit). I was attracted by her focus on the mutual creation of knowledge between the viewer and viewed, and the focus on interpretative understanding of subjects' meaning (Guba and Lincoln 1994, Schwandt 1994), but I misinterpreted her claims that grounded theory does not have to follow rigid procedures, as implying that I could use the method without following its underlying premise of theory building. My study could not meet the grounded theory criteria of theoretical saturation (Weed 2009). I had entered the project from a grounded theory premise of holding no pre-conceptions of what I might discover (Weed:ibid), but in choosing to work with a small scale comparative case study method, I had removed the possibility of using grounded theory as the basis for analysis." I was trying to cherry-pick those aspects of grounded theory that were usable, whilst ignoring fundamental flaws in my approach. I needed to start again.

What I was looking to grounded theory to provide was a means of managing data, of enabling me to take many hours of transcripts and reduce them into codes and categories that could then be used for understanding shifts in thinking, for change in narratives, for

processes at play and for comparison between the two case studies. Those needs could be met legitimately by thematic analysis, as it offers "an accessible and theoretically flexible method for qualitative analysis" (Braun and Clarke op cit: 78). It would allow me to identify, analyse and report themes within the data openly, rather than attempting to conduct a selective 'grounded theory lite' approach. I would be conducting an inductive analysis where I was not trying to code the data into any pre-existing coding frame based on a theoretical position (Patton 1990), and without carrying the grounded theory core expectation of generating theory. While thematic analysis has been criticised for being merely descriptive, it can do more than describe. I would be analysing the data at a latent theme level, which went beyond the semantic content of the data to identify "underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations" (Boyatzis, op cit:13). Thematic analysis could provide me with a means of structuring my analysis, without risking over claiming what I had achieved.

Conclusion.

In this chapter I have laid out the process by which I attracted participants, my justification for working with a sample of 2, the means for collecting written and spoken narratives, and how I participated in the collection of data, through placing my own interventions as part of the data set. I also positioned thematic analysis as the most appropriate method for analysing data, since it provided a valid structure for working with case study material.

Having invited participants to tell their story as a central part of the work, I decided before analysing their data, to examine my own learning from the loss and regaining of resilience. I used psychotherapy sessions as the means of doing so, and reflected on those sessions in

the context of their relevance for this study. In the next chapter I share my resilience stories and the insights that came from that process.

Chapter 6

Telling Resilience Stories

Introduction

The argument that any piece of research includes a 'me' that connects with the topic of choice, an 'us' that is the aim of contributing to professional practice and a 'them' that is the desire or requirement to contribute to academic thinking (Reason and Marshall op cit) made me aware that despite registering for a professional doctorate, the 'them' had loomed largest in my concerns. The 'us' I saw as an outcome of meeting the requirements of 'them' and the 'me' was a silent voice. Not that the 'me' was absent, but that I had failed to see it as a legitimate voice to be heard. It was offstage, directing my energy, but without stepping into the spotlight. Allowing the 'me' a space enabled me to acknowledge that the topic of resilience was not an accidental choice. It resonated with my own struggles, and opened up consideration of what of myself I was bringing to the subject, and what I had learned through my own experience of resilience and its loss.

I proposed that participants write their own narratives on their resilience. In terms of my personal ethics, it seemed appropriate therefore to write my own. If I was putting myself into the process as a coach, I should know where I stood in terms of my own resilience, so that the work would focus on their issues, and my own needs would not be confused with those of my participants. Beyond, taking a professional ethics stance of not getting in the way of participants, I wanted to understand if there was more that work on the self could bring. At an empathic level, a deeper awareness of resilience, could enhance what I noticed in my participants' data. Drawing on the principles of auto-ethnography, critical reflexivity about the writing self is a valuable creative and analytic practice, because it

evokes new questions about the self and subject (Richardson, 2003 op cit). As an insider researcher my experience could potentially add to the learning outcomes, rather than being a contaminant.

Before writing my account, I decided to create space to talk about my experiences with another person who could help me make sense of my stories. Someone who could help me hear them. I decided that an exploration of resilience through using my own experience, within a therapeutic relationship would deepen my understanding of the phenomena. I sought an experienced psychotherapist because I was clear that I did not want a coach who would use discussion to drive action. What I wanted was the opportunity to examine one aspect of my being in a safe and confidential environment. The psychotherapist agreed to this contract, and we met 6 times. The stories which follow in this chapter are stories which I talked about in my sessions with her. The day after the sessions began; I started a journal where I reflected on my conversations with her. That journal shaped the stories I have chosen to recount and the learning I took from them.

6.1 Putting the writing in a wider context

Writing has always been a natural activity for me. As an introvert, it has allowed me the time to shape my thinking, so the opportunity to write my own narrative was an attractive one. It is important, however, in presenting these stories that I do not present them as 'the truth'. Narrative is a means by which we can make sense of events, but it cannot claim to tell the truth, rather it is about "how protagonists interpret things". (Bruner 1990, 51). Equally, the timing of the writing shapes the truth as I see it. Writing, as I do, in this chapter, of my experience of being a 7 year old, the account is shaped by the stories others have told me, by the fragments which I remember which have been polished over the

years, and by how I see myself in relation to that event 50 years on. I am imposing a new order on experience, because I am doing so through the lens of resilience. I am shaping my identity through the way in which I choose to tell these stories (Rosenwald and Ochberg 1992 op cit). Narratives are often defined as having a beginning, middle and an end, but what strikes me in writing these stories is that they have no end, because they are constantly rewritten. The starting point remains the same, but what follows changes as I change in relation to that event. The perspective of the Personal Narrative Group captures how I see my own narratives.

"When talking about their lives, people lie sometimes, forget a lot, exaggerate, become confused and get things wrong. Yet they are revealing truths. These truths don't reveal the past 'as it actually was', aspiring to a standard of objectivity. They give us instead, the truths of an experience. Unlike the Truth of the scientific ideal, the truth of personal narratives are neither open to proof nor self-evident" (1989: 261).

Had I written my stories, 6 months before or 6 months later they could be different. That they are written as they are is a result of the influence of writers on narrative, in particular the work of Ellis and Bochner (2000 op. cit) and Richardson (1997 op.cit, 2003 op.cit). Ellis and Bochner had introduced me to the idea of autoethnography, of the legitimacy of the researcher making connections between the personal and the subject of research, and the reality that the researcher is never an outside observer (Hayano 1982). They directed me to personal accounts by researchers, where their own stories were made available to their readers, as part of their research focus (Mukaia 1989; Jago 1996), so that the 'me' was an integral part of the 'them'. Richardson opened up the idea of writing as a method of

discovery, where rather than focussing on 'writing up' as the output of the research process, the process of writing could become a dynamic part of the research. Richardson described research accounts where the researcher's own story is a supplement to the traditional methodology chapter, and where the researcher's writing is interspersed with that of the researched.

In presenting these accounts, I recognise that my writing is not clean. I am recounting these stories after having explored the literature on resilience. Inevitably, my account calls on what I now believe to be true about resilience, it shapes what I have included and what I have omitted. My accounts will be limited by that knowledge in that I will have edited out aspects which challenge what I now already believe I know. By framing them as stories I have imposed an order and shape on them, for the benefit of the reader. I want them to be readable, and so I am as much editor as I am author. But in acknowledging those limitations, a postmodern reading would not discount my accounts. It both recognises the "situational limitations of the knower" (Richardson 2003 op. cit: 508), and allows that in every telling of the story, there is still a" knowing of something, without knowing everything" (Richardson ibid: 508), and that my subjectivity is "shifting and contradictory, not stable, fixed, rigid" (Richardson ibid: 509). These accounts simply reflect where I am now in my understanding of the phenomena of resilience.

6.2 Resilience: Multiple Stories

The opening story is the one that catalysed my interest in the subject as the focus of a project. It came from my work with a client, who I had worked with over several years. Someone, whose story I thought I knew, but where the opening up of the partiality of my

understanding prompted me to question myself and to recognise the complexity of the issue of resilience.

6.2.1 The Professional Story

I had known Andy* for 5 years. I met him as a young talented economist within the Treasury. He had moved into his first management role, and had a reputation for upsetting people by the use of an intellectually aggressive manner, applied regardless of the seniority of the other person. He had received an appraisal rating that indicated something must be done, and I had been asked to work with him. The person I met was in his early 30's, shorter than average, with an open, friendly face and a strong North East accent. He had an obvious love of his area of expertise. He was well aware that he could upset people, but his primary focus was on how he could influence outcomes and be a good team leader. He encouraged his team to feedback to him on his performance, was responsive to their feedback and anxious in every session to learn something that he could take back into his work with them. Over time we were able to explore what prompted those aggressive outbursts. He came to understand that the response was evoked by a feeling that he was responsible for getting things right even when his area of control was limited. By placing himself within the system as it operated, he was able to start recognising the limits of control and not set himself up as the one fighter for justice. He was able to look at himself from others' perspectives and understand how they experienced him. He worked hard on himself. He valued the coaching process and made me as a coach feel valued.

His career reward was to be offered a Director level role in the Department of Health: a role which excited him. To be involved in the development of healthcare strategy, to have

a larger team reporting to him, to work more closely with government ministers seemed perfect. Yet, the potential of the role was not realised. He struggled in the early days with being able to recruit the right staff, and became focussed on battling the HR systems to prove them wrong. He was in conflict with long serving staff who held different expectations of their role than he did. We spent many sessions working through particular difficulties, but while we were working at the micro-level, macro-level changes were occurring. A change of government meant a fundamentally different approach to the NHS was being proposed. A role with responsibility for strategy became devalued when a new agenda was imposed, and those aspects of strategy he and his team had been working on were swept away. Suddenly he was only one player in a much larger landscape, scrabbling to find a foothold that would allow him to still be engaged with the main players. He went to his boss looking for support, and whatever was offered he saw as inadequate. He became increasingly angry with his boss, but also with the team he led. He came to see them as not delivering what he needed in order to be credible with his senior colleagues. Sessions became focussed on helping him to rebalance himself, on trying to widen his perspective. As a coach I felt that my work was in enabling him to go out the door and deal with the world that day. It felt piecemeal, as though we were not addressing what was driving his responses, but it provided him with enough armour to get through. It felt dissatisfying, but I was not sure why.

Then the phone rang, his PA rang to say he had gone on sick leave and would be away for a while. She would say no more. I knew he had had a bout of ME in an earlier work stage, which had taken him away from work for 2 months. I suspected it had reoccurred. Periodically, I checked if he was back, and the guarded responses told me something serious had happened. I asked for a note to be forwarded to him to let him know I was

thinking of him. When the phone rang from his office to say he was coming back on a staged return, and would I meet with him, I was relieved. The Andy I met was pale and thinner. He spoke of having had another bout of ME, but that this time he had decided the task was about more than resting until he could get back to work. He had realised that there was something fundamentally wrong with how he was living his life and his work, and he had started to address it. He had received some CBT sessions during his time away. He had taken caffeine out of his diet. He had joined a book club specifically in order not to be with people who only talked 'Westminster'. Most significantly for him, he had got in touch with friends and let them know he was ill, allowing them to help him; an opening up of vulnerability, he had not previously allowed. What he said he wanted from me, was to work with him during his transition back to ensure he did not slip into his previous ways, and to hold onto what he had learnt during his time away.

The sessions developed into an exploration of what had been happening during those months when we had been working together, and I had been unaware of the depth of his unhappiness. We looked again at his relationships with his boss and his team, and he was able to see that he had asked for what could not be delivered, and ignored the stresses they were also experiencing. We talked more about his childhood and the expectations he had placed on himself to succeed. He opened up about how he had been living during those months before he became physically ill. He had withdrawn from social contact with others, because he felt he was not fun to be around. He had created a rigorous timetable around physical exercise because it enabled the possibility of sleep. He rarely slept. I suggested that the ME could be seen as a form of burn-out and gave him a book to read on the topic. He devoured it, and recognised himself in the accounts of able professionals who developed strategies for driving themselves to succeed which ultimately undermined

them. Gradually, the word resilience came into our conversations. How he had lost access to it, and how he could rebuild it. We became fascinated by the issue of his resilience, and how he could use what he had learnt to move forward with his life. By the time he returned full time to his job he was reporting that he had never worked more effectively, and that he was having an impact that had not been available to him before. He had got himself to where he wanted to be, but he had also realised that he no longer wanted to be there. Our last sessions were focussed on his leaving and thinking how he could allow those aspects of himself he had lost contact with to have more space in his future. He wanted to see if by allowing in the new, he would create a totally different future, or find a way of integrating it with the old. We used our last session to identify all those things which he had learnt from the past year, and which he did not want to lose in whatever future he created. I wrote those insights to him in a letter to be opened when he returned from a period away travelling, when he felt that he risked becoming anxious about 'what next?'

It was the experience of working with Andy that prompted my desire to understand more about resilience. Andy does not form part of the research project, but without him the project would not have developed.

6.2.2 An alternative version

In writing an account of my working relationship with Andy, I realised it was just one account. It held truths but there were other truths that were available to me that I edited out of my first version. I presented an identity as a professional coach, when there were other identities also at play in my interest in Andy. In the same way that clients bring an

initial story that expands allowing different perspectives, as they come to trust the listener, my work with Andy held multiple stories. I initially created a story about a coach looking to develop her practice, prompted by the needs of a valued client. There is another story that is as much a part of the 'me', a coach whose own resilience was impacted by her identification with her client.

Andy is a working class boy from the North East. He talks with a strong accent. He is visibly different from the privately educated economists who surround him in the Treasury. He is the council estate boy made good. The only child in a working class family, where his father died young and he was brought up by a single parent for many years. He was the bright boy who not only went to University but went to Oxford. He was successful in his studies, but uncomfortable in the environment and turned down the opportunity to stay on; instead choosing a red-brick university to complete his Masters. He saw those he worked with at the Treasury as a 'boys club', that he did not want to be part of, while still envying their social ease. He is in his 30's living alone. Although he has had relationships, he has not had one for some years. He works hard, and invests enormous parts of himself in his work. While he lives in the world of Westminster, he goes back frequently to his family, and friends. He holidays with those he was at school with.

I am a working class girl, brought up in Liverpool by a single mother after the early death of my father. I am not an only child. I am the girl who does better than anyone imagines she would, To go to University is unknown in my family, and while my results would have allowed me to go to Oxbridge, I made my choice on the basis of geography. At University, I see how different my life is from those around me. I come from the world where people

come for tea not dinner parties. We go on holiday to caravans in Wales, not abroad. A whole range of life experiences which rest on income have been denied me. I cling in friendship to those whose lives in some ways mirrored my own, ashamed of what I do not have, and resenting those who do. My relationships are short-lived until my mid-30's. I retain strong links with my extended family,

From this distance, I can see that I identified with his story, transferring onto him the feelings that I associated with my own childhood. It meant that as a coach I vicariously shared in his successes. It also meant that when his resilience failed him, I felt exposed. Exposed as a coach – how had I who understood and shared his story, not been aware of what was happening for him? How had he not felt safe enough to share with me how he was living his life? Had my sense of connection with his story, blinded me, in a way it would not have done if our stories were dissimilar? I felt I had failed him. I should have both seen what was coming and been able to help him prevent it. I shared these feelings in coaching supervision, but without acknowledging the depth of identification that shaped my response.

When he returned to work, there was a part of me that felt de-skilled. He had learnt so much about himself during his time away, and I had had no part in it. On reflection, I had offered him support to do better, but I had not equipped him to do it alone. In his time away he had faced himself alone, and decided that he did not like what he had created. In facing the reality of his life, he had reconnected with some core values, and begun to see new possibilities. By the time we met again, he had done much of the work. I was doing catch up. His resilience had begun to return, and I acted as a mirror to help him see more

clearly what he was doing that was enabling him to get himself back into balance, in order to move forward.

*Andy is not his real name.

6.3 My Resilience Stories

The remaining stories relate to my own learning in therapy. By reflecting on times of difficulty when my resilience had been lost or was available to me, I was able to develop my thinking in ways which then informed the project. The stories are ones which explore the presence of resilience, its absence and a false resilience which provides coping strategies but limits growth.

6.3.1 Fragile Resilience

I am 7 years old, a quiet introspective child, adored by a father who is not able to realise his potential, because of his class and education. He has high expectations of me. I am the oldest of 3. My mother is caring but no-nonsense and practical. My father has been taken into hospital. He has a fever which isn't responding to treatment. My brother and I are sent to stay with my grandmother. My youngest sister stays with my mother. I am aware of hushed voices and whisperings at my grandmother's house. My cousin who is a year older than me is crying but won't say why. Days later we return home. My father isn't there, but no mention is made of it. I go into the back-garden to play with my brother and our next door neighbour Susan. As we play she says, "Your Daddy is dead". I reply, "No he isn't, he's in hospital". She says it again. I scream. My mother rushes out to find out what is happening. I cry out "Susan says Daddy's dead". My mother's face expresses horror.

She says nothing for a moment, and then says “Come inside”. In tears she tells me the truth, he is dead. He died while we were at my Grandmothers. I hate Susan.

I watch relatives not knowing how to deal with the grief of a child. They offer me money and presents. I do not feel appreciative. Even as a 7 year I know a toy is no substitute for my father. Over the next days they disappear, and then the pattern emerges. Little is said about him. Life goes back into a normal pattern. We are taken on a holiday to stay with old neighbours of my mother, American army personnel now based in Suffolk. I know it is a reward because my Daddy had died.

When I go back after the summer I am in the Junior School. No reference is made to the fact that my father has died over the holidays. The teacher never calls me aside to ask if I am OK. I become quieter. I make no fuss, I do my work. I tell no-one about my father. If they ask, I say he has gone away. I dream he will come back, or that a prince will come in his place. I rarely show my sadness to my mother. She has so much to cope with, an 18 month old baby, a 4 year old who can’t sleep because of his upset. I am the big girl. When I look around the house there are no pictures of my father. Taken down because they might upset us. I discover his dressing gown in the wardrobe, and smell it to remind me of him. I miss that male figure who made me feel special, who made me feel I could do whatever I wanted. I find him again in a teacher 2 years later, who gives me attention. I work hard for him, and see myself moving up the seats in the classroom as my performance on weekly tests improves. By the end of the year I am in the top seat.

My mother does a great job. She brings us up well. She devotes herself to us. Friends and family comment on how well she has done. No one would know that we have so little, or that she is doing it all by herself. We are a credit to her. She always uses as her benchmark "What would Len want?" We never mention him on his birthday – I even come to forget the date. She never mentions their wedding anniversary. I don't know the date of his death, and even the cause of it is unexplained. We get by.

We are a strong family unit. We are to the outside world resilient, but I feel like I am living inside a shell. We are protected by her, a tigress, who is determined that we will be OK, but I feel constantly vulnerable. A question which catches me off guard cracks the protection. Invitations to other family homes opens up the realisation that lives are different when there is a male presence. The fear that not having a father aligns me with Lesley, the smelly girl in the class, who everyone knows has never had a father. My lack of understanding when Judith tells me she and her brother are sent to Sunday school so her parents can have some time in the bedroom. I worry about what people think of me because I don't have a father. I don't want them to pity me, so I start stealing small sums of money from my mother's purse to buy sweets for friends. Finances are so tight, my mother notices the missing pennies and I stop.

My purpose becomes doing well for my father. Doing something he would be proud of. I work hard to get good exam results. I know I can have a different future to my mother's because of education. I know I will never be left as financially vulnerable as she was. I am protected but I am not resilient.

6.3.2 Resilience Lost

While the death of my father had been the defining event in my life, it is also true that my life has been defined by work. It seemed important, therefore, to examine my resilience in the context of work, and in particular, a time when I lost my resilience, since that is the context of this project.

I am 53 years old. I have established my own business as a coach and trainer, and after a period of sporadic work because of parenting, I am again growing my practice. A friend introduces me into a biotechnology company, where I design and run a management programme. It has gone well and I am invited to meet with the Research Division of the company in Holland. They are wanting to introduce a management programme for research scientists. An initial meeting where I facilitate the senior team in considering the difference they are looking for, feels successful, and I return to the UK to draw together their thoughts and to present a solution. I speak with the OD Director the day before my return visit, and notice his emphasis on making my presentation practical, but dismiss his concerns as 'fussing'. I begin my presentation, summarising what they had told me in our first meeting under key themes, and suggest a number of ways forward. I notice the increasing agitation of the HR Director: a man often described as 'difficult' by colleagues. He begins to challenge me, pushing me to give them the answer, and I feel my brain freeze as the attention of the room turns on me. The OD Director comes in at times in support of me, but it feels like a parent protecting a child from the anger of an irate adult. I am diminished by his protection. The HR Director suddenly stands up and disappears from the room. He does not return. The meeting dribbles to a close, with no decisions made, and I feel myself wanting to slide out of the room, making myself as small as possible. In the debrief after the meeting my failure to manage the session hangs unspoken in the air. The

OD Directors tells me that the HR Director has a migraine. It is an explanation, but it does not comfort me, and I return home deflated, and not knowing what will happen next.

Two days later a colleague calls, she has been contacted by the OD Director and asked if she would consider taking on the project, as the HR Director does not have confidence in me. She is uncomfortable in discussing it with him, without my knowing of her involvement, and understanding my side of the story. She is totally professional in her approach, and while we speak I am equally professional. When the call ends, I feel sick. I am a total failure. How could I have not read the situation and its requirements? Why was no one honest with me? I spend days running thoughts around my head about my own inadequacies and my lack of credibility. My stomach is constantly in a knot. My sleep is intermittent. After nearly 2 weeks, I awake with a new thought. Just as my friend behaved professionally with me, I want to behave professionally with them. I don't want to run away and hide, I want to face the situation head on. I request a phone call with the HR Director, and get no response. I decide to take the initiative and call him. He is clearly taken off-guard. I begin by stating that the meeting had not gone well, and that I understood that he had now asked my colleague to take the project over, I just wanted to confirm that that was the way forward. He becomes flustered, offering reassurances about how much they value the work I have done for them, stating that nothing is personal. I stay firm, not getting hooked by his reassurances into feeling like a child being placated, but focus on saying I would like to have been told of the decision, rather than hearing it second hand. The conversation continues with much repeating of reassurances. As I feel his discomfort grow, I feel my confidence returning, and I seize the moment. I state that I would like to be paid for the time I have already given to the project. He leaps on the request, and asks me how much time I have spent. Without any questions he agrees to

pay me generously for the time I have given. The phone call ends. I feel myself having returned to my normal size. The knot has disappeared.

Looked at from a distance, I see that my resilience is strongly attached to my work identity. That knowing that I had failed in the assignment ripped my confidence away from me, because my sense of confidence was based on my work being valued by others. My thoughts then became dominated by messages of my own inadequacy. That one event came to stand proxy for my whole value as a person. All perspective was lost. Without the modelling of the colleague who was willing to be honest with me, I would have slunk away, avoiding future contact with the client, as a means of protecting myself from pain. My regaining of resilience came in the moment that I acknowledged my right to be treated openly, honestly and fairly, and in my facing what I feared rather than hiding from it.

6.3.3 Standing with Resilience

In my final story, I return to the death of a parent; this time examining why the death of my mother allowed me to stay with my resilience. It was important to me to recognise what enabled me to stay resourceful at a time of stress, in order to acknowledge what sustains access to resilience, as much as what causes its' loss.

I am 57 years old standing at baggage reclaim at Belfast City Airport when the phone rings. It is my sister. Through the background noise of the airport, I hear her say that my mother has only days to live. The kidney failure which had taken her in and out of hospital was no longer responding to treatment, and when prompted, the consultant had admitted that

the end of her life was near. It is both expected and unexpected. I have rehearsed her death since childhood. As a child any illness evoked feelings of terror in me. I would refuse to go into her bedroom when she was ill because of the fear that she might be dead. I felt angry with her whenever she had to take to her bed. The fear that she too would leave me had always been present. She had not left me. She had lived to 83 years old surviving multiple major health problems, and yet she had always come through. She always wanted to be there for us, so even in hearing the bleak statement of her mortality, there was a sense of disbelief. In the last few months, her trips to hospital had become more frequent, once she rejected the idea of dialysis. I spent more time with her. We had had a golden day together only weeks previously, where I took her in a wheelchair back to the haunts of my childhood. We walked along the promenade remembering happy times, and noticing what had changed in the intervening years. I took her to a restaurant and enjoyed watching her eat greedily for the first time in weeks. We did not speak of her death, but she covertly acknowledged it in insisting I take some money for my 11 year old son, so that he would have the same gift as had his cousins when they reached 21. Days later when she is in hospital again, I had asked her if she was scared of death. She said, “No, I am ready to die, but I don’t want to leave you all”. We both start to weep.

The next day in Belfast, I compartmentalise the news I had heard, and do my work. When I return home, I prepare to set off North. The woman I see on the hospital bed is unrecognisable from the woman I had seen weeks earlier. She is now on the care path towards death, asleep for much of the time, but agitated whenever she wakes. She seems to recognise me, but I cannot be sure. My brother and sister have taken turns sitting with her at night, now it is my turn. We agree that we do not want her to die in hospital, and

persuade the hospital to set in motion the procedures so that we can get her home quickly. As we bring her back into her home, she speaks her last words “I am happy now”.

The next 48 hours are important ones for us all. We are able to be with her whenever we want. We cry with each other, eat little and drink too much. Visitors come and go. We create a false sense that this could go on forever, and it would be fine. We can care for her, as she has cared for us.

As she lies resting I read to her Psalm 26 as it that captures how she has lived her life, and the importance of her faith.

Vindicate me, LORD,
for I have led a blameless life;
I have trusted in the LORD
and have not faltered.
Test me, LORD, and try me,
examine my heart and my mind;
for I have always been mindful of your unfailing love
and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness.

She squeezes my hand in response.

I lay beside her bed all night, falling asleep as dawn breaks, and waking with a start 2 hours later. As I do so, I noticed her breathing has changed and go into the next room to wake my sister. When we came back into the room she has died.

In the days that follow, we work as a unit, organising her funeral, each doing what we can do best, and all concerned that we give her a funeral that reflects the way she lived her life, and the diverse qualities she brought to it. In grief, I am conscious of how much I owe to her, and how glad I am that she died when she did. She was spared any more pain, and she had done everything that she had committed to doing when my father died.

In the weeks that follow, my brain is at times befuddled, but never do I feel I cannot cope. I feel her as part of me that cannot be lost. I feel supported by her.

Why is this experience of death so different? Of course, I am now a woman, with 50 years more experience to call on, but it is more than that. The death of my father continues to evoke real sadness in me. It is a wound that has never healed, there continues to be a fragility in my response to it. The shell can still easily be cracked. The death of my mother heightened my sense of my own resilience. Where one evokes a sense of what could have been, the other evokes a sense of thankfulness for what was. As a child I felt alone in my grief, as an adult I felt supported by my siblings. As a child I felt that my whole world had collapsed, and that his death was the defining event of my life. As an adult, my mother was one part of my life. As a child I could make no sense of what had happened to him, as an adult her death made sense in terms of providing relief for what had become untenable to her, and that her life's work had been done. As a child his death felt like a shameful secret that separated me from others, and therefore it was easier to deny its' reality. As an adult, death is an experience shared with one's peer group. Her death made me the head of my family, it asked that I step into a new role, and I was ready for it. As a child I was expected to be the big girl, when I wanted to be taken care of. As an adult her death, provided a taking stock point, the opportunity to review what is important and to make changes based on the insights gained. As a child uninvited changes were forced on me,

which could only be seen as bringing loss. When I think of her death, I don't think of grief, I think of gratitude.

6.4 Learnings from Psychotherapy

As the psychotherapy sessions continued, I explored my resilience in respect of other life events and current challenges. Through doing so I became clearer on what takes away my resilience and what supports it. I became more aware that the 'faux resilience' which got me through childhood is caused by my not facing reality. As a child others did not want me to face reality, as a means of attempting to offer protection. As an adult, 'faux resilience' is a self-imposed coping strategy, which attempts to protect the self from pain, through denying the situation or diverting attention away from it. Yet it was at those times that I faced reality head on and learnt to live with the pain, that my creativity became engaged, I was able to find a sense of purpose, and with it came the persistence to succeed.

The sessions reinforced awareness of the centrality of work to my sense of self, and my vulnerability to losing resilience when I experience myself as failing. At those moments, I become taken over by repetitive self-punishing thoughts which question my worth, which leave me feeling powerless and incite an instinct to flee. It is only when I reclaim the self by accessing other parts of me, that I am able to reposition the current challenge and access different thoughts, and from this new actions.

In reviewing my resilience, in a variety of situations, I came to realise that my resilience deserts me when I lose access to something that is central to my sense of self. In childhood

it was a sense of being loved and secure. In adulthood it is not work in itself which is the source of resilience; it is what work represents to me. It provides me with a sense of confidence borne of witnessing my expertise in action. It also provides a sense of safety. The message from childhood that "You must never be left in a situation where you cannot financially support yourself" means that paid work provides a means of feeling safe. Work has come to stand proxy for those things which were taken away from me in childhood: a father who reflected his confidence in me as the daughter who would do well, and who provided a sense of security and safety. That my resilience stayed intact with my mother's death was a reflection of the support I was able to call on, and a sense that I was not being diminished or abandoned by her death.

Conclusions

The experience of examining my own resilience added important insights for my working with my participants. It drew me to become engaged with the importance of listening for the story they brought with them, rather than simply listening to the story they told. What identity were they signalling in the telling of their resilience story? What core part of them was challenged by what had happened to them? What need was not met by the situation they now found themselves in? What was not available to them that they needed access to in order to feel resilient? How did they usually get that need met, and was that a healthy way? What reality did they need to face in order to be able to access different resources within themselves? What other parts of themselves could they call on to help them in regaining resilience? My own experience of psychotherapy had made me understand how losing access to a need which I saw as central to my resilience destabilised me. That recognition gave me a filter through which I could look to understand the other's story. I had also come to recognise that holding resilience did not have to rely on those needs

being provided by another person, and that it was possible to regain resilience without the perceived need being met, if one was prepared to face reality. That learning could be used within my work with my participants.

The work on my own resilience positioned me to be ready to examine my participant's data. In the next two chapters I report on the outcomes from applying thematic analysis to participant data in respect of their written narratives and movement within coaching sessions, before analysing my own data to understand the role the coach played in the process.

Chapter 7

Analysis of the Written Narratives

Introduction

This chapter reports on analysis of the initial written resilience narrative, the extension of narrative within a coaching diagnostic conversation, and the contribution of writing throughout the coaching contact, which culminated in a final narrative written following the ending of coaching. Analysis of the final narrative allows for consideration of the question as to how far their resilience narrative has changed.

Themes from the Written Narratives

The key themes explored in this chapter that emerged from analysis of the written work and the exploration of that work in a diagnostic session are:

- The identification of an identity that had been challenged by the disruptive event.
- Unearthing of the resource(s) needed to rebuild resilience which provided the focus for coaching
- The missed opportunity in the use of inter-sessional writings
- The role of the final narrative as a measure of the degree to which a new story had emerged to support resilience going forward

7.1 The Participants

As reported in Chapter 5 the decision was made to base this project on intensive work with 2 participants. Those individuals were initially identified by client organisations, and the individuals openly acknowledged that a career disruption was impacting on their sense of self efficacy.

Participant 1: C

C is a male in his mid-fifties working as a senior civil servant in a Central Government department He has a lifetime career in the public sector, largely in policy roles, with the exception of one foray into operational work when he worked as a Prison Governor. That experience was short lived and he quickly returned to policy work. He saw himself as someone who has always done good work and been sponsored into new roles because of the quality of his contribution. A restructuring of the department was meaning that his role was to be removed, and he knew that within a year he would need to find a new role. This would probably be his last before retirement. The immediate cause of his upset, and the reason he volunteered to participate was a recent experience of having applied for a role, which he had seen himself as being eminently qualified to fill. He had not been shortlisted. His reaction to this event had been intense. He was struggling to understand how a skill set which he saw as strong had not been recognised, and was interpreting this as the end of his career.

He wrote:

"*My decisions have been undermined by the fact that I am facing an uncertain future and am not able even to be interviewed for a post where all my experience and skills would ostensibly make me well qualified. . . My feelings of confidence and self-worth have taken a knock. I am particularly sore about the X application, which I regard (rightly or wrongly) as an example of the organisation's failure to appreciate me".*

Participant 2 J

J is a male in his early 40's working for an international bank in a specialist role. His career since graduation has been within his specialism, and he currently occupies a middle management position.

Some years ago, when working for a competitor his career had been unsettled by the arrival of a new head of function who had asserted that his function was an early career stepping stone within a banking career, not a destination. He had spoken of the specialism as being "a cesspool" which he wanted to empty. He introduced performance management measures which were seen as the means by which longer serving staff would be removed. J had moved to another organisation before he was driven out, but the experience had stayed with him. He spoke of that time as having put him "in a dark place". In the intervening years he had worked hard to overcome this setback, including a period working in Asia. He saw his career as back on track, until he heard the rumour that his previous boss was to join his current organisation, and that he would be reporting to him. At a point at which he thought he was about to be promoted, his confidence was being attacked by the fear of a repetition of the past.

When J wrote his resilience story, it was notable that story was dominated by an account of the event 6 years previously. While his career had moved on, the fear of the emergence of his former boss was making that story live once more. He wrote:

"I have a feeling of there being a dark place, which I don't ever want to revisit. . . I am afraid that he may start to influence and contaminate the thinking of my peers and the management team with regard to their view of my performance. To date at X I have

achieved a strong performance rating every year and am well regarded. I fear that this person may somehow take that away from me."

On the surface C's resilience had been knocked by one failed application and J's was being knocked by the fear of an event which may not happen. Those events did not in themselves explain the strength of the language, they used when writing their accounts. Those accounts were powerful because they hinted that something fundamental to their sense of self was being attacked, which was limiting their capacity to deal with the reality of their situation.

7.2 Analysis of initial written narrative

7.2.1 Participant C

The initial narrative was written using the structure:

- What has happened?
- When did it happen?
- Who is involved?
- What is the context in which it has happened?
- How do they understand the event – what realisation or learning has it given them?
- What thoughts do they have about themselves in relation to what has happened?
- What feelings do they have in relation to what has happened?
- How do they see their future right now?

Applying the question, "Where is the writer in relationship to their resilience?" to that initial narrative account, a thematic analysis approach of line by line coding, identification of concepts and clustering of concepts into themes was applied. A concept was identified

as a distinct position in relation to resilience. A theme was identified as a classification of .concepts, which when compared to each other, appeared to describe a similar phenomenon.

An example of concepts and their clustering into a theme is given below:

Theme	Concepts
Loyal Servant	Following orders Sacrificing mainstream career to do the right thing Retraining to broaden career Following Civil Service statements on the value of front line experience Commitment to redirecting career

Figure 7.2.1 at the end of this chapter provides a table of the concepts and themes identified in C's initial written narrative.

7.2.2 C's Story

As a reader of his account I heard a story of a loyal organisation servant who had always done what was asked of him. He had pride in his work as a public servant and in the career he had built. When the organisation said it wanted people to broaden experience into operational roles rather than being policy focussed he followed orders, in the belief it would help his career. When he was told that as a result of restructuring he would need to find a new role, he found that being a loyal servant did not serve him well. Rather than his value having been enhanced by broadening out, he experienced it as reduced. He was hard hit emotionally by this rejection, both in terms of his own beliefs about the value of his work, and by the reality of an uncertain employment market and his age. He tries to present a positive face to the world, and seeks comfort in the words of support others offer him. He clings to a belief that his boss will try and make it OK for him.

7.2.3 What Sort of Story?

Using the lens of narrative theory to ask the question, 'what sort of story is being told?', the narrative is of a retainer who is not being taken care of when he needs support. The identity which he gives himself is that of the trusting victim; a man who is being asked to pay the price for doing what was asked of him. C can be seen as being denied the care which he believes is his due, and which is central to his sense of self-worth.

7.2.4 Participant J

For J the analysis of his initial written narrative to answer the question 'where is he in relation to his resilience?' is reported in **Figure 7.2.2** at the end of this chapter.

The story I read in the initial written narrative was of a person who was dominated by a conceptualised past (Harris 2009 op.cit). He was projecting the feelings and thoughts from a previous time when his resilience was lost onto his present and future. The threat of the impending arrival of a former boss, from whom he fled, when it was made clear that his years of experience in the same role were not valued, has provoked a return of the thoughts and feelings which marked the earlier time. He has returned to a mind-set which sees flight as his likely response because, while he has evidence that others who stayed and fought, won their case, he fears that talk of fighting for himself is only bravado. He sees history as stalking him, and gives the possible new boss the power to put him back into a dark place. He feels uncertain as to his future. Already he doubts his abilities, and the possibility of gaining a further promotion. He is caught in the tension between a recognition that his earlier career 'failure' provided some valuable lessons in waking him up, provoking him into working harder and giving a stronger focus on achievement;

combined with the fear that the reappearance of the person who provoked that sense of failure will put at risk all that he has worked for in the intervening years. He remains angry.

7.2.5 What Sort of Story?

From a narrative framework this is the story of a man whose past is catching him up. The identity which he brings to that is of someone who fears facing his past because he believes he will fail again. What is unavailable to him which he believes he needs, in order to deal with this narrative, is a sense of certainty. The organisation is not offering him the career certainty of promotion he sees as protection against the future. The unseen shadowy figure of his former boss dominates the story, demolishing the certainty he thought he had refound.

7.3 The Spoken vs. the Written Story

In providing a structure for the written account, I was shaping how that story would be presented. I had invited participants who had limited previous contact with me to share their thoughts and feelings about an event which was impacting on their sense of self. It is likely that they edited their copy for public reading, with some concern to protect themselves. It was, therefore, important that I presented myself as a willing audience for their story, enabling them to hear their own voice. We could then together explore the story in more detail, opening up aspects that may have been overlooked or omitted in the desire to present a singular line of narration.

Analysis of the diagnostic coaching session produced an expanded set of themes. These are presented in Appendix 7 Tables 7.3 and 7.4.

Looking at the concepts attached to the diagnostic session, the story became richer and more complex. **Figure 7.3.1** (see end of chapter) presents additional concepts generated in the context of the identity which the participant is attaching to their narrative.

The invitation to write a narrative implicitly directs the author to focus on one identity, rather than allowing for the multiple identities which the writer may be holding simultaneously. There is an impulse in writing to create a sense of integration and to "reduce the multitude of motley information about the self to manageable personified categories" (Raggatt 2006 op. cit: 16). In bringing that story to a diagnostic session, the author is being invited to begin the process of re-authoring. The participant is invited in telling their story to begin the process of hearing it differently. In the response from the listener, and their questioning, the participant is encouraged to explore a range of feelings and multiple identities, which may be in conflict with each other. The process of telling a story to a curious listener widens the lens of attention so that the author can see themselves from different perspectives. In expanding the story they are able to recognise the position they wish to hold in the story going forward.

The outcome of the diagnostic session was a recognition that changing their story rested on changing the identity which they brought to it, because by doing so their resilience would be better supported. That recognition (as previously reported in Chapter 5) came from the coach repeating to the story's author key words in their narrative and asking them to consider how together those words positioned them within their present story. The outcome was the choice by Participant C to focus on confidence and motivation as the key to regaining resilience. For Participant J the focus for work was self-belief, and being able to deal with whatever was thrown at him.

7.4 Between Session Written Narratives

Encouraged by the evidence that repeated writings, no matter how short, had value in supporting cognitive reframing of emotionally charged experiences and boosted immune functioning (Pennebaker 1997 op cit), I asked of participants that they write an account of themselves in relation to their resilience at a mid-point between sessions. Analysis of those narratives are included as Appendix 7 Tables 7.7.1 to 7.7.5 in relation to C and Tables 7.8.1 to 7.8.5 in relation to participant J. In reality, the accounts were often not completed on the designated day, and the original instructions to the exercise were changed, (See Appendices 7.5 and 7.6.) to make the requirement more explicitly linked to their individual resilience work, as the early accounts were more often directly linked to the activities of that day, rather than to the issue of their resilience.

In analysing intersession written narratives, I looked for the degree to which they mirrored or diverted from themes of the coaching session. I was also interested whether they held a distinct purpose.

In looking at the themes of C's writings between sessions, they acted to affirm themes that had emerged in the coaching related to his capabilities. He used the narrative to report how they had been applied within work. He reported on things he was doing which signalled he was productive and could contribute, was valued and could support others even while his future was uncertain. He used the narratives to mirror identities with which he was more comfortable, and to quieten the voice which challenged his worth.

For J the first two inter-session narratives were used to offer further evidence of his failure and the dangers of believing in himself. They signalled that any apparent shift within the coaching session was not yet accepted, and he had a need to retell himself the narrative that he was familiar with. Only following the third session did the written narrative mirror adjustments to thinking he had made in the coaching session. Where C used the written narrative to quieten self-doubt, by displaying other selves, J used it to hold on tightly to the story until he was ready to accept new perspectives.

7.5 The Final Narrative

One month after the sessions were completed, the 2 participants were invited to write a final account. One participant (C) did so, the other (J) completed the narrative some 3 months later, when circumstances had changed once again. The accounts cannot therefore be read for comparative purposes.

7.5.1 C's Final Narrative

C's final narrative account (see **Figure 7.5.1** at end of chapter) showed that the circumstances of the initial story have not changed. He still does not have a secure job. Rather, he has instigated a process which could mean he will leave the organisation. However, he writes:

"I find the situation comfortable and am not concerned. Being forced to get another job is making me focus on my skills and my commitment to work. Whereas before the research study started I was negative and hurt about a specific job rejection, I am now determined to gain advantage for myself and to try very hard to succeed."

7.5.2 What is the final story?

Where the initial written narrative told a story of the loyal servant who was not cared for, this final account is of someone who is learning to live with the unknown. Where the identity was that of the victim of his own trusting nature, the identity in this final account is of someone determined to gain an advantage from uninvited change. Where he sought care from others as the means of supporting his sense of worth, in this final account he positions support of others as an adjunct to his own ability to take action and to present confidently. He presents as being able to care for himself.

7.6 J's Final Narrative

Figure 7.6.1 reports J's final narrative. In this account J is ambivalent. He describes himself as "positive about the future but also apprehensive". The event he dreaded, the re-emergence of the boss who sent him to the 'dark place' has happened. He looks to comfort himself through the evidence of an excellent appraisal, his hard work, and his being prepared for Partnership, but he remains unconvinced that this will be enough. He may be let down by direct reports and fear of history repeating itself looms large.

7.6.1 What is the Final Story?

The narrative which he brought to coaching was of the past coming back to unsettle him. The final story is of the feared past arriving. The identity which he brings to facing that reality has shifted from one of fearing failure to that of someone who while apprehensive can also recognise possibility. Where he saw the provision of certainty as the means by which his sense of self belief could be supported, he is now drawing on a sense of

perspective. He sees a commitment to doing what is needed to progress his career as the best means of supporting his self-belief.

In this final account as much as in C's while the circumstances of the story have not been reconstructed, they have both repositioned themselves as actors within it.

Conclusion

The invitation to write a loss of resilience narrative within a structure focuses the writer on the telling of a story in which they have one strong identity. It brings into sharp focus a need that is not being met, and which they see as central to their sense of self. The bringing of a story to a conversation allows for a deeper exploration of aspects of the story, for unearthing what may have been edited out or overlooked, and for framing the resilience coaching need in the language of the story's author, rather than in the language of resilience trait based psychometrics.

The distinct purpose of inter-session writings is less certain. They met diverse needs for the two participants, to either support an alternative view of self, or to scaffold the original narrative. There was little evidence of the cognitive reframing which previous writers on narrative have reported. They were used instead as an amplifier of where the individual was in relation to the construction of a new narrative, rather than as a means of doing so. The final narrative provided a means of assessing the degree to which a new story had emerged. In both cases the final narrative was less the building of a new future than the repositioning of the participant within a largely unchanging present.

The use of written narrative raises questions as to how best it can be positioned within coaching relationships addressing issues of resilience, which will be addressed in Chapter 10.

In the next chapter, the lens shifts to the content of the coaching sessions, and the process that participants used to create shifts in their narrative.

Figure 7.2.1

Initial Narrative Participant C

Theme	Concepts
Loyal Servant	Following orders Sacrificing mainstream career to do the right thing Retraining to broaden career Following Civil Service statements on the value of front line experience Commitment to redirecting career
Career Pride	Pride in career status Classic civil service career Pride in career
Emotional cost (of rejection)	Loss of confidence and self-worth Dispirited Less motivated Hurt Disappointment
Discounted value	Unappreciated Being well suited to post Having necessary skills Strong application Well qualified but discounted Experience has less value to others Other candidates stronger
Fortitude (in face of adversity)	Positive about work even when tough Forcing a positive face
Career Uncertainty	Uncertainty Age awareness Career decision undermined by present uncertainty Difficult job environment Few options
Seeking consolation	Consoled by visible support of others Boss is working to make it OK for me

Figure 7.2.2

Initial Narrative: Participant J

Theme	Concepts
Flight from difficulty	Run away vs. fighting the process Those who fought won Belief in a face down is bravado Feelings of strength I can face him Withdrawing from competition for promotion Escaped before targeted Looking for escape routes Reluctance to expose self to risk of failure
Power of Boss	Fear old boss coming back into my career Power of line manager Risk of failure in the present because of old boss Dark place is opened up by the possibility of old boss reappearing Possible reappearance is making me reappraise my work Confidence about applying for promotion is diminished Second guessing what he will want
Fear of history repeating	History is coming into the present My history follows me Past failure stays with me Old issue opened up again
A Target	Personalised target Target for being pushed out Targeted function
Changing career management message	Change of management Shift away from supporting individual careers Shift to work as stones to be stepped over
Overt vs. Covert	Overt message be independent Covert message – you are no longer wanted Remove staff

	You are part of the old organisation
Failure as prompt to action	Failure work me up Failure reinvigorated my work ethic Stayed in role too long My organisational experience was too limited Familiarity made me stale
Achievement through hard work	Working long hours to ensure achievement Importance of achieving
The Dark Place	Fear of being in the dark place again Not wanting to revisit the dark place
Reputational Risk	Risk of reputational damage Others view of me will be contaminated Fear that others view of me will be influenced by him Terrified of not being seen as a good performer Fear of performance being re-evaluated Strong track record at risk
Temporal connections	Linking experiences of failure Linking events which are separate
Anger	Anger at treatment
Uncertainty	Uncertainty about future Conflicting emotions

Figure 7.3.1

Additional Concepts Resulting from the Telling of the Resilience Story

C	J
Victim of trust is augmented by: Anger and resentment Tension between desire for support and perceived risk of doing so Disconnect between feeling valued and evidence of not being valued. Disconnect between evidence of failure vs. respect given to him as an individual Recognition of needing to make it happen for himself	**Fear of failure is augmented by:** Career passivity. Acknowledgement of his own part in previous failure Increased emotional disclosure on the impact of the failure Search for validation from others to support his sense of self Recognition of the need to challenge his own thoughts Recognition of the need to reduce dependence on others approval.

Figure 7.5.1

Participant C: Final Written Narrative

Theme	Concepts
Critical career decision making point	Dramatic developments Get another post Critical career point At risk Will decline voluntary redundancy Making a decision Staying put not an option Requested information
Support encourages me	Good will encourages me Support of colleagues Support of line manager
Letting go of negatives	Was hurt Was negative
Growing confidence	Feel more able to present well Feel more confident Focussing on my skills
Accepting uncertainty	Accept it will take time May happen soon or not Not concerned Comfortable with uncertainty of situation
Determination to succeed	Determined to gain an advantage Will try hard to succeed Want to continue Focussing on my commitment to my work
Expertise available to me	Availability of expert advice Guidance available Availability of careers advice

Figure 7.6.1

Participant J: Categories from Final Written Narrative

Theme	Concepts
Conflicting emotions	Apprehensive Everyone apprehensive Mixed emotions Should not worry Positive Plus side
Career risk of change	Change is starting Clearing out management Positive regard will evaporate Managed out Bring in cheaper labour
At risk through direct reports	Direct reports missing targets Outside my control I miss less targets Targeting
Preparing for Partnership	Opening for Partner Eligible for Partner role Develop to prepare for role Planning for Partner role Assessing self vs. criteria Identify gaps
Hard work as means of security	Working longer Working harder Increased work load Work hard as the means to security
Positive affirmation	Good feedback Still highly thought of Line manager affirmation
Destructive power of rumour	Rumour Rumoured History risks repeating itself Hypothesising

	Negative scenario building Risk of reporting to the persecutor Fear of reporting to persecutor
Limited alternatives	External job market difficult Few alternatives

Chapter 8

Analysis of Coaching Sessions

Introduction

The written accounts provided a beginning and end point for contact with the participants. Between those two points, the individuals were each involved in coaching sessions which built from identification of what was not available to support their resilience. These sessions were recorded and transcribed. This chapter reports on the analysis of those sessions using thematic analysis.

Themes from analysis of coaching sessions

While the chapter reports the themes which emerged in individual sessions, a comparison of themes across sessions highlighted meta-themes which marked the degree of progress for the individual participants from session to session, and which signal the degree to which the participant is moving on from the initial story they had created. These meta-themes are those of:

Holding	Themes related to the loss of resilience which were carried from one coaching conversation to the next.
Supporting	Themes which were carried from a previous session and provided support to the regaining of resilience.
Adjusting	Themes which repeated a theme from a previous session but took a different position. This adjustment could be either supportive or challenging to the regaining of resilience.
Exiting	Themes which are not present in a subsequent session
Braking	New themes which enter in order to slow or halt progress

Entering New themes which bring in thoughts, feelings or behaviours which the individual believes will support resilience.

8.1 Analysing their coaching data

Each participant generated 10 hours of recorded material. Those recordings were divided between an initial diagnostic coaching session at which their initial written narrative was explored and a coaching focus was agreed, followed by 4 sessions during which developing resilience resources was the focus of the work. Sessions were transcribed following each session, but the transcriptions were not generally available before the following session. When the sessions were completed, each of the transcripts was read and reread to understand the broad narrative within each session, and as a whole. Sessions were then coded on a line by line basis in response to the question:

- Where is the participant in relation to their resilience?

An initial collection of concepts in response to that question generated between 102 to 262 per session. These were then clustered into themes. At this stage, some concepts were discounted because they did not on reflection serve the question being posed. The number of themes generated in each session ranged from 9 to 30.

The individual results are attached in a series of figures included as Appendix 8.1 Tables 8.11 to 8.4 in relation to C and Appendix 8.1 Tables 8.2 to 8.2.4 in relation to J. These chart the themes generated within each of the sessions and how they shifted from session to session for each participant. In examining those shifts, a separate pattern emerged which helped explain the degree to which the individual stories changed.

8.2 The Emerging Process

Reflecting on the themes separate from the transcripts, and comparing themes from session to session, allowed the realisation that there was a distinct rhythm within each session. Initial themes disappeared, new ones entered, themes which could support movement forward would be accompanied by ones which pulled the individual back. A position held in one session, would be re-examined in the next, and the nature of that re-examination was unpredictable.

In looking at the totality of the work for each participant, I saw that each session held in varying degrees 6 meta-themes. By a meta-theme, I mean an abstraction from existing themes, which in itself creates a new category of thinking. The meta-themes emerged by clustering together themes in relation to their presence or absence across sessions. This process allowed for the identification of 6 meta-themes which were present in all sessions.

Holding	A theme carried from one coaching conversation to the next.
Supporting	A theme carried from a previous session which provides support to the regaining of resilience.
Adjusting	A repeated theme from a previous session but which takes a different position. This repositioning could be either supportive or challenging to the regaining of resilience.
Exiting	A theme which is not present in a subsequent session
Braking	A new theme which enters in order to slow or halt progress
Entering	A new theme which brings in thoughts, feelings or behaviours which the individual believes will support resilience.

The way in which those meta-themes changed between sessions and the comparison of the two participants is given in **Figures 8.2.1 to 8.2.4** listed at the end of the chapter.

8.3 The Narrative of Meta-Themes

In the first coaching session C jettisons some of the negative emotions of the diagnostic session, allowing in themes which he recognises he needs in order to move beyond his present situation. He still hopes that fate will rescue him, but he is also supporting himself through pride in his work. In contrast J brings with him some of the themes from the diagnostic, while letting go of others. He applies more brakes than does C and has fewer new themes entering into the conversation. Those themes which enter are like those of C related to what he believes he needs to access if he is to move forward.

In the second session C does not hold onto any theme from the previous session, and shows both positive and negative adjustment to his thinking. Central to this session is the application of brakes in terms of opening up fears which he has about himself, and siren voices which tell him that he is too old to experience career success. For J, while there is a holding on to the status which he gives others, there is also evidence of adjustment. He questions some of his assumptions, whilst also recognising the limitations of some of his thought processes. While new brakes are applied, entering the session are sources of energy and support.

In the third session C returns to a key theme in his story his desire for certainty. He continues to make adjustments, many of them challenging his earlier negative accounts of himself but also undermines his previous claim of wanting to claim authority, by acknowledging his dislike of self-promotion. In doing so he is harking back to his desire for others to act for him. He lets go of the brakes from the previous session and allows in a range of thoughts which position him as being pro-active and valuing of his abilities. The brake that remains is his passivity. For J the third session is one in which he holds onto his

discomfort with not knowing, whilst still retaining a sense that there is an inevitability to peaks and troughs of experience. His adjustments indicate that he is more trusting of himself over others judgement of him, but he continues to be held in the tension of both wanting and doubting the value of self-belief. The brakes in this session relate to the impact that power figures have on his confidence, whilst entering are new themes relating to increasing his presence, and adjusting his communications in recognition of different styles.

In the final session, for C the core issues of a desire for certainty and a recognition of his passive self are held onto, but they are countered by other identities: the person who can take charge, the person who fears a passive working future, the person who can face reality, the person who can take bold action. All are now available to him. Staying with him from the previous session are traits and behaviours which are of value to him in managing his career forward. There are no brakes.

For J, the final picture is less complete. He holds onto the theme of leaders as powerful figures, and to his need for profile. He stays with a key theme in the coaching sessions of the importance of being able to notice his thoughts as a means of disempowering them. There are adjustments in noticing that he is succeeding in his role, and that he can operate more flexibly but also doubts as to the sustainability of an instinctive self. While many of the categories from session 3 exit, present in the session is the brake of work as a heavy and testing burden. In this final session he is able to own for the first time that he has some natural resilience and that the sessions have increased his awareness of that resilience, but alongside there is recognition that he has not reached a state of self-maintenance. Resilience is a work in progress.

8.4 Implications

In the previous chapter, the particular role of written narrative was explored, in this section, by looking at the coaching journeys both individually and in comparison, it becomes even clearer that for these participants the regaining of resilience is about the repositioning of the self within the story. The story ending may not be different, but their relationship with that ending has changed. Constructivists talk of the story in terms of an initial construction by the client which is deconstructed in partnership with the coach, and from which a new construction emerges (Brott op. cit. 2001). In this study, the telling of the story makes it larger and more complex with the author becoming conscious of the multiple identities that are at play. These accounts are, however, less the building of a new story in terms of outcome, but of learning to live more comfortably with the existing story. Rather than a process of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction, they present a picture of construction, extension and relocation. C is still without a clear future and is still seeking certainty at the end of the sessions, but has been able to adjust his perspective, to remove brakes on his thoughts and feelings, and in doing so has allowed other selves to become available to support him in dealing with reality. For J, the situation which he feared has happened. He still holds a fear of failure, but he has been helped by being able to recognise the power he gives to his thoughts and the value of being able to notice them. However, he has not completely repositioned himself within the story. In particular, he is still caught by a view of work as a testing burden which catches him out. There has been some shift, in a growing sense of trust in himself, but the failure to remove the brakes, means the work of regaining resilience is not completed: an awareness reinforced in his final written narrative.

The identification of meta-themes helped my understanding of the process of change for these participants. Changing a story is not a linear process. In this study it does not follow the path suggested by key writers on change. Prochaska's trans-theoretical behavioural change model (Prochaska et al 1994) argues for recognition of the need for change being followed by counter-arguments which are eventually removed and from which experimentation with the newly desired behaviours flows. The application of brakes and negative adjustments can be aligned with this approach, but unlike the trans-theoretical change model, the process of counter-argument continues throughout the process. Scharmer's Theory U (Scharmer 2009) argues for the process of change through letting-go (of our old ego and self) and letting-come (our highest future possibility: our Self) with a point at the bottom of the U where the present and future self-listen and resonate with each other. In this study, there was more a process of leakage in of the new self, rather than a point of resonance between the two identities. Lewin (1948) saw change within social groups as being one of freeze, unfreeze and freeze. The process of these sessions was one of repeated thawings and refreezings, with the crystal shapes changed with each refreezing.

In these accounts the struggle is one of being willing to let go of an identity which is attached to a powerful story, and to let in other identities which can support movement away from the difficulty. As much as the participants wanted to find a new identity, they still wanted to be able to catch sight of the old story and the identity it held. They are both wanting to change and not wanting the work of change. Changing their story asks that they experiment with a different identity and accept the actions that go with it. Within these two coaching relationships, the process was less linear and more analogous to that of a swimmer caught in a cross current. The desired landing place is visible. The swimmer is supported by waves, at times pushing them forward but then hampered by counter

currents which halt their progress. The degree to which progress is made, being shaped by their willingness to change stroke and adjust direction.

Having looked at the data generated by the participants, I realised I could not understand the process of change without examining the role that the coach played in the process. The next chapter reports on the work of the coach.

Figure 8.2.1

Comparison of Meta-Themes as Shown in the First Coaching Session Following Diagnostic Session

C	J
Supporting Pride in work	**Holding** Seeking reassurance The danger of change Inadequate performance
Adjusting Emotional focus becomes internal Hurting Inwardly focussed self-critic Claiming own value vs. seeking value from others	**Adjusting** Failure from lack of role fit not lack of meritocracy
Exiting: Loyalty Hopeless future Unfathomable failure vs. respectful feedback	**Exiting** Career led by others Career off track Flight from danger Risk from lack of protection Learning from the previous failure Fears Projections
Braking Belief in fate	**Braking** Fear of an audience The dangers of thought patterns Feelings of inequality Staying too long in role Projecting weaknesses onto others
Entering Challenging own passivity Challenging the initial story	**Entering** Career ambition and having what is required to succeed Need for self-belief

Claiming the value of own skills Recognising limits of own skills Recognising need for stronger presence Recognising need to reduce power distance with authority figure Offering support to others vs. expecting support Context unchanging but seeing small signs of change.	

Figure 8.2.2

Comparison of Meta-Themes within Second Coaching Session

C	J
	Holding Giving others status
	Supporting Claiming skills
Adjusting Confidence can come from own sources as well as others confidence Seeking appreciation rather than supporting others Claiming authority rather than claiming value	**Adjusting** Ambitions for future tempered by unreadiness for promotion Needing self-belief challenged by the power of others judgements and not trusting own judgements and needing to affirm self. The dangers of thinking challenged by recognising the value of noticing thoughts Seeking reassurance challenged by recognising that others' feedback is temporary palliative Seeking safety underfoot challenged by recognising that life has peaks and troughs
Exiting Hurting Needing the power of presence Staying under the radar Bureaucracy works for me Dependency Open to feedback	**Exiting** Failure from lack of connection Unpolished performance Cautious self Comfort with the known Risks of staying too long Fear of an audience Owning past projections Change means swimming in dangerous waters Projecting weaknesses onto another The demands of moving up a gear
Braking Feeling discounted Ambivalence about the potential pay-off of making an effort Feeling rejected by mainstream	**Braking** Boss as gatekeeper Hanging future on rumour Impact of exclusion Going off career rails

Siren voices Personal fears Carrying the old story not challenging it Seeking certainty Value of Youth over Age **Entering** Valuing of own history Sources of energy Personal risks Wrong career time	Needing time to process thoughts **Entering** Importance of finding a career track Fear of failure as a performance motivator Wake up call to recovery Harnessing energy to recover Partner as supporting challenger Unconditional family support

Figure 8.2.3

Comparison of Meta-Themes in Third Coaching Session

C	J
Holding Search for certainty	**Holding** Discomfort of not knowing **Supporting** Acceptance of life as peaks and troughs Asserting self
Adjusting (Carrying an old story) Open to career possibility and the risks of putting self into competition (Valuing own history) Wanting a career pay-off for that history (Seeking appreciation) Offering and receiving support (Claiming own authority) Dislike of self-promotion (Value of Youth vs. Age) Not too old	**Adjusting** (Needing time to process thoughts) The value of instinct over preparedness (Not trusting judgement) The value of judgement (Leaking away of self-belief) Thinking limits self-belief (The positive experience of self-belief) Self-belief grows through action but too much self-belief is risky. (Harnessing energy to recover) Challenged by different energies to his own. (The boss as gatekeeper) Separating self from boss.
Exiting Discounted Siren Voices Personal Fears Personal Risks Ambivalence regarding the effort of competing against likely return Rejection by mainstream Sources of energy Wrong career time	**Exiting** Others feedback as temporary palliative Accepting others judgements Being stopped by others' judgements Testing the message Being replaced Un-readiness for promotion Going off the career rails Importance of finding a career track Risks of a bigger role Danger vs. safety of moving sideways Fear of failure as a performance motivator Denying own potential Claiming capability Fresh vs. stale Giving away self to status

	Wake up call to recovery Delayed emotional response Partner as supportive challenger Unconditional support Positive reframing
Braking Passive self	**Braking** The unsettling power of leaders The lost voice Being observed heightens internal focus Shifting confidence barometer
Entering Taking control of the conversation Moving into pro-activity Entering the competition The skills of competing Claiming style strengths Claiming emotional intelligence Claiming the value of experience Claiming managerial skills Claiming quality outcomes Claiming knowledge of the system Claiming specialist skills Claiming process skills	**Entering** The modelling power of leaders Wanting presence Comfort in standing out Doing presence Amplifying the voice Be brief to influence Changing perceptions of me Self-trust zones The value of pragmatism Value in challenge Adjusting to new clients Be prepared Steeling vs. steeled

Figure 8.2.4

Comparison of Meta-Themes in Coaching Session 4

C	J
Holding Passive self Search for certainty	**Holding** The power of leaders Needing thinking time The importance of profile
Supporting Claiming strengths Career possibilities Proactive job search Importance of support	**Supporting** Noticing thoughts helps
Adjusting (Living with uncertainty) Facing reality	**Adjusting** (Adjusting to new clients) Focus on other person's needs (Shifting confidence barometer) Riding a wave of success (Be prepared) Preparing less but preparing strategically (The value of judgement) Trusting judgement. (The benefits of instinct over preparedness) Succeeding with improvisation (Flying with the unexpected) Thrown by the unfamiliar.
Exiting Not too old Career pay-off Entering the competition The skills of competing Career failure Projecting the 'I' Dislike of self-promotion Claiming emotional intelligence Claiming the value of experience Claiming managerial skills Claiming process skills Claiming quality outcomes Claiming knowledge of the system Claiming specialist skills Open to failure	**Exiting** The modelling power of leaders Separating self from boss Presence in voice The lost voice Amplifying the voice Working with waves of change Self-belief as over-confidence is risky Positive use of self-belief Self-belief grows through action Thinking limits self-belief Challenged by different energies to own Self-trust zones Denying own potential Being observed heightens internal focus The value of pragmatism

Taking control of the conversation	Asserting self The risk of non-assertion Not directed by others' signals Changing perceptions of me Discomfort of not knowing The value of challenge Be brief to influence Steeling vs. steeled **Braking** Work as an examination Work as a burden Carrying too much Fears Wrong footing myself
Entering Confidence Value of coaching I'm in charge Fear of passive working future Conditions that work for me The importance of relationships Escaping from difficulty Ambivalence about other's feedback Role modelling for resilience Gaining perspective Down but coming back Adjustments helps Self-belief Resilience gives protection Boldness pays	**Entering** Resilience increased Resilience needs reinforcing Natural resilience Reducing the burden of work Sharing the workload Recognising my responsibilities Leading not managing

Chapter 9

The Role of the Coach

Introduction

Having examined the work of the participants, the role of the coach in that process became of interest. What had I done that influenced the progress of the sessions? While I did not bring a model for testing, what implicit model was I bringing to my work with them, and what impact did that have? The end point for the participants was different, so what role may I have played in those differentiated outcomes?

9.1 Coaching Epistemology

In turning the focus on my own work as a coach-researcher, I was presented with the challenge of how to be both inside and outside of the process. My interventions will have influenced the outcome of the process, in ways which as an insider I may not recognise. While I was not bringing an explicit model to test, I was bringing 30 years' experience of working with individuals, so that an implicit model that captured my theory of knowledge through practice was present. That model had been shaped by my earliest post-graduate training in careers counselling, drawn from the humanistic person-centred psychotherapeutic model of Carl Rogers (Rogers 1951 op.cit). Those precepts of unconditional positive regard, where the coach provides a climate of trust, lack of judgement and belief in the efficacy of the client, as the means which will enable the client to access their resources for self-understanding and for altering thoughts, behaviours and the sense of self, have been fundamental to how I have worked. Whatever subsequent training I received in a range of coaching approaches, including Solution Focussed Therapy (de Shazer 1985; Pemberton 2006) Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Hayes et al 1999 op.cit; Hayes et al 2004 op.cit; Harris 2009 op. cit), Gestalt (Perls 1947 op.cit), NLP

(Bandler and Grinder 1979) and Transpersonal Coaching (Assagioli 2007), the foundation of my epistemology remains Carl Rogers. When I developed my coaching model in order to work as an executive coach through completing an advanced programme in executive coaching, Rogerian precepts remained central, but supported by a solution focussed approach which looked to turn new thoughts into actions, and which had a future rather than a past focus. 6 years after completing that programme, I saw my approach as eclectic, working flexibly across a range of coaching models, in response to individual need. I had a full toolkit, however, I also knew that the effectiveness of the chosen tool was as much about the timing and the positioning of the offer, in alignment with the client, as the supremacy of any one approach over any other. The value of analysing my own work would be in understanding my processes, rather than evaluating tools.

In order to address this, I returned to the transcripts and repeated the process of line by line coding seeking out concepts and themes within my own interventions, through asking the question "What was my intent?" Figure 9.1 below illustrates how concepts and themes were developed in response to that question.

Figure 9.1 Example of Concept and Theme Building

Concepts	Theme
Using their language to encourage disclosure Using their language to signal listening and engagement Mirroring words to encourage deepening of thinking Mirroring back language that signals strong feelings Mirroring language code of	**Working their language**

the speaker to signal empathy Picking up on powerful words to show comfort with strong feelings Grouping key words in written and spoken narrative to magnify impact of their story on them	

Analysis of the outputs of that analysis for the 5 coaching sessions conducted with each of the participants are included as Appendix 9.1 Tables 9.1.1 to 9.1.5 in relation to C and Appendix 9.2 Tables 9.2.1 to 9.2.5 in relation to J. In this chapter I report on the changing role of the coach both between participants and across sessions, and identity 5 distinct roles which were used in the process of the work. I also examine the reflexive writings completed immediately after each session to assess the degree to which an analysis of my intent conducted some months after the sessions aligned or differed from my understanding immediately after the sessions. What was I learning from the participants and about myself in each session and how did that influence subsequent sessions?

9.1 The Coach in the Diagnostic Process

Following separate identification of concepts and themes, I brought the data of the 2 participants together to look for similarities and differences in my intents within each of the sessions, and to explore if differences in outcome were influenced by my work within the sessions.

Figures 9.1.1 to 9.5.1 at the end of this chapter record the shared themes of coach intent within each of the sessions.

The role I saw myself taking in the diagnostic session was primarily that of the enabler of their expanded narrative. The session focussed on using core person centred coaching

skills in the service of building trust and encouraging the participant to say more. I was bringing into the open for testing ideas about their story, and thoughts about themselves which were unstated in the written version, but were hinted at in gaps between their words and their behaviours, or omissions in their account. I was clarifying issues through clustering words, and feeding back observations on their nonverbal behaviour to invite them to reveal more of their internal processes. In this first session I was also challenging them to own their own story. Central to the diagnostic session was linking the language of their written and spoken narrative in order to highlight to them the identity which they brought to their story. In doing so they were able to recognise what in their resilience needed attention if they were to move forward.

Figure 9.1.2

Differentiated interventions in diagnostic session

J	Intent	C	Intent
Working with his visual imagery	To signal understanding of his preferred mode of communication. To build rapport	**To keep focus on the present story**	To unearth the emotion behind the story in a participant who is highly cognitive and divergent in his approach

From the beginning the participants had different needs of the coach which became recurring motifs within the coaching relationship. For C there was a need to keep him focussed on his present story, rather than diverging into a range of other stories, because those other stories were used to minimise what was impacting him. Where career constructivism sees the collection of multiple stories as the basis for constructing a new

narrative, I was asking of the participants that they use the one current story of resilience loss as the basis for our work. In doing so I was arguing that one story will hold a macro-narrative about their resilience. Working with one story brings a clarity of focus that may be defused by asking for multiple stories. Additionally in working with C I recognised the need to have him own his emotional rather than rational self. For J there was an early recognition of visual imagery as central to how he communicated, so using his visual imagery was a means of both understanding more of his meaning and of building rapport.

9.2 Coaching Session 1

In all subsequent coaching sessions themes related to core coaching competences of contracting, reviewing, listening at a verbal and nonverbal level, summarising, mirroring and clarifying were evident. The focus of interest then became the 'what else?'

The first coaching session was marked by their need to retell their story, and for that process to be allowed. It signalled that there were aspects of their story that the coach had not understood fully or given sufficient acknowledgement of. Attempts to move things forward were met by constant interruptions by the participants, talking over the coach, as they signalled that they needed to hold onto their account and for the coach to understand more fully what it meant to them. The role of the coach was primarily that of acknowledging their right to their story, and of checking in that they understood the teller's intent. The coach uses their language to help them deepen understanding of their own narrative, and opens up the idea that there are multiple versions of their story available to them. Without asking that they change their story, the coach notices any changes in the story since its last telling. The coach holds the tension between the participant's need to be heard and the coaching agenda which they highlighted as the focus of the resilience work. The coach provides a framework for starting work with them

which is based on recognition of how they like to operate in the world. There is a deliberate matching in order to build trust.

Figure 9.2.2

Differentiated interventions in coaching session 1

J	Intention	C	Intention
Introduction of mindfulness	To help him recognise that his thoughts do not necessarily represent reality. To reduce the power which his thoughts have over him. To increase his capability for noticing the difference between the self (I) and the judging self (me)	**Providing feedback on his passivity**	To challenge him to claim areas of confidence and competence. To encourage him to seek out feedback. To signal his focus on his problem rather than towards finding solutions.

Again the coach is working differentially. An agenda defined by J as that of self-belief, and being able to deal with whatever is thrown at him begins to be explored through inputs which challenge him to recognise that his thoughts do not necessarily reflect reality. The introduction of the idea of the difference between the self as the actor (I) and the judging self (Me) (James op cit) is used to start a process of reducing the power which his thoughts have over him. Experimentation through a mindfulness exercise is offered as a way forward, and the coachee is open to accepting it. For C the agreed agenda is that of increased confidence and motivation. Inputs are designed to give feedback on his passivity within his situation; to encourage him to claim areas of confidence, to seek feedback and to divert his attention away from the problem towards possible solutions. His resistance

indicates that these interventions are premature and while he is open to getting feedback from others he is not yet ready to make claims for himself. The coach sets too fast a pace for the participant and he pulls back.

9.3 Coaching Session 2

In the second coaching session the participants are more open to working with the issues of their story. While they continue to want to expand their story and to seek supporting evidence from other stories, the coach is now openly asking them to focus on the issues their story highlights, and the work they want to do. In doing so the degree of challenge increases. Communication becomes more direct in terms of bringing into the open issues which have lain unspoken but present. In particular, undermining voices which are driving their behaviours and emotions are acknowledged. Individual frameworks are provided to encourage them to experiment in ways which will challenge the identity which they attach to themselves, and encourage the idea of other identities being available to them.

Figure 9.3.2

Differentiated interventions in coaching session 2

J	Intention	C	Intention
Holding up changes in his thinking	To bring to his attention changes in thoughts, which enable him to see that shift has begun.	**Highlighting the fears that undermine him.**	To reduce their size and impact.
Widening out the system of	To position his story as existing within a system.	**Exploring contradictions in his story.**	To encourage him to claim the superior as well

his thinking to bring in other perspectives			as the inferior self.
Offering support to his moving outside of his established ways of thinking	To signal belief in his capability to think in different ways, and to encouraging the unexplored self.	**Inviting the unspoken to be revealed.**	To invite him to think more deeply about his response to his current situation, and the power of its impact on him.

Their differentiated needs reflect where they are in relation to their story. J is recognising shifts in his thinking and is encouraged to go further. He is invited to widen his focus of attention from himself to the wider system in which he operates, in order to explore how far the issue is his alone or is part of systemic change, and to define what is within and outside of his control. C is encouraged to bring his irrational fears into the open and to suppress the rational voice. He is also invited to explore contradictions in his story, which point to the availability of other identities he could call on. C is challenged to remove the protection which he uses to deflect the reality of his situation, and to face it head on.

9.4 Coaching Session 3

Interventions in the third session reflect a key shift as the participants start to accept the challenge of taking control of their situations through facing reality and what it demands of them. There is a move towards an active self, so that when invited to take a risk in the service of their resilience they are willing to do so. Interventions continue to match with their preferred style of communication, with a focus on identifying resources to support themselves. New voices are being heard in both the externalised voice and in the quietening of the internal voice. They are encouraged to separate themselves out from the

'others' to whom they give authority and to trust their own voice. Links are made to previous sessions and to their initial narrative to enhance their recognition of change.

Figure 9.4.2

Differentiated interventions in coaching session 3

J	Intention	C	Intention
Moving attention to the future	To encourage him to consider the demands on him of a new situation. To invite him to consider insights from working this narrative for the emerging future.	**The importance of self marketing**	To open up his feelings about self-marketing, in order to develop an authentic approach
Adaptation	To encourage consideration of how he needs to adapt his communication style for a new situation.	**Embodiment**	To move him from a focus on head to recognition of the importance of body in signalling confidence. To provide practice in embodying confidence.
Rehearsal	To enable a 360 degree view of how he needs to be, and his comfort in taking on new behaviours.	**Focus on language**	To highlight language changes as a measure of shifts in self-perception.
		Focus on story	To keep resilience story centre stage, so that the focus does not become diffused.

J's needs are differentiated in terms of his attention moving to an emerging story of a new role. That allows for anchoring of what he has learnt from his resilience story and on the different demands of his new role. The limitations of his model for coping with difficulty are exposed and a new focus on increasing his flexibility to match others' needs emerges. Learnings are reinforced so that they can be carried forward, and the participant is asked to rehearse taking action through visualisation.

With C, the move from a passive to a more active self opens up the challenge of a willingness to engage in self marketing. He is invited to develop a model for being able to self-market with authenticity. He is challenged to move outside of his preference for the analytical through focussing on his physical embodiment of confidence. His changed language of self is brought to his attention. As a divergent thinker there is a continuing challenge to keep his focus on working with the story he brought, rather than looking for other stories which will direct attention away from his discomfort.

9.5 Coaching Session 4

The final session marks the end of the coaching work. The focus of the coach is on enabling them to assess progress and extrapolate the learning so that it can be accessed going forward when faced by new challenges. Participants are asked to create anchors which will sustain changed thoughts once the coaching is finished. There is recognition of their entering a transition into their next stage, and an exploration of the demands that will make of them. There is also an acknowledgement of the ending of the coaching relationship. Alongside this differentiated needs remain.

Figure 9.5.2

Differentiated categories of intervention in coaching session 4

J	Intention	CH	Intention
Positioning expertise and talent as contextual not absolute	To encourage his adapting his skills to the needs of the context. To plan with client rather than himself in mind. To focus him on impact as well as content.	**Establishing his capacity to deal with uncertainty**	To anchor his resilience through building a template of resources he can call on. To structure his thinking about himself. Taking the resourced self into activist mode. To reinforce what he has control over.
Highlighting the weight of self expectation which he places on himself	To encourage him to view himself from an adult rather than as a school pupil being tested.		
Testing his ability to accept success rather than fearing failure	To draw attention to his use of failure to drive motivation rather than the confidence of success.		
Separating the leader of the task from the owner of the task	To challenge him to consider how his mastery of his specialism is best used in a leadership role.		

The final session highlights significant differences. C is still living with the same situation of insecurity but is able to attach his insights to the new story he has created; that of someone who can live with uncertainty and can take action for himself. There is a sense of a piece of work completed, and of having a narrative that supports him in transition. His need is to anchor that new narrative, so that it remains accessible to him as a driver of action. J is being put into a new story before his old one has been fully rewritten. In the final session he opens up new anxieties about the potential for failure, and presents as a student under examination. There is a sense that he needs to live with the discomfort of his story longer, in order to more fully rewrite it. In being offered a new role he has been given an escape from the pain of feeling rejected, but he is still carrying the old story of high self-expectation and fear of failure. He is moving into being expected to lead without having let go of a view of himself as being judged primarily for his knowledge. He is recognising the need to shift from seeing technical knowledge as the basis of others confidence in him, to his ability to work with their needs, but it is still unclear whether he has accessed an identity that will enable him to do so.

9.6 Reflections on Coaching Sessions

As a further support to my thinking, immediately after each conversation, I wrote notes on my experience of the session. These were focussed on my feelings about the work and myself within it. They were not an account of the conversations, but space in which I could allow thoughts and feelings to emerge which may not be apparent from listening to my recorded interventions, but which were guiding my work with the participant. The writings also allowed the opportunity to consider where I wanted to position myself within the next session. Those notes were subjected to the same analytical process as had been used in looking at my coaching interventions. The categories which emerged from those writings

and comparison between participants over the 5 sessions are given in Appendix 9.3 Tables 9.3.1 to 9.3.5.

Focussing on my role as coach as revealed through my writings, highlighted that I brought a different self to each session and to each participant. In the diagnostic session, I positioned myself as a respectful listener, eager to understand what they meant, to mirror their language, to use their metaphors, to signal that I wanted to know more. That session was important in building rapport and trust in me, and it felt appropriate that I should present myself as the non-judgemental, curious, person centred listener. That first session was equally important to me as a researcher. It allowed me to soften the focus on research method, and to start being with them as a coach, rather than viewing participants as sources of data. I became engaged in their story rather than my project. From that point on, I consciously prepared myself for my sessions by re-reading my reflexive notes and doing a short mindfulness exercise, so that I stayed in the present with what was happening in the dialogical space, rather than positioning myself as the detached observer or the research student.

In the first coaching session, I began to position myself differentially with the participants. While with J, I was willing to allow him to continue re-examining his story, matching with his pace, and presenting a cognitive challenge with which he was comfortable, with C I began to force pace. I became caught in the tension between his desire not to address his emotions by providing stories which told of being a valued employee, and my desire to focus him on present difficulty.

Sensing that there was some shift in his thinking, I wanted to move him towards a resourceful self that could be of service to him in dealing with his present situation. I was premature in my assessment of his readiness to shift.

Having achieved success in the first session through opening up a challenge with J, I continued this approach in the second session. In doing so I misread his readiness to shift: something that was not initially apparent to me in listening to the recording. My sense of this in reflexive writing was reinforced in reading J's written narrative following this session. This made clear that I had moved too fast, and had simply reinforced his beliefs about himself and his situation. With C, recognising the tussle I had set up in the previous session, I slowed pace and in doing so was able to listen more closely and open up a previously unspoken element in his narrative: his fear that he was too old to count.

In session three, I experienced myself as coming alongside rather than inappropriately leading the way. I was working with where they were within their story, rather than moving too fast or diverting them from their preferred story. Picking up on an increased sense of confidence in J, I was able to use that to enable him to claim resources and to make links with insights from previous sessions. With C I was able to pick up on shifts in how he was talking about himself. He was now facing reality rather than looking for a rescuer. This enabled me to follow his energy in our work, still using his desire for structure, but positioning it in the context of a desired future.

In the final session, my writings position me as closing the gestalt. My focus is on a letting go of the initial story, acknowledging what has been brought in, seeking means of sustaining learning and looking toward 'what next?'. Where I felt comfortable with this process with C, I had a strong sense that whilst J spoke of our work coming to an end and expressed thanks for our time together, the work did not feel complete. His desire to focus on a desired self in respect of a new role felt premature. This sense was affirmed in his final written narrative.

9.7 Conclusion

Looked at as a whole, the pattern of interventions suggest that each session held a distinct purpose.

The diagnostic session positioned the coach as a fully engaged listener, inviting the teller to "tell me more", so that I can help you to understand your story more fully. In the first coaching session the retelling continues, with a focus on continuing the process of understanding and allowing in the resilience agenda. The extent to which this is possible is shaped by the degree to which the participant is focussed on holding onto their story, as distinct from being willing to work with the insights from the story as a basis for moving forward. In the second session the need to retell continues but the coach is more interventionist in asking them to challenge their own story so that other identities can be recognised. In the third session, the purpose shifts to taking control of the building of a new story. Whilst in the fourth session the focus is on supporting that new story so that it is the basis for future thoughts, emotions and behaviours.

In summary the coach's role within the arc of the coaching relationship was to:

- **Hear the story**
- **Acknowledge the story**
- **Challenge the story**
- **Resource a new story**
- **Sustain the new story**

Alongside this the individual needs of the participants were addressed in interventions which were designed to meet their particular resilience challenges. There was a continual process of crafting in response to where the individual stood in relation to their narrative, and their preferred ways of working. Some of these interventions were mismatched in

their positioning, when the coach became invested in movement. Additionally, reflexive writing allowed for recognising dynamics that were not available to the coach in the demands of the moment, or through only focussing on verbal content.

While the analysis is based on a series of 4 coaching sessions, the different outcomes for the participants suggests that the roles are ones which needed to be met within the totality of a coaching relationship before a sustainable story could be created, rather than being linked to a finite number of sessions. With C there is a sense of completion at the end of the final session. With J, there is a work still to be done. The coach has not created sufficient space or offered the appropriate means to enable him to fully explore his identity in respect of his story. He has not completely accepted other identities he has available to him, or gained confidence in how to access them in the service of his career. Without this he is not able to fully support a new story, so that he is moving into a new narrative whilst carrying elements of his old story with him. In this sense he risks once again carrying a conceptualised self-based on his past into the future. Analysis of the coaching interventions reinforces the evidence of his written narratives that while he has loosened his attachment to the story he brought, he has not cut the link with it.

Having explored the data from three perspectives, the next chapter brings together the outcomes of the data analysis to consider their implications for working with the issue of resilience through narrative.

Figure 9.1.1

Themes of Interventions in Diagnostic Session

Shared Themes	Intention
Core coaching skills of: Building rapport through showing engagement in their story. Working with the language they use. Clarifying and probing to understand meaning.	Building trust in my commitment to their story.
Testing out Ideas I am forming about their story which have not been stated directly. Testing out underlying message of the story. Testing out if there is more to be said. Testing out gaps in the story. Testing out gaps between words and behaviour.	To encourage their expansion of the story, to allow in aspects they chose to omit from the written account. A reader builds an untestable theory about the motivations of the characters; a listener is able to bring into the open the picture they are building, to check its veracity.
Bringing out Bringing into the open tensions in the story. Making claims which the speaker is hinting at but does not claim directly. Bringing nonverbal information into the space to explore their theory of explanation. Magnifying the language by clustering key words together.	Reflecting back the story to them in a louder and more direct voice so that they can look at it from a different perspective i.e. as the listener rather than the speaker of the story.
Challenging To own their story, its reality and its impact on them. Challenging them to stick with the reality of where they are now	To keep a focus on the story they bring as the basis of our work.

rather than to divert to other stories past or desired future.	
Owning Asking them to define and take ownership of their resilience development agenda. Checking their commitment to that agenda.	Signalling that they are the authors of their resilience story and they are also the authors of their future.

Figure 9.2.1: Themes of Interventions in Coaching Session 1

Shared Themes	Intention
Working with their language	Using their language and the metaphors they offer to deepen their thinking and to heighten awareness of tensions and insights. Showing respect for the language they use and its importance. Signalling that the language and the metaphors are not accidental.
Checking in	Checking on inferences I am making regarding values, emotions and behaviours.
Testing Out	Testing out hypotheses of how they operate in the world i.e. their theory in use i.e. going wider than the specific story to gain an understanding of is as part of a macro-narrative.
Reinforcing	Supporting their right to hold the position they do. Reinforcing changes in language around the story to signal it is capable of change. Reinforcing progress they have noticed. To signal their right to their version of the story.
Normalising	Normalising their response to their situation to make their emotions and thoughts allowable.
Highlighting multiple stories	To introduce the idea that they have multiple versions of the story available to them and they therefore have choices e.g. they bring the head story, but there is also a heart story, they bring the externalised story, but there is also the story in their head. Making them aware that the story and identity they have chosen shapes their response.
Challenging	To test their willingness to examine themselves as being creators of their story as much as victims of it.

Providing structure	To enable them to start the work of challenging their own resilience gap through choosing a framework based on a recognition of their style preferences. Deliberate matching.

Figure 9.3.1

Themes of Interventions in Coaching Session 2

Shared Themes	**Intention**
Focussing	Holding them to the moment of what is happening now, rather than allowing the collection of data from other stories that reinforce their original story.
Opening up the challenge of the core resilience need	Naming and opening up the underlying need that is needed to support rebalance. Allowing the undermining and unspoken voices out into the open. Flipping perspective to encourage exploration of the shadow side.
Structuring	Providing a framework which matches with their preferred style for exploring their resilience challenge.
Experimenting	Inviting their participation in an experiment which challenges the identity which they carry in respect of their story.
Working preferred communication style to expose issues	Working with visual imagery and key phrases they use to bring issues into the open.
Direct communication	Stating directly what they have signalled indirectly in order to bring the difficult into the spotlight.
Testing	Testing out a hypothesis linked to their core issue.

Figure 9.4.1

Themes of Interventions in Coaching Session 3

Shared Themes	Intention
Coachee taking control	Encouraging of coachee to take control within the session in terms of choices but also in being more willing to make claims for self, and in facing the reality of the situation they are in. Feeding back changes signalling a move from passive to active self.
Risk taking	To encourage the coachee to take a risk in the service of their need.
Working with preferred mode	To match with their preferred mode in the context of supporting the building of an alternative identity.
An emergent voice	To encourage the coachee to hear an emerging voice (whether internal or external) this supports them.
Linking	To link insights to previous sessions and the original story.
Accessing resources	To reflect back resources displayed by the coachee. To provide a focus on finding what is there, not what is missing.
Separating out	To help them separate out their self from their situation. To encourage them to separating out themselves as distinct from other's 'truth' about them. To separate out their internal voice from their external presentation of self.

Figure 9.5.1

Themes of Intervention in Coaching Session 4

Shared Themes	Intention
Getting the measure	Taking stock of where they are in relation to their resilience and reported changes from previous session.
Recognising resilience resources	Reinforcing resources which are of value to them going forward.
Sustaining change	Acknowledging the ending of the coaching process and inviting them to create a meaningful anchor that will support them in sustaining change.
Widening their framework	Enabling them to extrapolate their learning from this particular experience to its wider application.
The demands of transition	Both are now in transition to their next career stage. Inviting them to explore the demands of the transition they are now moving into.
Closing	Closing the coaching relationship and explaining what will happen to their data. Acknowledgement of the value of their input.

Chapter 10

Learning Outcomes and Implications

Introduction

Separating out the coachee's input in written and spoken narrative, and looking separately at the role of the coach in the process of regaining resilience, allowed for examining the coaching intervention as a system, whereby each part had a role to play in the extent to which the participant was able to create a new narrative which would support a future self.

In this chapter, I bring those three elements back together, to argue that comparison of two cases allowed for the identification of potential models for the process of change and for the role of the coach in working with a narrative approach. The study has also allowed for an exploration of the value of written narrative as a distinct methodology for structuring coaching interventions related to the loss of resilience. Finally, in this chapter, I revisit the stories which I brought to the work, to examine their value in developing my thinking on resilience.

10.1 The Process of Change

Analysis of the participant's input to the coaching sessions had shown that there were six processes at work within each session, which was labelled as meta-themes:

Holding	Themes related to the loss of resilience which were carried from one coaching conversation to the next.
Supporting	Themes which were carried from a previous session and provided support to the regaining of resilience.
Adjusting	Themes which repeated a theme from a previous session but took a

	different position. This adjustment could be either supportive or challenging to the regaining of resilience.
Exiting	Themes which are not present in a subsequent session
Braking	New themes which entered in order to slow or halt progress
Entering	New themes which bring in thoughts, feelings or behaviours which the individual believes will support resilience.

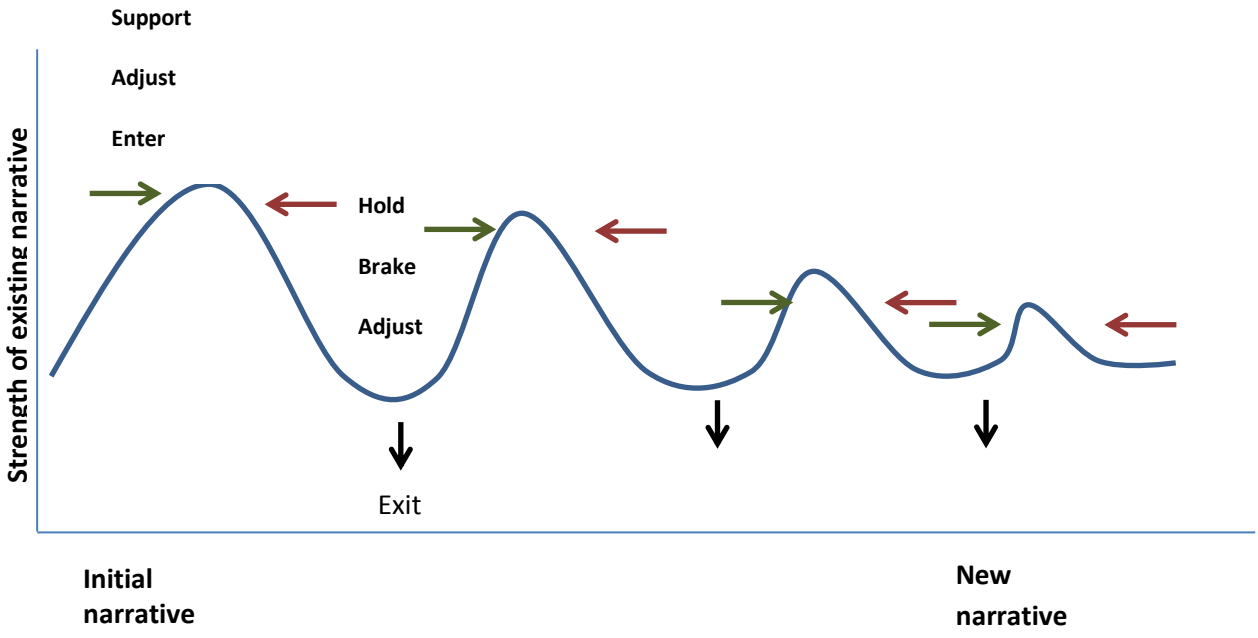
Martin Vogel in reporting on his study of narrative coaching (Vogel 2012b) argued that changing an individual narrative is difficult, because of our attachment to an existing story. The findings of this study suggest that the attachment to an existing story is strong, but that within a coaching relationship the changing of the story rests on the degree to which the individual is willing to admit other identities which offer support to change, to adjust perspective on an existing identity and to remove blocks on the shifting of an identity. The differentiated outcomes in the two participants can be seen as the greater willingness of C to remove the brakes which caught him in the identity of the trusting victim, and to see himself as able to live with uncertainty. In contrast J completed his involvement at a point in the project, where he was still admitting new brakes to limit his ability to access resources which he recognised could be helpful to him. In both individuals there continued to be a need to hold onto the old story: the search for certainty, and the uncertainty of not knowing, but there are now other versions of the story available to them. Their stories had been redrafted to take account of perspectives that were not accessible to them at the beginning.

10.2 A Potential Model of Change Within a Narrative Coaching Relationship

In Chapter 8, I described the process as one of a swimmer caught in cross-currents, and questioned the idea of change as following shapes established in previous research (Sharmer 2009 op cit; Prochaska et al 1994 op. cit; Lewin 1948 op. cit). In coaching sessions, the process was less one of linear movement than of battling energies between the forces driving movement forwards and the backwash created by that process. Just as the power of an oar moving a boat forward creates a backwash in its wake which impacts on whatever is following. For an individual, that process means that progress cannot be made without a backwash, and that backwash has a purpose in allowing the individual to hold onto what is known, even as they move forward.

The model demonstrated in these two coaching relationships is presented in **Figure 10.2.1**

Figure: 10.2.1 The Waves of a Changing Narrative

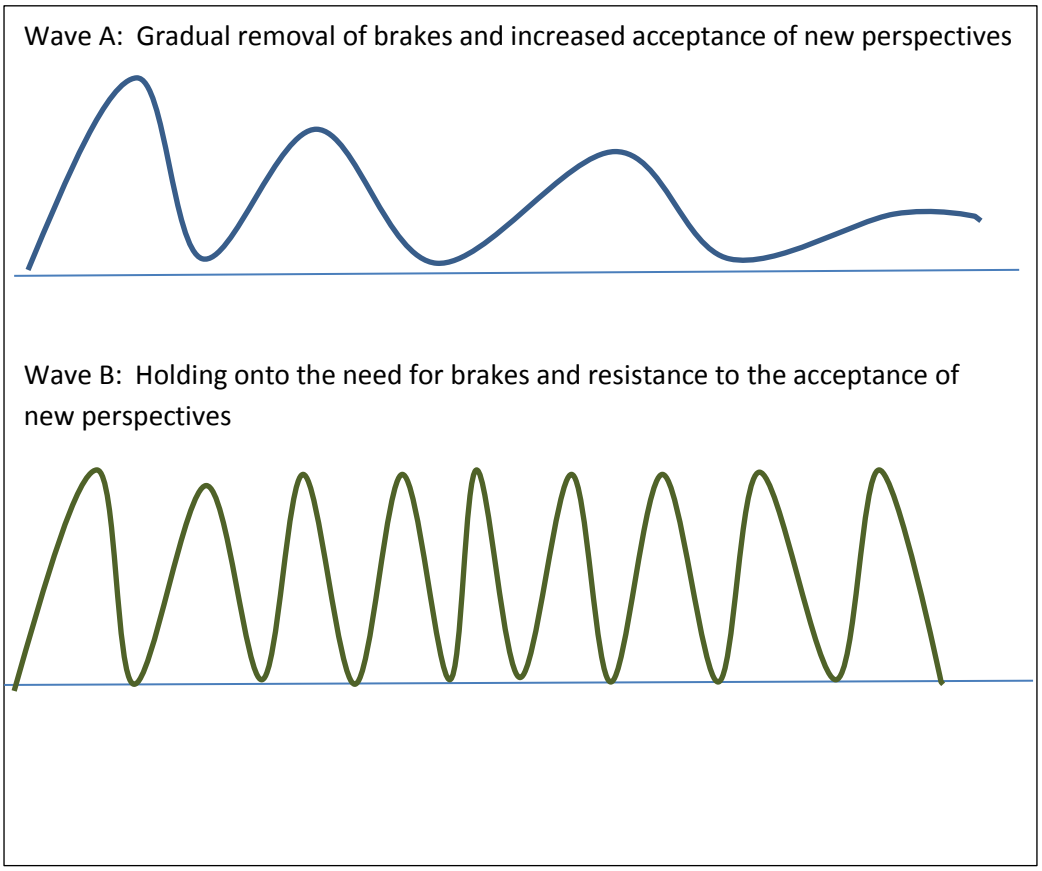


In this study, a coachee who is willing to remove the brakes and to let in new thoughts enables the energy to move them forward, and in doing so the waters become calmer. A coachee who is battling against propulsion by bringing in new brakes when one is removed, uses large amounts of energy in holding themselves static.

The difference can be seen in **Figure 10.2.2.**

Figure 10.2.2

The Differentiated Energies of a Changing Narrative



Visualising the process of changing narrative as a wave form shaped by the energy towards change meeting the countervailing forces acting against the changing narrative identity, means that the shape of the wave changes from session to session. By being tuned into the conflicting energies at play, the coach can become alert to what is being held onto, what is entering the narrative that will support change, what is exiting and no longer requires attention. They will be attuned to the nature of adjustment and what is entering as a brake. The brake works to protect the existing identity. It is a signal that the individual is not yet ready to move into the new narrative. The coach is moving at a pace of narrative development that is ahead of where the coachee is capable of being, or that the coaching is bringing into awareness aspects of the story which have previously been unexplored. The brakes are a signal to the coach both of where attention needs to be paid, and also that until they are removed a sustainable narrative cannot be developed. The wave model does not assume as its outcome flat water. At the end of the process there may be aspects of the initial identity that the individual continues to hold onto, but the wave pattern has been sufficiently changed that they can now move forward without being submerged by the old narrative. This visualisation of a changing narrative as a wave pattern is a development of David Drake's unpublished model of the flow of narrative change (2012), where he sees the movement from the old to the new story as the movement from the present situation, into a process of search from which comes shift and then a sustaining of the new story. Missing from this model are the tensions of the process, where a forward trajectory is accompanied by movement backwards and forwards in the process of change; the reluctance to let go, the nuance of adjustment and the holding on as much as the letting in. Missing from this approach also is explicit consideration of the identity which the participant is bringing to their narrative and the coach's role beyond that of facilitating search. The value of seeing a coaching relationship in terms of waves where there is inevitably a back swell, is that it prevents the coach seeing

change as coming from one pivotal point of shift, or one breakthrough session. It positions change as a continual process of managing the tensions between the familiar and the emerging story, where the author will seek ways to return to the familiar story, and their role within it, even as they access new aspects of themselves.

10.3 The Coach Within the Process

This project asked that I work as a coach within my own research process. Because of this I resisted for some time, looking at my own data. I was concerned that it would focus my attention on the models of coaching I was using within the work, and lead to an examination of the value of one particular approach over another. Alternatively, I would become focussed on my abilities as a coach and more concerned with critiquing my own skills. I feared that using my data would draw attention away from the narrative focus of the project. Initially, I believed that by keeping the lens on the participants' data, I would keep myself out of the framework. However, once I looked at the recordings from the perspective of the participants, it felt unethical to ignore the impact which the coach had on the sessions. I was an active player in the process, and the choices I made within sessions inevitably shaped the direction of conversations. As much as coaching is non-directive in terms of attachment to outcomes, it is directed by the models, beliefs, interests and intentions of the coach. The coach directs the gaze of the coachee by what they pick up on, what they ignore and what they fail to see.

In becoming clear that the inputs of the coach were part of the creation of a new narrative, I was committed to keeping the focus on the role of the coach in that process, rather than on a close examination of the coaching approaches being used within each session. For

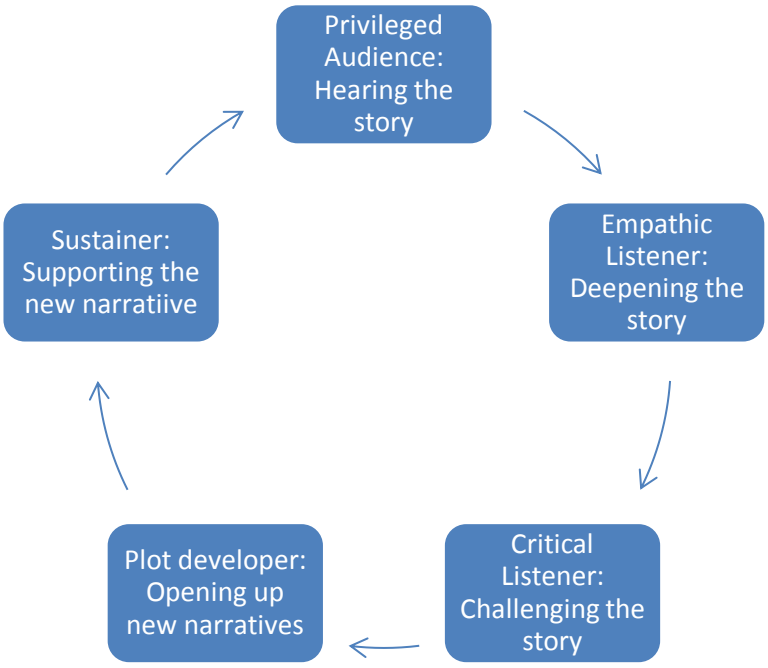
this reason, the question I asked myself in analysing my own interventions was “What was my intention?” In asking that, I was able to remain open to discovery. While I was aware that within sessions, I had used techniques drawn from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) Solution Focussed Therapy (SFT), Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) and mindfulness, alongside core person centred coaching skills, I was often unconscious of intentions that went further than the reaction in the moment. By examining my work both within sessions and in reflexive writings, and identifying concepts and categories, I was able to see that I brought distinct intentions to each of the sessions.

In Chapter 9 I spoke of the coach as occupying different positions in relation to the narrative:

- Hear the story
- Acknowledge the story
- Challenge the story
- Resource a new story
- Sustain the new story

Those positions can be viewed as creating a gestalt within the relationship, wherein the coach occupied different roles in relation to the story at different points**. Figure 10.3.1** represents those different roles.

Figure 10.3.1 The Coach's Roles in the Development of a New Narrative



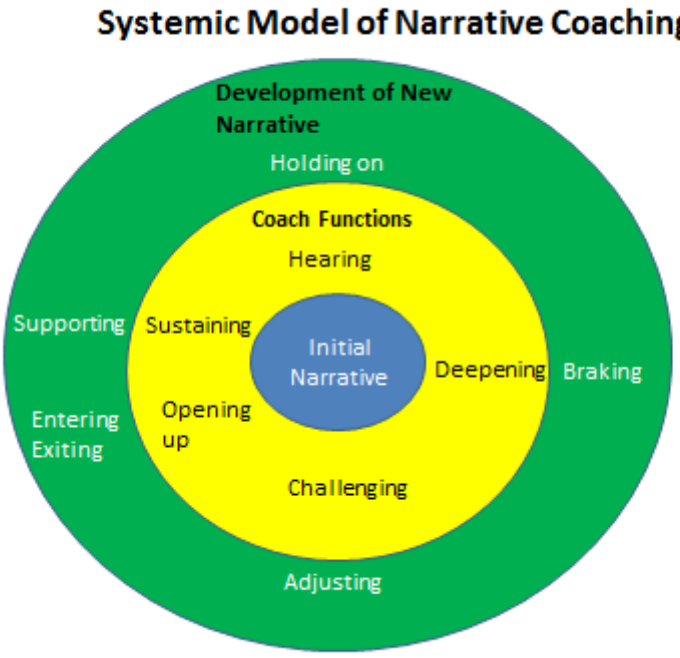
Analysis of the role of the coach in this study across the process of creating a new narrative to support resilience, highlighted that there were distinct roles that the coach filled within the process of change. The coach may have been the first audience for the coachee's story. It is a privileged position, and one where it is important that the coach signalled their willingness to not only hear the story once, but to hear and re-hear it. As I discovered in working with participants, if the author feels that their story has not been fully heard, they will return to it repeatedly, until they believe that the listener has 'got' it. Only when they feel fully heard were they open to both deepening their relationship with the story in terms of revealing emotions and thoughts which they edited out of the initial telling, and to having that story challenged. The willingness to accept that challenge is based on the trust and rapport that has been built with the listener, so that the story teller understands that in challenging the account, the coach's aim is not to deny its 'truth' but to expand perspective. From the acceptance of that challenge, new narratives became available, and the choice as to which narrative emerges was shaped by the coachee's relationship with

their own wave pattern. Once that narrative is selected the coach moved into helping the coachee sustain that story, so that it becomes a narrative available to them in action. It becomes their narrative in use, a marker of the learning that has come from the process of working with their resilience issue.

10.4 The Systemic Relationship between Coach and Participant

In analysing the data of coach and participant separately, two potential models emerged. However, to present them as separate, is to ignore the system that was created between the two within the coaching sessions, and the impact of the one on the other. Figure 4.2.1 presents the creation of a new narrative as a systemic intervention.

Figure 10.4.1



The functions which the coach fulfilled in the service of supporting the development of a new narrative were influenced by the narrator's own relationship with their story. In listening until the participant felt heard, the coach encouraged the narrator to hold on to their story, to tell more. It allowed for the coach signalling their full presence so that the narrator is comfortable with expanding their account, without feeling any pressure that they should change their story. Rather, they are encouraged to build a heightened sense of the author (ity) of the story, in order to reveal the identity which has been threatened by the event. As the coach asked the narrator to deepen their understanding of their account, building on the rapport that hearing has established, the deepening account opened up awareness of the brakes which the narrator is applying to prevent a different story being possible. Recognising those brakes, strengthens the narrator's sense of the difficulty of changing their story, and signals to the coach that it is time to introduce challenge into the relationship. This was done through looking for means which would enable the narrator to examine the brake from a new perspective, to question its truth, or to recognise alternate resources and identities within themselves. In the process of that challenge the process of adjustment starts. Adjustment enables the exiting of brakes, and the entering of constructs from which a new narrative can begin to be crafted. The coach was a facilitator of that process: highlighting to the narrator shifts in their thinking, and encouraging them to act on those changes, so that the focus becomes future oriented. Finally, when the coach senses that the narrator is committing to a new narrative, they work with the participant to find means of supporting it, so that it can be held, until it no longer serves their need.

The systemic model describing the entirety of the coaching relationship is equally relevant to the movement within an individual coaching session, where the narrator moves

between positions as they work through their resistance to letting go of one narrative and letting in a new one. It requires the coach to partner in a dance; recognising where the coachee is positioning themself in any moment, matching pace and adjusting in response to the coachee's relationship with their story. The systemic model is a structure to move within, rather than being a sequential and predictive account of change.

10.5 The Role of Narrative

In designing the narrative process, I had been influenced by 2 approaches to narrative, that of narrative inquiry and that of written narrative research. Narrative inquiry provided a structure for the collection of data. Research on written narrative had pointed to the value of repeated writings as a means of generating new cognitive frameworks in relation to events with strong emotional meaning.

10.5.1 Working with a Structured Narrative

The participants were invited to construct an initial story which took account of context, key figures involved in the story, the impact on them of the event, their current thoughts and feelings, their meaning making, and their projection of the present into the future as a result of that event. The structure for their initial account is given as Appendix 7. The value of a structured narrative is that it encourages the writer to go beyond a simple account of events and signals that their story is worth hearing. The structure deliberately pre-supposes that the event is impacting on their sense of self and their view of themselves going forward. In working with individuals who were highly cognitive in their presentation of self to the world, this structure encouraged them to bring parts of themself

which they often kept out of view. It invited them not to rationalise away the event, but to inhabit it more fully, and to see that as valuable.

The final narrative (see Appendix 7.2) post coaching, provided a structure to write about their thoughts and feelings about the future, about themselves, their understanding of the event, learning that had come from it and insights that they could now draw on that would help them in the future in dealing with future challenges. This writing was intended to enable them to highlight any changes in their narrative as a result of their involvement in the project, to own changes in their thoughts and feelings, and any learning that could be applied in dealing with future risks to their resilience. It positioned the final narrative as designed to enable them to reflect on the process of dealing with a knock to their resilience and how they could integrate that learning into their sense of self.

Figure 10.5.1 compares the first and final narratives for participant C.

Figure 10.5.1 Comparison of first and final written narrative: participant C

	Themes from 1st Narrative	***Themes from Final Narrative***
	Loyal Servant	
	Career Pride	
	Emotional cost (of rejection)	Letting go of negatives
	Discounted value	Growing confidence Determination to succeed
	Fortitude (in face of adversity)	

Career Uncertainty	Accepting uncertainty Critical career decision making point
Seeking consolation	Support encourages me Expertise available to me

By comparing the two narratives the emotional and cognitive shifts that are fuelling the new story become clear. The acceptance of uncertainty is allied to feelings of growing confidence, determination, and the seeking of both practical and emotional support in the service of going forward, rather than as consolation for rejection. With a new purpose the negative emotions and sense of victimhood of the first narrative are removed. Central to his learning has been the realisation that by taking control of the situation through making a decision, he has resourced himself, rather than waiting for others to resource him.

Figure 10.5.2 compares the first and final written narratives for participant J.

Figure 10.5.2 Comparison of the first and final written narrative: participant J

Themes from 1st Narrative	***Themes from Final Narrative***
Fear of history repeating Uncertainty	Conflicting emotions Destructive power of rumour
Achievement through hard work	Hard work as means of security
A Target Reputational Risk	At risk through direct reports
Changing career management message Overt vs. Covert	Career risk of change
Flight from difficulty Failure as prompt to action	Limited alternatives
The Dark Place	

Temporal connections	
Anger	
Power of Boss	
	Positive affirmation
	Preparing for Partnership

Comparing narratives for J, the changes are ones of nuance. The feared 'old boss' has arrived. J is not fully resourced with a new narrative to deal with this reality, but he does bring a wider range of cognitive and emotional responses to it. He recognises that fleeing is a limited option in current economic circumstances, so is focussing on preparing for Partnership. Where in the first account he assumed he would be the target if the 'old boss' reappeared, now his focus is on his team and ensuring they can deliver to the expected standards.

Missing from the final narrative are the strong emotions of the first account. He resists seeing a temporal connection between his past and present in terms of his emotional responses to impending change. He does not talk of himself as being in a dark place or of anger, rather he is focussing on the affirmations he is receiving about his current performance and focussing on using change to build his future.

Where the first narrative was an account of how change had shattered his confidence and resulted in him bringing his past into his present, when that becomes a reality, he is able to approach it with a wider perspective. He is able to hold both that there will be change and that there is risk, but also that he does not have to repeat his own history. He sees the

possibility of finding an opportunity for benefiting from the change if he works hard and prepares himself for the next level of responsibility.

10.6 Implications for Practice of Initial and Final Narrative Accounts

The evidence from these two case studies is that offering a structured narrative exercise is of value in helping to establish the focus of the resilience coaching, and in harnessing learning from the process of coaching. At the beginning it establishes that their narrative is rich in meaning. It assists in recognising the type of story which the individual is bringing to coaching, and the identity which they have given themselves within it. At the end it reflects back to the participant the shifts which have occurred in their view of their story, and themselves within it. It offers the possibility of recognising learnings of future value.

In a research exercise, the participants were asked to make all narratives available to the coach. In coaching practice, asking coachees to write a narrative to be discussed in a first coaching session is a means of gaining a wider and deeper understanding of what the event means to the individual, than is often offered in a spontaneous oral account. By submitting a written narrative ahead of that conversation, the account, no matter how brief is a legitimate basis for further exploration. The coach is able to examine the language of the account for clues as to the story the coachee is bringing, the identity they attach to it, and the need that is not being met.

The role of the final narrative is more complex. The motivation to write a final narrative sometime after coaching has ended is likely to be less strong, and there is no case for that narrative being made available to the coach. Asking coachees to write a final narrative in advance of a final session or as part of a final session would allow for discussion of

progress, the degree to which the narrative has been altered and what is needed to sustain changes. It could be positioned as part of the process of resourcing the story for the future. It would also act as a measure of the degree to which the narrative has moved forward, and the work is finished.

10.7 Intersession Narratives

Previous researchers had spoken of the value of repeated writing on issues where there is an emotional content, as a means of using writing to support cognitive reframing of the impact of the event. It offers a means of placing the judgemental 'Me' which sits inside the author outside of the self, so that it can be examined, and in doing so gain different perspectives. Often those studies ask individuals to write repeatedly about an emotional event e.g. parental divorce or death, in a laboratory setting, at a set time and for a set period. These writings are done sometime after the event, when a degree of processing has already occurred. They are being invited to re-process, and to see what new thoughts and feelings result, in a situation which is designed to remove all other distractions in order to focus their thinking.

My experiment with inter-session writings was inviting individuals to process their thoughts and feelings, whilst they were still involved in both living with the issue and receiving coaching. Their writings suggest that they used the inter-session narratives as a means of reinforcing where they were, rather than in order to bring new thoughts or feelings to the process. It could be that there was insufficient distance post-coaching, for them to be able to process, and that their writings served to re-state what they knew or believed about the present, rather than to move them forward. It may also be that asking

participants to write within work rather than in a separate setting, meant that writing was competing for attention against the task demands of their day, and was another task to be done, rather than being seen as the opportunity to reflect. Inter-session narratives received relatively little attention within the coaching sessions. They were primarily viewed as sources of data collection, rather than inputs to coaching conversations. This may have impacted on the participants' engagement with the idea of writing. What purpose did the writing have if it was not acknowledged and used within the work?

Reflecting on this in the broader context of my coaching I see a significant difference between how I positioned inter-sessional writing in the project and my general practice. As a result of this project I now invite coaches to keep a journal in relation to their coaching focus. I build commitment to that process by giving them a notebook at the beginning of the coaching relationship, which they bring with them to all coaching sessions. The coachee then begins sessions by reporting back on whatever in their journal seems relevant to our work together. They retain ownership of their data, deciding what they want to share, what to withhold and what is relevant. By asking participants to write for an exercise which was implicitly presented as being of more value to me than them, their engagement with the inter-session narratives as part of their learning journey was reduced. Giving them a journal to note down any thoughts, feelings and actions in relation to their resilience and positioning that as shared data feeding into our work, may have made the writing more helpful to the development of a new narrative.

10.8 The Self Within the Process

My interest in exploring my own resilience and then writing about it had been influenced by a connection with the principles of auto-ethnography, and an initial belief that it would help me stay 'clean' in my handling of the data. In reality, I brought my insights into my analysis, because it helped me understand aspects of resilience which would not have been available to me without that work. Nowhere in my reading had I seen resilience explored from the perspective of the loss of an identity that is central to a stable sense of self, and its replacement with a shadow identity that undermines resilience. My sense of being loved as a child was replaced with one of being unloved, the sense of being valued for expertise as an adult was replaced with one of being of no value. In contrast the adult who did not lose resilience in the face of death was able to do so because the core identity related to being loved was not challenged, and I was able to hold onto other identities e.g. that of a family leader. That insight coupled with the recognition that my resilience was lost when unable to face a reality, and regained when reality was acknowledged were valuable when analysing data. I was able look for the lost identity, and how its shadow played out in the coaching conversations. I was also able to recognise that their shifting narrative came not from refinding that lost identity, but from finding alternative identities that supported them in dealing with the reality of their situation.

In retrospect, it would have been more valuable to have experienced psychotherapy before beginning the coaching sessions, as it could have made me more alert to issues related to the identity that was being challenged within their story, and the shadow identity which they replaced it with. It could have speeded the process of accessing other identities that could support them. It may even have allowed me to address the issue of the reality being avoided earlier. Instead, those other identities and the acceptance of

reality emerged over time. The learnings from my own exploration of resilience have however, proved valuable in working with subsequent clients.

The challenge that can be posed is that they are only my insights, they have not been validated by others. When I have presented the issue of identity loss in relationship to resilience to groups of coaches they have readily recognised its relevance to themselves and their clients. It resonates with their experience. However, there is interesting work to be done in taking this issue further in the development of practice in relationship to resilience.

10.9 Conclusion

By using thematic analysis to examine the data in 2 case studies, possible models operating in those relationships, and a systemic model linking the two were identified. One, describes how the changing of a narrative account of self in relation to an event is not linear, but relies on a changing relationship between forces pushing towards change and those which resist change. In particular, these case studies suggested the importance of braking, as a process for protecting an existing identity. The second possible model identifies distinct roles which the coach played at stages within the coaching process in supporting the development of a new narrative. The systemic model suggests a relationship between the two in the letting go of a narrative which does not support resilience, and the creation of one which supports moving forward. In examining the role that written narrative played in the study, the case studies support the value of structured narrative at the beginning and ending of the process, and question the way in which narrative was positioned and used between coaching sessions. Finally, the examination of

self within the process suggests that issues relating to loss of identity are key to the loss of resilience, and that this offers a potential new area for exploration in taking work on resilience coaching forward.

A project of this type can make no large claims. The original thoughts of building theory on resilience recovery from a grounded theory perspective was reliant on an original design which sought to work with a larger sample. Once the decision was made to focus on working in depth on 2 case studies, the work became exploratory. Its ambitions no larger than understanding the processes at work within those 2 coaching relationships through the vehicle of narrative and comparing outcomes. What the project does offer however, is a template for others to follow, and a widening of perspective on the issue of loss and regaining career resilience.

The totality of this project has produced outcomes which contribute to the development of coaching practice in relation to resilience through:

- Expanding understanding of career resilience beyond that of protective action to a recognition of lost access to a core identity and its impact on the capacity to move forward
- Extending understanding of loss of career resilience through the use of narrative to highlight the identity which has been violated by the event.
- Positioning structured written narrative as a means by which individuals can relate a significant loss of resilience story.
- Signalling the potential for repeated narrative as a means of marking movement, or its lack, in an individual narrative when positioned appropriately.

- Developing a potential model in respect of the regaining of resilience which recognises the tensions in movement towards a new narrative, which can be developed in practice and further research.
- Identifying key roles which a coach played in supporting the individual in developing a new resourced narrative for testing by others.
- A potential systemic model that describes the process of co-creation of a new narrative by participant and coach within the study that can be tested and developed.

The next chapter looks at how the experience of the project and my learning throughout the process of completing it, have been taken back into my own work and is being shared with coaches, HR practitioners, other professionals and the academic community.

Chapter 11

Outcomes for Practice

Introduction

In designing this project, I had set aims relating to my own learning, business and career, to my contribution to my profession, and to my desire to develop which added to existing approaches to working with the issue of career resilience. This chapter reports the progress I made on these aims, on additional outcomes which were not expected at the outset, and on limitations of the project which offer scope for others to address. Appendix 11 offers a record of the outcomes as evidenced in my professional practice, while the chapter focuses on how those outputs are directly linked to my learning and evidence my contribution to the professional and academic communities.

11.1 Developing my own skill set in working with resilience issues

I began the project with a superficial understanding of resilience, but inspired by client work, to deepen my thinking and develop my skills. At every stage, I looked to take whatever I was learning from the project back into my work, testing out ideas both with clients and fellow professionals. Whilst this project reports on two case studies, in my coaching practice I was making narrative a central part of my contracting work with clients, as a means of both identifying coaching needs and monitoring progress. I was also experimenting with techniques drawn from reading. As my confidence grew I identified working with resilience issues as a core offering, and found that it resonated with clients, and opened up new markets. In particular, work with senior civil servants, my involvement with Judge Business School in coaching country heads of a global NGO and my recruitment

as a coach for the coaches of elite Olympic athletes and teams, were all influenced by my ability to evidence experience and knowledge in the area of resilience coaching.

11.2 Developing Accredited Programmes

Recognising that career resilience was missing from career coaching skills programmes for internal and external coaches, I used insights from the literature review to develop 2 programmes which are recognised and quality assured by the Institute of Leadership and Management. Career Coaching for Changing Times is a 4 day programme for those new to career coaching. It combines key career theories with a generic model for career coaching that is then supported by a module specifically designed for working with loss of resilience issues. Career Coaching for Resilience is a two day programme for experienced career coaches focussed on coaching those who are experiencing career failure or setback. Both these programmes were developed early in the project, and subsequent learning offers scope to strengthen the programmes' design, and to test out the models developed from the case studies.

11.3 Raise Profile

Experience had taught me that turning learning into written outputs was a valuable marketing tool, so I committed from the beginning to write as a means of helping my thinking and to reach an interested audience. This provided the opportunity to write for on line professional journals and to contribute to Coaching at Work (Pemberton 2011). I developed a blog www.carole.pemberton.co.uk explicitly to periodically offer new thoughts on resilience emerging from my work, and to share wider research findings that I thought would be of interest to professionals, and interested individuals. Co-writing of a

CIPD Toolkit for Building High Performance (McGee and Pemberton 2012) allowed for my developing questionnaires for assessing individual and team resilience. At the beginning I had been hampered by the existence of commercial trait based questionnaires, causing me to doubt that I could bring anything distinctive. By becoming familiar with the literature, I was able to understand the development route of existing questionnaires. It then became possible to develop differentiated materials in which I had confidence, and to test them out with client groups.

The intended major output of this project is a handbook for coaches which will increase their understanding of resilience as a phenomenon, share learning from the project and provide materials that can be used when coaching resilience issues. Following an input at a research conference, I have been approached by the series editor for Open University Press to submit a proposal on coaching for resilience. Should this not be successful, my present publisher Taylor and Francis has also expressed interest.

11.4 Grow New Markets

Wanting to develop new markets at a time when the shrinkage of the public sector was removing established clients was a key driver to completing the DProf. As the project developed speaking opportunities opened up new client work in new sectors. This has been an important development because it has challenged me to make the subject and my approach to it relevant to different audiences e.g. HR Directors, Chief Information Officers of IT companies, alumnae of a leading business school, women lawyers. The depth of my understanding of resilience through the literature review has equipped me to design bespoke interventions. This would not have been possible prior to the project.

11.5 Career Marker

I spoke in my aims of wanting a career marker: a signifier of what I had achieved that was visible to myself and others, since so much of my working life had been in roles which sat at the periphery of organisations, or in self-employment. My value was measured by my retention by client organisations, annual revenue or book sales, but this felt insufficient. A DProf would be a measure to myself, that I had developed depth in my expertise. During the time of the project, I was offered a Visiting Professorship by Ulster University Business School, in recognition of my work in developing internal coaching capacity, but also for work on resilience with senior leaders within the University. The Visiting Professorship has also been offered in order that I support them in developing a Masters Programme in Coaching for Senior Leaders, and input regularly to MBA programmes on subjects related to coaching and resilience.

11.6 Share Learning with Professional Colleagues

The two key foci of the project: understanding the loss and regaining of resilience and the value of narrative have both proved to be of interest to other coaches and to career coaches. Within careers work I delivered the keynote address at the 2012 Association of Career Professionals Conference, and also ran a workshop for members. CCS a leading trainer in career coaching skills invited me to deliver a workshop on working with narrative to their alumnae. Within broader coaching practice, I was invited to open the 2013 Association of Coaching Irish Conference and the European Co-Active Coaching Community Conference. I delivered a workshop at the 2012 Coaching at Work Conference, and designed and ran a one day Masterclass on coaching for resilience through the University of Chester in partnership with Leadershape. I have developed a career coaching for

resilience one day public workshop accredited by the International Coach Federation which is targeted at internal and external coaching practitioners. Invitations to share the outputs of the project when it is completed reflect back to me that this work is seen as having relevance to the coaching profession.

11.7 Sustaining a Career

In Chapter 1 I spoke of the role of this project in sustaining a career; so that I did not atrophy through basing my work on long established knowledge that was of diminishing value to others, or become rigid in resisting new sources of knowledge because they required an openness in my thinking that I was threatened by. The timing of this project coincided with a downturn in my business, as established clients moved on, or budgetary constraints limited the use of external coaches. Rather than seek new work, I chose to regard the additional time available to me as a gift, which would enable me to give focussed attention to this study. I decided to see the project as my primary source of development, rather than being diverted into the acquisition of additional coaching skills. This strategy has proved correct, as new sources of work have emerged because of the increasing focus of my work on issues related to resilience. I now believe that my career has developed a sustainability that would not have been available to it, if I had used down time as marketing time.

11.8 Working with the Them

I addressed my own needs within this project through psychotherapy, the development of a methodology that was congruent with my values and preferences, and developing products and processes that could be taken back into my practice. I addressed the needs

of professional colleagues through regularly sharing ideas with professional groups throughout the duration of the project. However, the 'them' loomed for a long while as a threatening internal presence controlling what I thought I should do. Having a consultant who understood the demands and purpose of the DProf process, allowed me to begin aligning my professional needs with academic criteria. Once I repositioned the 'them' as a curious challenger, rather than a critical barrier, I became more open to engaging with the disciplines of the 'them'. Accepting that the outcome will be qualitatively enhanced through developing my critical thinking, I offered my methodology for discussion at a DProf Methodology Conference at Brighton University, and had accepted a proposal for the presentation of my study at the 2013 EMCC Research Conference.

11.9 Outputs for the Academic Community

The outputs are necessarily tentative given the scope of this project, but I believe they are valuable in opening up areas for further exploration. Through being able to examine the totality of a coaching relationship through thematic analysis, I have been able to identify processes that operate across sessions, and which support or impede a changing narrative. This is a potential useful addition to existing literature on both change and changing narrative because it enables the coach to be looking for those processes in their work with clients, and to adjust their interventions in response to them. The evidence from this study suggests that the coach does more than provide a structure for narrative, they are an active partner in creating the conditions for the construction of a new narrative.

I have shown that written narrative added value to the diagnostic of need process, in that its exploration enabled deeper understanding of the story being brought, the identity attached to that story and the need not being met. I have demonstrated that a repeated

narrative allowed for recognition of the degree to which the story had changed, and other identities made available to the author. What I did not establish was the value of inter-session narratives. Both replication of this approach, and experimentation with the use of inter-session writings would add value.

I have been able to identify distinct roles which the coach played within the coaching relationship, which it is argued, act to support the development of a new narrative. This model is also emergent. It continues to be tested within my own coaching practice, and it will be shared with professional and academic colleagues in order to encourage testing and feedback from others.

11.10 Learning

All of the above signals that the project has been an important learning experience, but there are additional ways in which I have developed during this time. Firstly, the opportunity of being a researcher practitioner has allowed me to look at the issue of resilience from multiple perspectives. It has moved me outside of the boundaries of career and coaching theory, to understand both resilience and narrative from broader perspectives, and from those vantage points new understandings have emerged.

A measure of my learning is set by asking the question "could I have achieved this without the DProf project?" The evidence I have presented is that I could not. It has opened up my thinking, my creativity and my ability to connect with my professional colleagues and new clients.

The other measure is one of the quality of my work with coaching clients, and the degree to which it has been enhanced by this project. I have spoken of my use of narrative within my work, but what the project has done is to enable me to understand more of what is being carried within the narrative, and in particular what is not available to the individual that is causing their lack of resilience. I am now able to identify that need, and to work explicitly with the idea of the lost identity, the shadow identity, and alternative supporting identities. I have been able to adapt the written narrative structure to work with clients on issues which are unrelated to resilience, but where it is clear that the individual is holding a story which is preventing them from moving forward. By providing a structure, they are able to access issues related to the identity they are holding, and brake(s) that are preventing decision making or action, so that the focus of work becomes clear. A written narrative provides a container for the work to be done.

I am more conscious of the process that I am imposing on coaching sessions; recognising when the role I am assuming is misaligned with where the client is in their work. I am mindful of what the client is bringing into the conversation, and am looking for the brakes, the adjustments and what is being held onto, as consciously as I was once focussed on what was entering from which a solution could emerge. Central to my learning has been the need to hear and rehear a story as a necessary foundation before the story can begin to change. Where once I would have looked to move the client forward once I signalled I had heard and understood, now I wait until the client has signalled that they feel understood.

11.11 What Would Have Enhanced This Project?

The question "what could I have done better?" is an important one. If I had delayed submitting my proposal until I had a better understanding of the literature and methodology, the focus of the project would have been clearer from the beginning. However, set against this, the development of the project has been authentic to who I am. I do work intuitively, and I am most engaged when I follow my own instincts rather than those set by others.

The quality of the coaching conversations could have been enhanced by the availability of transcriptions shortly after each coaching session, rather than solely relying on reflexive writings. This would have supported my preparation for subsequent sessions, and made me more conscious of the processes being enacted within sessions, so that they could have been brought to the attention of the participant. My coaching work would have been enhanced by completing the psychotherapeutic sessions in advance of participant contact, rather than only feeding into analysis.

The availability of a consultant earlier in the process would have offered challenges to my thinking and perhaps influenced the design. Without the availability of a consultant, I acted on my need to do something and went into the work of the project untethered. I connected with my consultant only when what I assumed was pilot study data collection had been completed. However, the intervention of the consultant at that point, asking me to look again at literature, to understand myself in relation to resilience, to gain clarity on the method for data analysis, and to question my belief that the study required a much larger sample had important consequences. It enabled me to develop a critical position in

relationship to the literature, it brought new dimensions to my understanding of resilience, and it gave me the confidence to work with 2 sets of data and to define a method for data analysis that was of value to me. It also by default created space between the collection of data and its analysis. This was of value in that it enabled me to look at transcripts with a disinterested but curious eye and ear. My memory of the sessions and myself within it had dimmed, so that I was not tempted to impose my voice or to re-interpret words. In that sense it allowed for a much cleaner approach to analysis than dealing with the data immediately following its collection.

11.12 Transferability

As already evidenced, the learning from this project been transferred into my own coaching work from the outset, but it has also opened up the possibility of transferring learning from a study based on individual work in the context of career difficulty, into other areas. The issue of resilience is one which is now on organisational agendas because of links that have been made between resilience and engagement, or conversely the risk of low resilience, stress and disengagement. (Robertson and Cooper 2013 op.cit.). It has also been seen as a necessary adjunct to agility in organisational capacity to deal with the complexity of delivering results (Holbeche 2013). Approaches used to develop resilience are largely based on the work of positive psychology, and is most evident in the mass programme for developing resilience in US army personnel (Reivich et al 2011op. cit). However, that work has been criticised (Sagalyn 2012) because early studies of the impact of the programme show that an untargeted and undifferentiated approach fails to take account of the differentiated resilience resources of individuals. Being able to offer organisations differentiated inputs either through 1:1 coaching or through identification of those whose resilience is more vulnerable allows for developing targeted inputs, rather

than positioning resilience development as a protective 'sheep dip' offering. Conversely, knowing who has the capacity available to them to deal with difficulty, is as important as knowing whose resilience is being impacted.

While the project was designed as a study of individuals, one output has been the development of a team resilience questionnaire which allows for identification of team resilience issues and resources. This has been piloted with a global charity, with positive feedback. Going forward, there is scope to further develop the learning from this project in relation to its relevance to team functioning.

Conclusion

Capturing the outcomes from this project highlights the significance this piece of work has had in professional and personal terms. I could not be doing the work I am doing without the experience of this project. In submitting this project, I believe I have produced a coherent piece of work, the output of which has benefit for the quality of my own professional practice, but also that of other coaching professionals. I have made a contribution to knowledge which extends understanding of career resilience through an in depth examination of its loss and refinding for 2 executives. I have met the academic demands of the work through selecting a methodology that served the needs of the project and have identified potential new areas for attention. I have evidenced a commitment to sharing my learning with varied audiences throughout the time that the project has been undertaken, and will continue to do so, after the doctorate is completed. I have also evidenced my commitment to meeting the academic requirements of a

professional doctorate through taking my work to academic conferences for testing and feedback. I submit this project as completing the requirements for the award of a D.Prof.

Word count:

48,909

Appendix: Chapter Five

Appendix : Informed consent form for participation in research

Contact Details:

Carole Pemberton
Director
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13 Varndean Road Brighton BN1 6RL

Tel: 01273 565640
Email:carole.pemberton@coachingtosolutions.com

The purpose of this document, in accordance with the requirements of the University of Middlesex's code of research ethics, is to make explicit the nature of the proposed involvement between the researcher and the person or organization agreeing to supply information (the participants) and to record that the research subject understands and is happy with the proposed arrangements.

The Researchers:
The researcher for this study, Carole Pemberton, is a doctoral candidate with Middlesex University's Institute of Work Based Learning. She is advised by Annette Fillery-Travis, Director of Programmes, IWBL Middlesex University. Complaints about the conduct of the research may be addressed to Dr. Annette Fillery-Travis at the address below:

Institute of Work Based Learning
Middlesex University
The Burroughs
London NW4 4BT
Tel: 02084116118

The study is a requirement for completion of the doctoral programme at Middlesex University.

The Research:
The purpose of this research is to understand the impact of loss of career resilience and the process of recovery within a coaching relationship.

Involvement in the study will ask of participants that:

- They complete a narrative account of the experience(s) that has resulted in a loss of resilience.
- They Identify with the researcher which aspects of resilience have been impacted
- A series of 4 x 2 hour coaching sessions which focus on the aspects of resilience identified as having been impacted. These sessions to be held at fortnightly intervals.

- Completion during the process of a journal reflecting on their response to the coaching process.
- The completion of a final narrative following completion of the coaching.

Participants are free to challenge or terminate their involvement in the process at any time. Written material generated by participants will be made available to the researcher. It will be stored securely, and will not be available to the employing organization. The material will be anonymised, so that the participant will not be identifiable to any other person who may be involved in the research.

Use of data:
The aim will be to eventually document and present the research findings in a doctoral dissertation and in other appropriate contexts, academic and professional, through publications, conference presentations and workshops. Participants will be given copies of any publications based on the research. They will also be provided with a summary of the research findings.

Confidentiality
All information acquired will be treated as confidential. There will be no feedback to the organization on any participant's involvement in the project. Unless specifically agreed references in publications, talks, etc. to particular jobs, organization, individuals, etc. will be anonymised and features which might make identification possible will be removed.

Declaration by the research subject(s):

I have read and am happy with the arrangements as set out above.

Signature of participant(s)

Name COLIN HARNETT

Date 26 July 2011

Researcher's signature

Carole Pemberton

Date 28/7/11

Appendix : Informed consent form for participation in research

Contact Details:

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13 Varndean Road Brighton BN1 6RL

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- They Identify with the researcher which aspects of resilience have been impacted
- A series of 4 x 2 hour coaching sessions which focus on the aspects of resilience identified as having been impacted. These sessions to be held at fortnightly intervals.

- Completion during the process of a journal reflecting on their response to the coaching process.
- The completion of a final narrative following completion of the coaching.

Participants are free to challenge or terminate their involvement in the process at any time. Written material generated by participants will be made available to the researcher. It will be stored securely, and will not be available to the employing organization. The material will be anonymised, so that the participant will not be identifiable to any other person who may be involved in the research.

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All information acquired will be treated as confidential. There will be no feedback to the organization on any participant's involvement in the project. Unless specifically agreed references in publications, talks, etc. to particular jobs, organization, individuals, etc. will be anonymised and features which might make identification possible will be removed.

Declaration by the research subject(s):

I have read and am happy with the arrangements as set out above.

Signature of participant(s)

Name JONATHAN LAMONT

29 JULY 2011
Date

Researcher's signature

Carole Pemberton

4/8/11
Date

Appendix 7.1

Your Resilience Story

I would like you to write about the incident(s) which have made you agree to be involved in this study.

There are no right or wrong ways to write about your experience, it is your story.

There is also no right length, write as much as you like.

The following is intended to help you structure your thinking.

1. What has happened?
2. When did it happen?
3. Who is involved?
4. What is the context in which it has occurred?
5. How do you understand that event – what realisation or learning has it given you?
6. What thoughts do you have about yourself in relation to what has happened?
7. What feelings do you have in relation to what has happened?
8. What effect is it having on you – what are you noticing about yourself?
9. How do you see your future right now?

Please write as honestly, openly and fully as you can. The narrative is intended to help me understand your situation, and to enable us to agree the focus for coaching. The narrative will not be seen by anyone in your organisation.

Once you have completed your narrative, please return to Carole Pemberton at carole.pemberton@coachingtosolutions.com, ahead of our first meeting.

If you have any questions before completing the narrative, then please call me on 01273 565640 or email.

Thank you.

Appendix 7.2

Your Resilience Story

When we began our work together, I asked you to write about the incident that had made you agree to be involved in this research study.

Now that we have completed our time together, I would like you to spend some time, writing about how you see your story now and going forward.

There are no right or wrong ways to write about your experience, it is your story.

There is also no right length, write as much as you like.

The following is intended to help you structure your thinking.

1. What are your thoughts now about your future?
2. What if anything has changed for you?
3. How do you now understand the event that happened to you – what realisation or learning has it given you?
4. What thoughts do you now have about yourself in relation to what happened?
5. What feelings do you now have in relation to what happened?
6. What effect has it had on you- what are you noticing about yourself?
7. Any insights that you will be able to draw on in the future to help you deal with future challenges?

Please write as honestly, openly and fully as you can. The narrative is intended to help me understand you and your perception of yourself and your situation

Once you have completed your narrative, please return to Carole Pemberton at carole.pemberton@coachingtosolutions.com

If you have any questions before completing the narrative, then please call me on 01273 565640 or email.

Thank you.

Table 7.3: Participant C: Comparison of Themes Between Written Narrative and Diagnostic Coaching Session

Themes from Initial Written Narrative	Themes from Diagnostic Meeting
Fortitude (in face of adversity)	
Loyal Servant	Loyal Servant
Career Pride	Pride in work
Emotional cost (of rejection)	Emotional cost Anger and resentment (outwardly focussed)
Discounted value	Unvalued and valued
Career Uncertainty	Hopeless future
Seeking consolation	Seeking support vs. risk of trusting
	Unfathomable failure vs. respectful feedback

Table 7.4. Participant J: Comparison of Themes Between Initial Written Narrative and Diagnostic Session

Themes from First Written Narrative	Themes from Diagnostic Coaching Session
Fight from difficulty	Flight as the preferred choice The pay-offs of fight
Power of boss	The power of rumour
Repeating history	History repeats itself
A target	Organisational target
Changing career management message	Auditing is not a career
Overt vs. covert message	
The learning from failure	Retrospective insights from failure
The consequences of failure	Actions from failure insights
The dark place	Fear of the dark place
What is at risk?	Projective fears
Temporal connections	
Anger at treatment	Internalised negative feelings
Uncertainty	Uncertainty Desire for certainty
	Capability questioned
	Negative labelling
	Culture change is uncomfortable
	Career led by others
	Cheated by lack of meritocracy
	Benefitting from lack of meritocracy
	Deskilled by directness

	Partner supports and challenges
	Careering off track
	Got it wrong
	Feedback destabilises There is no protection
	Ambition vs. self-doubt
	Personal vs. circumstantial rejection
	Others' reassurance validates
	Tackling feelings to change thoughts
	Defusing negative cognitions

Appendix 7.5: Original Template for Inter-Session Writings

Following Our Coaching Session

Following on from our session last week, I would like you to spend a few minutes **today** writing down your thoughts and feelings regarding your resilience issue(s) as it is for you on . . .

Don't censure your thoughts. Write as much or as little as you want to.

There are no right or wrong ways to be thinking or feeling. There are no expectations as to how you write – just write as it comes to you.

Once you have completed your writing email it back to me at carole.pemberton@coachingtosolutions.com

Thank you.

Appendix 7.6: Amended Template for Intersession Writings

Following Our Coaching Session

Following on from our session last week, I would like you to spend a few minutes **today** writing down your thoughts and feelings regarding your resilience issues of

Confidence

Motivation

as it is for you on . . .

Don't censure your thoughts. Write as much or as little as you want to.

There are no right or wrong ways to be thinking or feeling. There are no expectations as to how you write – just write as it comes to you.

Once you have completed your writing email it back to me at carole.pemberton@coachingtosolutions.com

Thank you.

Appendix 7.7

Participant C: Themes from Written Narratives

Table 7.7.1

Themes from First Written Narrative

Theme	Concepts
Loyal Servant	Following orders Sacrificing mainstream career to do the right thing Retraining to broaden career Following Civil Service statements on the value of front line experience Commitment to redirecting career
Career Pride	Pride in career status Classic civil service career Pride in career
Emotional cost (of rejection)	Loss of confidence and self-worth Dispirited Less motivated Hurt Disappointment
Discounted value	Unappreciated Being well suited to post Having necessary skills Strong application Well qualified but discounted Experience has less value to others Other candidates stronger
Fortitude (in face of adversity)	Positive about work even when tough Forcing a positive face
Career Uncertainty	Uncertainty Age awareness Career decision undermined by present uncertainty Difficult job environment Few options
Seeking consolation	Consoled by visible support of others Boss is working to make it OK for me

Table 7.7.2

Themes from Written Narrative after Coaching Session 1.

Theme	Concepts
Utilising strengths	Playing to strengths Deploying skills
Productivity	Busyness in and out of work Understanding what makes for a good week Being productive
Value	Being valued
Positivity	Feeling positive Positive feedback
Shifting thinking	Space to articulate thoughts Refocussed thinking
Offering support	Helping others
Future unclear	Concern about future activities Not pressing for certainty

Table 7.7.3

Themes from Written Narrative after Coaching Session 2

Theme	Concepts
Busyness	Busyness of the day
Response to demand	Short notice response work
Happy	Happiness in busyness
Motivated	Motivated by energy released by demands
Work mood barometer	Demand increases positivity
Importance of business value	Energy is linked to business priority of issues
Increased energy	Energy comes with pressure

Table 7.7.4

Themes From Written Narrative after Coaching Session 3

Theme	Categories
Unwell	Unable to shake off cold and cough Rough health wise
Lowered energy	Demeanour affected
Energy input	Pepped up by colleagues presence
Rejected for post	Not shortlisted for investigation post
Not concerned	Own response less strong than boss's response Not that bothered
Internal career support	Meeting Career Transition Service

Table 7.7.5

Themes From Final Written Narrative

Theme	Concepts
Critical career decision making point	Dramatic developments Get another post Critical career point At risk Will decline voluntary redundancy Making a decision Staying put not an option Requested information
Support encourages me	Good will encourages me Support of colleagues Support of line manager
Letting go of negatives	Was hurt Was negative
Growing confidence	Feel more able to present well Feel more confident Focussing on my skills
Accepting uncertainty	Accept it will take time May happen soon or not Not concerned Comfortable with uncertainty of situation
Determination to succeed	Determined to gain an advantage Will try hard to succeed Want to continue Focussing on my commitment to my work
Expertise available to me	Availability of expert advice Guidance available Availability of careers advice

Appendix 7.8: Participant J: Categories from Written Narratives

Table 7.8.1

Themes From Initial Narrative

Theme	Concepts
Flight from difficulty	Run away vs. fighting the process Those who fought won Belief in a face down is bravado Feelings of strength I can face him Withdrawing from competition for promotion Escaped before targeted Looking for escape routes Reluctance to expose self to risk of failure
Power of Boss	Fear old boss coming back into my career Power of line manager Risk of failure in the present because of old boss Dark place is opened up by the possibility of old boss reappearing Possible reappearance is making me reappraise my work Confidence about applying for promotion is diminished Second guessing what he will want
Fear of history repeating	History is coming into the present My history follows me Past failure stays with me Old issue opened up again
A Target	Personalised target Target for being pushed out Targeted function
Changing career management message	Change of management Shift away from supporting individual careers Shift to work as stones to be stepped over
Overt vs. Covert	Overt message be independent Covert message – you are no longer wanted Remove staff

	You are part of the old organisation
Failure as prompt to action	Failure work me up Failure reinvigorated my work ethic Stayed in role too long My organisational experience was too limited Familiarity made me stale
Achievement through hard work	Working long hours to ensure achievement Importance of achieving
The Dark Place	Fear of being in the dark place again Not wanting to revisit the dark place
Reputational Risk	Risk of reputational damage Others view of me will be contaminated Fear that others view of me will be influenced by him Terrified of not being seen as a good performer Fear of performance being re-evaluated Strong track record at risk
Temporal connections	Linking experiences of failure Linking events which are separate
Anger	Anger at treatment
Uncertainty	Uncertainty about future Conflicting emotions

Table 7.8.2

Themes From Written Narrative After Coaching Session 1

Theme	Concepts
Directed by others	Direct feedback Steered by others Guided into alternative role
Discomfort of change	Shifting rocks Plates sliding over each other Earthquake conditions
Sideways not upwards	Sideways move Accepting alternative challenges
Inadequate Performance	Not seen as promotable Broader profile needed Increased responsibility needed Not adequate
Can't compete	Desired role out of reach Will be rejected Withdraw from competition No guarantees
Invisibility	Not thinking of me Developing them not me Helping the other person
Hurt	Disappointed Wronged
Undermined	Not thinking about the consequences Not informed Lack of consideration Undermined Being replaced Overlooked
Seeking comfort	Easily assuaged Comforted by positive feedback
Excluded	Background conversations Lack of transparency Direct report uncomfortable with subterfuge
Strong personal reputation	Held in high regard Good reputation with team

	Key person Relied on Positive feedback on personal qualities

Table 7.8.3

Themes From Written Narrative after Coaching Session 2

Theme	Concepts
Others' self-belief is admirable	Admire unvarying self-belief
Too much self-belief harms	Self-belief is misplaced Too much self-belief leads to failure Too much self-belief leads to mistakes Too much self-belief trips me up
Self-belief varies	Circumstances influence self-belief Varying levels of self-belief Self-belief changes by the day
Good day self-belief	Confident on a good day On a good day in control
Forces act against me	Malign forces work against me Miss things Failure Not anticipating
Response to setback	Feel down Take setbacks to heart
Means of recovery	Wobble but don't fall Can dust myself off Get on with things

Table 7.8.4

Themes From Written Narrative after Coaching Session 3

Theme	Concept
Self-belief increasing	Raised self-belief
Focus on work effectiveness	Drowning in work Desire to maintain good performance Find more effective way to work Discussing reallocation
Positive feedback	Good review Off the cuff positive feedback
Recognising reliance on feedback	Recognise reliance on others for feedback Work on need for affirmation
Performing without preparation	Thrown at me and coped On the fly Spoke without preparation 15 minutes to prepare
Movement	Moving in the right direction Repeat at higher level
Performing with presence	Coherent Messages well received Well structured Articulate

Table 7.8.5

Themes From Final Written Narrative

Theme	Concepts
Conflicting emotions	Apprehensive Everyone apprehensive Mixed emotions Should not worry Positive Plus side
Career risk of change	Change is starting Clearing out management Positive regard will evaporate Managed out Bring in cheaper labour
At risk through direct reports	Direct reports missing targets Outside my control I miss less targets Targeting
Preparing for Partnership	Opening for Partner Eligible for Partner role Develop to prepare for role Planning for Partner role Assessing self vs. criteria Identify gaps
Hard work as means of security	Working longer Working harder Increased work load Work hard as the means to security
Positive affirmation	Good feedback Still highly thought of Line manager affirmation
Destructive power of rumour	Rumour Rumoured History risks repeating itself Hypothesising Negative scenario building Risk of reporting to the persecutor Fear of reporting to persecutor
Limited alternatives	External job market difficult Few alternatives

Appendix 8.1

Participant C: Comparison of Themes Across Coaching Sessions

Table 8.1.1

Comparison of themes in diagnostic and coaching session 1

Themes from diagnostic coaching session	Themes from coaching session 1
Loyal Servant	
Hopeless future	
Unfathomable failure vs. respectful feedback	
Pride in work	Bureaucracy works for me (pride in skills of work)
Emotional cost Anger and resentment (outwardly focussed)	Hurting Inwardly focussed self-critic
Valued/Unvalued	Claiming own value
Seeking support vs. risk of trusting	Dependency on others for outcomes Offering support to others
	Sources of confidence (in self)
	Needing the Power of Personal Presence
	Staying under the Radar (the costs of being a low visibility contributor)
	Making an effort
	Open to feedback
	Challenging own negative thinking
	Make an effort (to influence outcomes)
	Challenge the initial story

	Change and no change (context is unchanged, noticing small changes in self)
	Need to be positive
	Reduce power distance with boss
	Challenge own passivity
	Belief in fate (as the preferred solution)
	Limits of own expertise

Table 8.1.2

Comparison of Themes in Coaching Sessions 1 and 2

Themes from coaching session 1	Themes from coaching session 2
Bureaucracy works for me	
Hurting	
Dependency	
Needing the Power of Presence	
Staying under the radar	
Open to feedback	
Sources of confidence	Own sources of confidence Sources of other's confidence in me
Supporting others (vs. seeking support)	Seek appreciation
Claiming my value	Claiming own authority
Challenging own thinking	Siren Voices Personal Fears Personal risks
Making an effort	Ambivalence: Effort in vs. likely return Want me don't test me
Challenging the first story	Carrying an old story
Change and no change	Seeking certainty
	Rejection by mainstream
	Discounted
	Sources of energy
	Valuing own history
	Value of Youth vs. Value of Age
	Career Time

Table 8.1.3

Comparison of Themes in Coaching Sessions 2 and 3

Themes from coaching session 2	Themes from coaching session 3
Own sources of confidence Sources of other's confidence in me	
Discounted	
Siren Voices Personal Fears Personal risks	
Ambivalence: Effort in vs. likely return Want me don't test me	
Rejection by mainstream	
Sources of energy	
Career Time	
Carrying an old story	Career possibility Career failure?
Valuing own history	Career pay-off
Seeking certainty	Living with uncertainty Search for clarity
Seek appreciation	Offering and receiving support
Claiming own authority	Projecting the 'I'
Value of Youth vs. Value of Age	Not too old
	Claiming Style Strengths
	Claiming Emotional Intelligence
	Claiming the Value of Experience
	Claiming Managerial Skills
	Claiming Quality Outcomes

	Claiming Knowledge of the System
	Claiming Specialist Skills
	Claiming Process Skills
	Dislike of self-promotion
	Open to failure
	Passive self
	Taking control of the conversation
	Move into proactivity
	Entering the competition
	The skills of competing

Table 8.1.4

Comparison of Themes in Coaching Sessions 3 and 4

Themes from coaching session 3	Themes from coaching session 4
Not too old	
Career pay-off	
Entering the competition	
The skills of competing	
Career failure	
Projecting the 'I'	
Dislike of self-promotion	
Claiming Style Strengths	
Claiming Emotional Intelligence	
Claiming the Value of Experience	
Claiming Managerial Skills	
Claiming Quality Outcomes	
Claiming Knowledge of the System	
Claiming Specialist Skills	
Open to failure	
Taking control of the conversation	
Career Possibility	Possibilities
Living with uncertainty	Facing reality
Search for clarity	Still seeking certainty
Move into proactivity	The proactive skills of job search

Offering and receiving support	Solidity of family support The importance of diverse sources of support being available
Passive self	Passive Self
	Confidence
	Claiming strengths
	Value of coaching
	I'm in charge
	Fear of passive working future
	Conditions that work for me
	The importance of relationships
	Escaping from difficulty
	Ambivalence about other's feedback
	Role modelling for resilience
	Gaining perspective
	Down but coming back
	Adjustment helps
	Self-belief
	Resilience gives protection
	Boldness pays

Appendix 8.2

Participant J: Comparison of Themes Across Coaching Sessions

Table 8.2.1

Comparison of Themes In Diagnostic Session and Coaching Session 1

Themes from diagnostic coaching session	Themes from coaching session 1
Others' reassurance validates	Seeking reassurance
Culture change is uncomfortable	Change means swimming in dangerous waters
Uncertainty Desire for certainty	Seeking safety underfoot Cautious self Comfort with the known
Cheated by lack of meritocracy	Failure from lack of connect with role
Capability questioned	Unpolished performance
Career led by others	
Negative labelling	
Organisational target	
Flight as the preferred choice	
Actions from failure insights	
Benefiting from lack of meritocracy	
Deskilled by directness	
Partner challenges and supports	
Careering off track	
The pay offs of fight	
Retrospective insights from failure	

Got it wrong	
Risk of history repeating itself	
The power of rumour	
Negative feedback destabilises	
There is no protection	
Ambition vs. self-doubt	
Personal vs. circumstantial rejection	
Auditing is not a career	
Defusing negative cognitions	
Tackling feelings to change thoughts	
Internalised negative feelings	
Projective fears	
Fear of the dark place	
	Committing to apply
	The demands of moving up a gear
	Ambitions for future
	Owning past projections
	Claiming skills
	Not an equal
	Need self-belief
	Projecting weaknesses onto another
	Thoughts are barriers
	The dangers of thinking
	Thinking less helps

	The effort of controlling thoughts
	Risks of staying too long
	Fear of an audience

Table 8.2.2

Comparison of Themes In Coaching Sessions 1 and 2

Themes from coaching session 1	**Themes from coaching session 2**
Claiming skills	Claiming capability
Not an equal	Discounting self to others' status
Ambitions for future Committing to apply	Unreadiness for promotion Risks of a bigger role Danger of seeking promotion vs. safety of moving sideways Being replaced Fresh vs. stale
Need self-belief	Accepting others judgements Being stopped by other's judgements Not trusting own judgements The positive experience of self belief Leaking away of self belief Affirming self vs. others perceptions
Thoughts are barriers The dangers of thinking Thinking less helps The effort of controlling thoughts	The value of noticing thoughts Noticing thinking as a practicing art Positive reframing
Seeking reassurance	Others feedback is a temporary palliative Test the message
Seeking safety underfoot	Life has peaks and troughs
Failure comes from lack of connection	
Unpolished performance	
Cautious self	

Comfort with the known	
Risks of staying too long	
Fear of an audience	
Owning past projections	
Change means swimming in dangerous waters	
Projecting weaknesses onto another	
The demands of moving up a gear	
	The boss as gatekeeper
	Going off the career rails
	Importance of finding a career track
	Hanging future on rumour
	Excluded from communication
	Impact of exclusion
	Fear of failure as a performance motivator
	Wake up call to recovery
	Harnessing energy to recover
	Partner as supporting challenger
	Unconditional family support
	Needing time to process thoughts
	Delayed emotional impact

Table 8.2.3

Comparisons of Themes In Coaching Sessions 2 and 3

Themes from coaching session 2	Themes from coaching session 3
The value of noticing thoughts Noticing thinking as a practicing art	Just a thought
Hanging future on rumour Excluded from communication Impact of exclusion	Discomfort of not knowing
Life is peaks and troughs	Working with the waves of change
Affirming self vs. others perceptions	Asserting self The risk of non-assertion Not directed by other signals
Needing time to process thoughts	The unexplained freezes thought Flying with the unexpected The benefits of instinct over preparedness
Not trusting own judgement	The value of judgement
Leaking away of self-belief	Thinking limits self-belief
The positive experience of self-belief	Positive use of self-belief Self-belief grows through action Self-belief as overconfidence is risky
Harnessing energy to recover	Challenged by different energies to my own
The boss as gatekeeper	Separating self from boss
Others feedback a temporary palliative	
Accepting other's judgements	
Being stopped by other's judgements	
Testing the message	
Being replaced	

Unreadiness for promotion	
Going off the career rails	
Importance of finding a career track	
Risks of a bigger role	
Dangers vs. safety of moving sideways	
Fear of failure as a performance motivator	
Denying own potential	
Claiming capability	
Fresh vs. stale	
Giving away self to status	
Wake up call to recovery	
Delayed emotional impact	
Partner as supporting challenger	
Unconditional support	
Positive reframing	
	Unsettling power of leaders
	The modelling power of leaders
	Wanting presence
	Doing presence
	The Lost Voice
	Amplifying the voice
	Being observed heightens internal focus

	Be brief to influence
	Shifting confidence barometer
	Changing perceptions of me
	Self-trust zones
	The value of pragmatism
	Value in challenge
	Adjusting to new clients
	Be prepared
	Steeling vs. steeled

Table 8.2.4

Comparison of Themes in Coaching Sessions 3 and 4

Themes from coaching session 3	Themes from coaching session 4
Unsettling power of leaders	Power of senior leaders
Just a thought	Noticing the thought
Comfort in standing out	The importance of profile
The unexplained freezes thought	Closing down thinking Judged as a slow thinker Need time to think
Adjusting to new clients	Focus on other person's needs
Shifting confidence barometer	Riding a wave of success
Be prepared	Preparing strategically Preparing less Knowledge gives me control
The value of judgement	Trusting judgement
The benefits of instinct over preparedness	Succeeding with improvisation
Wanting presence Doing presence	Beginning well Losing presence
Flying with the unexpected	Thrown by the unfamiliar
The modelling power of leaders	
Separating self from boss	
Presence in voice	
The lost voice	
Amplifying the voice	
Working with the waves of change	
Self-belief as overconfidence is risky	
Positive use of self-belief	

Self-belief grows through action	
Thinking limits self-belief	
Challenged by different energies to my own	
Self-trust zones	
Denying own potential	
Being observed heightens internal focus	
The value of pragmatism	
Asserting self	
The risk of non-assertion	
Not directed by other signals	
Changing perceptions of me	
Discomfort of not knowing	
The value of challenge	
Be brief to influence	
Steeling vs. steeled	
	Resilience increased

Appendix 9.1

Participant C: Themes and Concepts in Coaching Interventions

Table 9.1.1

Themes and Concepts in Diagnostic Session

Theme	Concepts
Empathising	Showing empathy
Engaging	Showing a shared excitement with his story Signalling wanting to understand his story Using his language to signal staying engaged with his thoughts Using the language of the written narrative to signal engagement
Focussing	Summarising divergent content to keep focus on participant's story Interrupting to stop diversion from story Moving into the present story rather than focussing on past stories Keeping him on track Sharpening the focus
Clarifying	Clarifying meaning Clarifying understanding Checking understanding
Working with language	Using his language to encourage further disclosure Using his language to open up further thinking and feeling Mirroring his words to encourage the offering of more information Using his words to understand what it

	means to him Using his language to check understanding of its meaning Reflecting his language to signal understanding of his preferred way of operating in the world Emphasising particular words to understand more about an experience of failure Mirroring words to make it safe to self-disclose
Testing	Testing if an important piece of information has been overlooked Testing the gap between behaviour and words Testing confidence Testing the underlying message of the narrative Testing his commitment to a less ambitious career agenda Testing the conclusion he is drawing from his situation
Challenging	Challenging to encourage facing the reality of the current difficulty Challenging a version of the story which discounts his needs Challenging his belief that his stress is invisible to others Challenging him to own generalised statements as relating to himself Challenging him to stay where he is now rather than where he wants the story to end Challenging his dismissal of himself Challenge to get specifics identified rather than offering general statements
Theorising	Seeking out what his theory of explanation is
Speaking For	Inferring – reading between the lines of what has been written Expressing what I think he is feeling to test out its truth Hypothesising on his behalf about the wisdom of a career choice

	Stating the unsaid tentatively to allow for it being challenged Stating what is unsaid but hinted at in the written narrative Expressing the hope which I think he holds Picking up on status needs and reflecting them back to him
Crystallising	Saying more succinctly and directly what he says Stating in more direct terms what he alludes to
Reassuring	Reassuring that negative thoughts are allowable
Claiming	Claiming what he won't claim for himself Claiming what he won't directly claim for himself
Bringing Out	The tension between what he feels and thinks
Unearthing emotion	Using his language of emotion to validate emotional disclosure Encouraging disclosure of feelings rather than facts Using his words to encourage admission of emotional impact Encouraging acknowledgement of the impact of living with the story To acknowledge strong feelings (but not work with them) Using feeling language to move him beyond the facts of his story Probing to understand the impact of the event on him
Using the unspoken	Giving the nonverbal information a place in the conversation Using nonverbal information to signal that it is being heard
Reality checking	Reality checking an earlier decision Checking out reality Using more direct words to bring out the reality of the situation
	Moving him into diagnosis of need Highlighting the resilience gap he faces

Diagnosing	Helping him realise what in him needs to be better resourced Summarising in clear language his resilience needs
Owning	Taking ownership of his resilience agenda Getting identification of what needs to be in place behaviourally before his desired outcomes are realised Helping him recognise how he needs to be to feel resilient
Committing	Checking commitment Rechecking commitment Restating the outcomes that would come to him from resilience

Table 9.1.2

Themes and Concepts in Coaching Session 1

Themes	Concepts
Recontracting	Checking on agreed agenda Recontracting in the context of progress Linking the coaching contract to what is happening now
Working his language	Using his language to highlight the difficulty of what he is asking of himself Using his language to reinforce his insight Working with his language
Reinforcing insights and movement	Reinforcing his awareness of his resources in relation to presence Reinforcing his insight to actively seek out feedback Reinforcing a shift in language Reinforcing a key concept in his value set – respect Reinforcing his right to claim assertive language Reinforcing his insight that his confidence comes from authority Reinforcing the virtuous circle he creates between positive thought/positive action/positive thought Reinforcing the insights he claims Reinforcing the insight that he flourishes with authority and certainty Reinforcing that he has experienced presence in concrete terms Reinforcing his concepts Reflecting back a physical change in his appearance to reinforce his thought Reflecting back a shift in his thinking to a more positive stance Reinforcing progress
Checking	Checking to understand thinking behind a more positive stance Checking on where he is relation to his story Checking out a value Checking understanding Checking to understand what he gains from work

	Questioning to gain clarification of understanding Reality testing Clarifying understanding of his concepts Checking on unspoken emotion Checking a concept developed through synthesising his ideas
Providing feedback	Feedback on the passivity of his language Feedback on the impact of his projecting presence Feedback on the value of his seeking feedback from others
Encouraging invitation	Encouraging him to seek out feedback Encouraging him to increase his awareness of his resources Encouraging him to build a larger picture of himself doing presence Inviting him to make concrete his concept of presence Encouraging him to focus on eliciting strengths in his feedback Encouraging his insight of seeking others views of him Invitation to translate presence into actions Encouragement to claim zones of confidence
Highlighting/Bringing to Attention	Highlighting the heart/head tussle Highlighting that others will see things he misses Higlighting the tension between the rational and emotional self in relation to his story Highlighting that the development gap is not so large as to be unattainable Highlighting the power of the internal voice
Challenging	Challenging through feedback the language he uses with figures of authority Challenging him to embody presence Challenging to test out the gap between knowing what to do and being able to do it.
Unearthing emotion	Unearthing emotion Magnifying emotion to enable a view of how it can affect behaviour

Testing out	Testing of what change asks of him Testing out how far he has lost a sense of authority Testing a thought to check accuracy of understanding Testing out which concept is of most relevance to him now Seeking out his hypothesis for his behaviour
Providing a tool to match preferred style	Establishing a measure of presence Using concept of a measure to define a goal outcome Repeating the measure to focus attention on his resources Providing a template to facilitate gaining feedback
Using solution focus to divert from problem focus	To use a solution focussed approach to increase awareness of what is there Focussing attention on how he does confidence Providing a broader framework to help explain his behaviour
Normalising	Normalising negative emotions
Rehearsing	Rehearsing presence in language
Signalling expectation of him between sessions	Signal on-going writing as part of the coaching process Positioning what I expect him to bring to next session

Table 9.1.3

Themes and Concepts in Coaching Session 2

Theme	Concept
Reconnecting	Signalling that he has control over the session and its location Connecting him with where he is today Reconnecting with his inter-session narrative Linking spoken content with emotions expressed in previous session
Working with the internal voice	Inviting him to share his siren voice Resizing the siren voice as just a thought Bringing into the space the internal voice that is louder than any external message about his value Curiosity about the internal voice messages Accepting the power of those voices Bringing in the internal gremlins that speak to him Positioning the internal voice as a harsh critic Resizing the siren voice as just a thought Positioning too old as one thought only
Frameworking	Explaining the power of particular thoughts to distort Positioning siren voices within the ACT theoretical framework Positioning siren voices as being given the power of truth, rather than being true
Normalising	Positioning siren voices as part of being human Normalising internal voices and their repeated messages
Focussing	Focusing his thinking over his desire to recount history Interrupting to focus and being constantly interrupted in is desire to tell his story Refocussing session on link with confidence rather than collecting more data Asking him to put his story aside to focus on building his resilience agenda

	Reconnecting him with his homework of linking confidence with authority and presence
Exploring the discount	Allowing in the discounting voice Noting his reluctance to accept feedback that his voice counts Seeking evidence that he does not count Picking up the belief that he does not count
Speaking as if him to expose issues	Espousing his theory that effort won't lead to success Speaking as though I am him to validate his voice and pull out tensions in his thinking Expressing resentment on his behalf Expressing resistance on his behalf
Bringing in supporting data	Summarising the areas of confidence that others have in him, and which he can recognise. Encouraging him to claim his feedback Magnifying a feedback message that signals confidence in him Signalling that the feedback does not surprise him Encouraging elicitation of more feedback from colleagues
Flipping the coin	Flipping the focus to explore how he undermines himself Inviting exposure of the unconfident self
Testing	Testing out if he sees his experience as elderly
Working with his language to expose an issue	Using key phrases in his language to expose the power of the too old thought Repeating the world 'old' to test his response Deliberately using the word 'old' to bring the issue of age into open space Using his language to enter the new territory of age Picking up a key word that reveals an unspoken concern Expressing the issue of age directly
Highlighting fear	Highlighting that he has set up a mind-set of failure Positioning fear of failure as trumping

	knowledge and skills Highlighting the discount as a self-generated fear Inviting him to embody what fear of being discounted does to him
Direct communication	Stating directly that he is holding onto his resilience story that he should be taken care of Stating the issue directly that he does not have a willingness to risk rejection
Highlighting contradictions	Reflecting his ambivalence about applying for a job Stating the tension as effort vs. risk of rejection Highlighting the gap between his story of being unheard and other stories of his intervention counting
Acknowledging	Acknowledging the work he has done Inviting him to bring his homework data into the conversation space
Empathising	Empathising with his illness To understand the impact of his ill health on thoughts and feelings
Inviting to reveal the unspoken	Inviting him to lay out his beliefs about the likelihood of success in a job application Inviting him to reveal his fantasy about who will be appointed
Reality checking	Reality checking on whether his silence matters to him Reality checking how much effort he is willing to make for a potential prize
Confirming	Signalling the energy shift in his nonverbal behaviour when the is doing work that he knows he does well and which is valued
Challenging	Challenging the belief that impact is linked to volubility

Table 9.1.4

Themes from Coaching Interventions in Coaching Session 3

Theme	Concepts
Reconnecting and contracting	Checking out buy in to the contract for the session Checking into his state of mind Checking if inter-session writing reflects who he is that day Linking with previous sessions to check on outcomes Recontracting Testing if the work of the session is about claiming
Coachee taking control	Being led by the coachee to revisit a part of the exercise Accepting his model of boasting Inviting him to evaluate his claiming answers Offering choices in direction of the session Giving him control of the exercise by asking to define key job demands Checking if he recognises the person described in my feedback Inviting him to record his claims Challenging his view of the coach as advice giver Reflecting back that he knows what he needs to do best Asking him to define the difference between boasting and claiming Inviting him to self-evaluate his presentation
Lack of self valuing	Noticing lack of self valuing Feeding back his reliance on others view of him
Facing Reality	Wondering if the shift in self is caused by knowing what he has to face Picking up his non emotional response to his potential exiting Feeding in facing reality as a marker of resilience to signal its availability to him Facing the reality of self marketing To show how facing reality will help his

	resilience Facing reality means claiming your talents to others Identifying real as distinct from stated need Positioning an interview as a facing of reality
Rejection of self marketing	Highlighting the discomfort of self marketing Positioning his need as how to claim rather than dismissing those that do Picking up his judgement of those who make claims for themselves Checking if claiming feels like boasting
Challenge of claiming with authenticity	Highlighting the courage needed to make a claim Sensing a gap between internalised confidence and the ability to articulate it. Challenging him to claim his right to the job Inviting him to trust his claims Inviting him to claim the evidence of achievement Challenging him to make the claim with strength Asking him to use a truthful 'I' voice Checking if the story models the claims he makes Providing more opportunities to claim through repetition Feedback on need to claim what he knows to be true Being a successful interviewee asks that he make claims and defends them Separating out claiming own qualities vs. claiming knowledge, experience and expertise Highlighting that he can defend a claim against criticism Linking claiming with his need to hear himself as much as the interviewers Checking if he has a role model for doing claiming in an OK way Scoping claiming as needing to be authentic to him Checking how he will operationalize the claims he makes

Language Change	Asking him to hold and recognise the change in his language Celebrating the language shift Reflecting a shift in his language about himself Highlighting a shift between the self-language of the first session and current session Contrasting the language of determined vs. helpless Stopping him to draw his attention to his shift in language from passive to determined
Voice change	Reflecting the strength and fluency in his voice in contrast to earlier voice
Checking will	Checking on his readiness to engage in the exercise
Extending challenge	Extending the exercise
Defining a legitimate model of claiming	Articulating his model of being able to trust claims made from an 'I' voice Being able to define how they did it Reflecting his model as one that others will use with him
Distilling claims by repositioning story	Direction to use story as a backdrop not centre stage Focussing his thinking away from story and towards his qualities Reinforcing a model of principle first before story Challenging him to condense his words to increase impact Feedback that reduces impact when he relies on storytelling Challenge him to own capability without the wrapping of his story Inviting a story to back up a claim not story before claim Holding up his model of examination: inference from story Challenging him on impact of his claiming Summarising his version Confirming increased impact when he claims for himself rather than via story Checking on the conviction of his replies

	when condensed and reflected by him Need to condense replies Challenge that listeners want a distilled version
Affirming feedback	Reflecting back the depth and breadth of his knowledge Reinforcing what works for him Reinforcing his insights re preparing for interviews Signalling to him the authenticity of his knowledge Affirming his experience Providing affirming feedback Affirming his conviction Positioning coach as offering feedback Feedback on his power in making his claims Feedback on the power of his voice when engaged with an activity Mirroring back his conviction Reflecting back a sense of him being fired up Mirroring back a sense of his strength Feedback on his conviction and confidence
Focussing	Focussing his story on its meaning for him Focussing him on learning from the exercise Focussing him to make link between what he expects of others and how he needs to be
Separating out	Separating out input of internal voice from the output which is visible to others Separating out the surplus role from the surplus person Feedback on the invisibility of the internal dialogue to others Separating out others truth from it being the truth
Moving from passivity	Checking out sense of him being spurred into action Picking up a shift from passivity to holding out for what he wants
Embodying confidence	Asking him to physically hold his confidence

	Preparing him for exercise by inviting him to physically experience confidence
Working his language	Using his language to signal empathy Reflecting back his language of liberation
Working with nonverbal information	Reflecting back on nonverbal messages about his enjoyment of busyness Picking up on nonverbal information on a shift in his thinking Feeding back on his nonverbal messages of dislike of boasting Feeding back on nonverbal information signalling empathy for the job
Checking on the siren voice	Listening with previous session to check if siren voice is operating Testing out the internal voice message Feedback that being a successful interviewee asks that he suppresses the internal voice Linking his understanding of himself to the internal voice Reflecting his insight that the inner voice was not discounting him Highlighting that the harsh self-critic does not necessarily hold the truth
Linking	Linking with first session and his telling of his story in terms of others valuing of him Picking up link between current statements and written work Linking back to the focus of previous sessions and recognising that a thought is not necessarily a truth
Summarising	Summarising main themes of his contribution Summarising to reflect back the depth of his knowledge
Providing structure	Structuring a framework to enable him to make claims Reflecting back his preference for clarity Reinforcing structuring as helpful to his thinking Being able to define measurable outcomes
Clarifying	Clarifying understanding of the demands of the role Questioning to understand what having clarity of outcome means for him

Challenging	Offering him a challenge Challenging him on use of 'we'
Closing session	Seeking specific feedback on value of session Offering further support in interview preparation Checking commitment to action

Table 9.1.5

Themes and Concepts in Coaching Session 4

Theme	Concepts
Contracting	Contracting Recontracting Reconnecting with inter session narrative Working with the language of the narrative
Establishing current reality	Asking him to describe how he is now Reviewing where he is now Repeating language of previous session to test if he still feels liberated
Recognising the shift	Asking him to position himself now vs. when we first met Highlighting movement I have witnessed in him Drawing attention to the shift from hopeless C to hopeful C Feedback on the shift in how he looks and sounds since first session Linking how he is not being able to get a good outcome
Recognising resources	Reinforcing his liking for pressure Reinforcing his view of himself at his best
Understanding response to rejection	Checking his response to job rejection Testing how he is post disappointment Noticing lack of concern re job rejection Focussing attention on boss's concern for wider issue not his case Reflecting back anger Anger removed by respectful feedback
Extrapolation to clarify messages	Summarising extended input to help his thinking Testing out if extrapolation is accurate Helping him see his own learning by framing content in a larger context Synthesising his content to make the message clearer Capturing his content and extrapolating bigger messages for him to test out

Facing the challenges of transition	Testing out his feelings about being in a career transition process Confronting the reality that his transition process could be slow and impact on his resilience Asking him to summarise what will help him be the best resources during transition Positioning movement as requiring him to disconnect Inputting successful transition as allowing energy to flow towards something rather than holding on Positioning him as in a transition with no clear end point
His behavioural risks in transition	Expressing my fear of his being a good departmental citizen and not focussing his own needs Turning the lens to focus on his worth not that of his manager Reflecting his model of him becoming a filler in Highlighting the risk of trying to make more of what is rather than putting energy towards what could be Challenging him on what he can be doing to build for the longer term His attitude shaping others response to him Mirroring back the value of holding purpose in mind and not getting caught by the day to day Checking on how his job diminishing will affect him
Facing reality	Highlighting that his experience tells him the boldness of facing a situation helps him be back in control Value of facing reality vs. hoping Reflecting back his realism about time frames for job
Building his resilience template	Inviting him to access what he knows about keeping in touch with his resources Checking what helps his confidence grow Refocusing him on resilience over job search Encouraging him to build a more detailed picture Encouraging him to widen his thinking

	about personal resources beyond work The value of a supportive manager Confidence of family support Keeping him on track re recognising resources Inviting him to extend his analysis Normalising the value of seeking enjoyment in a difficult time Extrapolating the value of the activity in mental and physical health terms Linking his strategy with what wider research has shown
Road testing his resilience template	Inviting him to road test his resilience template against another situation Checking what in his template would be of use to him Encouraging him to make link between past and present Keeping him in touch with outputs
Testing his thinking	Challenging him to test his thinking Challenging his statement of having given little effort to job application Testing his statement for its relevance Pulling out his messages to hold them up for examination
Encouraging action	Mirroring back the value of boldness to him Reinforcing the value of him taking action Linking his Churchill quote to the value of his taking initiative Positioning the need to take the resourceful self to the Career Transition Service not the helpless seeker of rescue
Building a sustaining anchor	Inputting the value of a personal anchor to remind himself of his learning on a bad day Linking his sustaining anchor with his own resilience need Crystallising the message of his sustaining anchor Encouraging him to claim his sustaining anchor Focussing him on sustaining change Focussing him on sustaining his strategy Affirming his choice of anchor Reflecting on the rightness of his message to support his resilience

Offering structure	Picking up his need for structure Positioning the exercise Offering a framework for identifying resilience resources Positioning framework as an experiment Holding the framework of the exercise and guiding him through it Ordering his thoughts Providing an example to help his thinking
Giving him control	Leaving the offer to experiment open to being replaced by his idea Reinforcing that he is in control
Closing	Signalling closure Reflecting back the clarity of his future strategy Inviting him to keep me informed of outcome Expressing thankfulness for his input Reassurance of confidentiality Next steps Closing

Appendix 9.2

Participant J: Themes and Concepts in Coaching Interventions

Table 9.2.1

Themes and Concepts in Diagnostic Session

Theme	Concepts
Signalling engagement	Signalling curiosity Summarising to signal listening Reinforcing enthusiasm from the agenda they have set Signalling wanting to understand more
Working with their language	Use their language to encourage further disclosure Mirroring their words to encourage deeper thinking Mirroring back language that signals strong feelings Mirroring the language code of the speaker to signal empathy Using his language to signal listening and engagement Picking up on powerful words to show comfort with strong feelings Grouping key words in the written and spoken narrative to magnify the impact of their story on them
Imaging	Using the images he creates as a vehicle for deepening consideration Using images to signal respect for his mode of communication
Magnifying	Highlighting phrases that stood out in the written narrative Identifying key concepts that are present in the telling of the story
Empathising	Showing empathy Reinforcing the strength of their feeling
Probing	Clarifying meaning Probing for more information Probing for better understanding

Validating	Validating the irrational as well as the rational Validating their language
Widening perspective	Widening perspective on issue to bring in other aspects of his life To understand the life messages that are brought to the story
Testing	Testing to understand where they place responsibility for his situation Testing out the unspoken in the written narrative To make the issue more immediate rather than distancing self from it Using visual imagery to test out its wider significance beyond its immediate application Rephrasing terms in more direct language to bring issues into the open Testing out assumptions I have made from the written narrative Testing commitment to an alternative version of his story The tensions in the story
Challenge	Challenging the discounting of strength of feeling Challenging belief in the possibility of certainty
Taking Ownership	Encouragement to define their own resilience focus Inviting the participant to claim what in their resilience needs support Inviting measures of how regained resilience would show itself Checking that they buy into the agenda they have defined Restating the agenda in order to check accuracy of understanding

Table 9.2.2

Themes and Concepts in Coaching Session 1

Theme	Concepts
Recontracting	Checking the contract is right Checking commitment to defined agenda Focussing attention on the self-belief agenda Connecting agenda to what is happening in work
Working his language	Using his language to pull out tensions Using his language to heighten sense of lack of self belief Working with his metaphors Working with his metaphors to deepen thinking Working with his visual imagery
Reality checking	Reality checking Understanding content Checking on emotions
Testing	Testing a hypothesis of how he operates in the world
Reinforcing insights	Explaining how his insight affected his behaviour in the story Reinforcing his own insight on the role of the mind Reinforcing recognition of projection as part of his story Magnifying the importance given to one person
Normalising	To normalise thinking as inevitable without being inevitably true Normalising his response to a situation
Highlighting	Highlighting how we live by the story we create Highlighting that there are multiple stories available from which we choose one Highlighting faulty thinking in his hypothesis of he how operates in the world

Challenging the power of thought	To position thought as not representing reality To explain the power he gives to his thoughts To encourage him to stop struggling with his thoughts To help recognition of how he can make his life easier To suggest reducing the power of his thoughts as a means of addressing his lack of self belief
Increasing self-awareness	To increase awareness of noticing the thought To increase his awareness of the judging thoughts he carries with him Inviting expressing of the thought To examine a key thought he carries with him
Illustrating	To illustrate how we struggle with a difficult thought To explain the difference between a thinking and a judging self To make a cognitive concept concrete To provide an example of streaming thoughts in action To illustrate how behaviours follow the history we create
Separating	To help him separate himself from the thought To expose the difference between being caught by a thought and being able to examine a thought To enable him to examine his thoughts rather than being taken over by them
Providing an explicit model	To explain a model of accepting a thought without being overwhelmed by it. To provide a theory of acceptance therapy related to the date has had given To explain To introduce the idea that our work is in challenging his cognitive processes To provide a framework to explain his thought processes.

Table 9.2.3

Themes and Concepts in Coaching Session 2

Themes	Concepts
Recontracting	Recontract for session Reconnecting with outcome from previous session Review of agreed actions
Keeping in the Now	Holding him to what is known not negative future scenarios Anchoring him in the present Highlighting his negative future scenario building Moving the story to the present Focussing him on working on an issue vs. telling more of the story Focussing on identified area
Challenging him to claim his own voice	Challenging him to own his own evidence rather than others Challenge him to claim his own voice rather than relying on others Staying with the challenge Testing out when others approval is unhelpful Testing out the reliability of his own insight Pushing him to own his own resources Challenging him to claim capabilities for himself Challenge to unearth an example of acting on own self-belief separate from others Challenging him to focus on own efficacy Provoking him to claim what in himself he can trust To hold him to unearthing a situation in which he has operated his self-belief Challenging his seeking self-belief in others view of him
Separating self from others	Enabling him to recognise that he does have a self-righting mechanism Clarifying thinking to help recognition that he is capable of self-belief unconnected from immediate performance data

	To separate him from other people's approval Reflecting back his ability to own self belief
Reinforcing changed thinking	Mirroring back a change in cognitive process Reinforcing his insight Reinforcing his view of others approval as a drink that only refreshes for a short time Reinforcing the importance of what he did in holding self-belief Mirroring back his ability to hold self-belief in the face of criticism
Acceptance	Signalling acceptance of his denial of parental influence Allowing for the rational and the irrational self His lack of certainty re his need for others affirmation
Direct communication	Stating directly what he alludes to i.e. feelings of inferiority Bringing into the open an unstated belief Rephrasing a thought to heighten awareness of the downside of accepting others views Sharpening his language to make a thought clearer Testing out a hunch that he cannot trust his own self judgement
Reinforcing shift	Supporting his progress Reinforcing his own insight that others belief in him is less powerful than his own Reinforcing recognition of his reliance on others feedback
Reflecting back to encourage reconsideration	His view that others view of him can be helpful to his thinking His need for evidence
Testing historical influences	Gaining an understanding of how old is the belief in the validation of others Testing the longevity of needing others' approval

Testing for evidence of change	Seeking understanding of his processing as signalling a possible change Testing out if thought processes are changing Testing if he is bringing a different cognitive model to the situation
Highlighting limitations to thought	Showing that others feedback is a temporary palliative Highlighting that others feedback is not sustaining him
Signalling belief	Signalling belief that he can hold self-belief Signalling that attitudes are learnt not genetic Asking him to claim 20 things in himself he can trust in
Widening the system	Making his partner an overt part of his system Reflecting back the gap between his view and that of his partner
Working with his communication style	Signalling respect by working with his imagery Working the language of his imagery to signpost that there is a decision point for him Reflecting the language he uses re the value of others feedback Signalling respect for his language Reflecting nonverbal information
Clarifying	Clarifying understanding of story Signalling need for clarification
Normalising the inconsistency of change	Normalising progress as non linear Signalling that insights need continued practice
Normalise and challenge	Normalising the value of short term injection of praise but not long term addiction to others praise. Normalising the desire for approval but also highlighting its limitation
Reality checking	Desire for promotion The reality of pragmatism in his response to difficulty

Structuring	Providing a framework for recognising the resources he has for getting back into balance To enable him to focus more clearly on his resources

Table 9.2

Themes and Concepts in Coaching Session 3

Theme	Concepts
Reconnecting	To gain an understanding of how he is feeling in relation to inter-session narrative Reconnecting with where he is positioned today Checking in on whether the written narrative signals shift in self-perception Assurance that his homework will be used in session
Building his model of self belief	Understanding his model of self belief Reflecting back a sense that he needs to know the limits of infallible self-belief in order not be self-deluded His developing a position of self-belief as not grandiose but in the service of Using business context model to illustrate the limits of unchecked self-belief Unearthing the tension he holds between self-belief as valuable to acting with confidence and self-belief as over inflation of capability Working to unpick his anecdote to synthesise what it signals to him about what true self-belief Challenging the idea that self-belief is a necessary prerequisite to action Reflecting back his analysis that self-belief is trusting when an opportunity comes one can use it to good effect. Unpicking his football story to highlight self-belief as grounded in a sense that one can make a difference. Reality checking his belief that others have unwavering self-belief
Risk taking for growth	Inviting him to take a risk in doing something differently Highlighting there are no guarantees from taking a risk Highlighting the rewards that can come from risk Using a current live piece of work to test out his willingness to take a risk in the

	service of self belief Challenging him to name the risk he is willing to take Challenging him to see risk as a route to self-belief Unearthing the challenges that can follow from behaving differently e.g. risking relationship
The challenge of acting without certainty	Direction not to accept total success Reinforcement of the idea that he can have presence without being totally successful Challenge him to have presence without all the prerequisites lined up Reality checking his expectations of control as a prerequisite to presence may not be deliverable
Visualising success	Positioning visualisation as an experiment in self belief Encouraging the building of a more and more detailed picture Invite him to define himself in terms of how he wants to be in the meeting Encouraging him provide detail of himself with presence Encouraging him to trust his visual picture Working with visual imagery to define the embodiment of presence Repeating key phrases to reinforce the picture of presence he is building Encouragement to add to the picture Working with his preference for visual imagery to ask him to describe himself with presence
Hearing the Voice	Enabling him to hear his voice with presence Reinforcing the importance and power of voice Establishing that he can hear his strong voice
Linking insights	Linking his visualisation of a piece of work with the broader issue of self belief Linking his visualisation back to the issue of taking a risk in the service of self belief Linking session work with homework of self trust Debriefing after the meeting to capture

	what he noticed about himself
Anchoring learning	Invitation to create an anchor that keeps him connected to his strong voice Creating an anchor from memory of a strong leader's voice Inviting him to record what in the visualisation is of value to him Summarising the qualities he wishes to claim to help embed their value to him
Accessing resources	Focussing him on what he needs to do create success rather than on what he won't be able to do Reinforcing confidence resources and the ability to deal with change Challenging him to own what in his self-trust repertoire he wants to call on Accessing what he can trust in the context of a piece of live work Reminding him that he knows how to adapt his message to different audiences Reminding him that he has used the skill in a previous context Focussing on confidence resources not confidence deficits Linking qualities with their support to having presence
Separating	Signalling that he is no longer using his boss as his point of reference Signalling a shift in thinking from reliance on boss as role model to someone who stands separate to show his capabilities Encouraging him to separate from his boss and assert his own strengths
Flexing	Reinforcing his insight that flexibility is important to his retaining presence Highlighting that flexibility is as important as preparedness
Accessing mindfulness	Reinforcing his use of mindfulness to keep him on track Mirroring back the value of noticing but not getting caught by the thought
Adapting communication	Pointing out the limitations of his communication style when dealing with others with a different style Inviting him to use what he already knows about working with a different style

	Mirroring back the changes he sees in others when he changes his approach Direction to notice self and impact on others Encouraging him to define how he will do the message
Challenging self-limitations	Challenging him to take a risk from which self-belief could follow. Challenge him to focus on positive qualities he can trust in Challenge him to develop strategies to deal with the unsettling effect of others perceived reactions Challenging him to access his robust voice Encouraging disclosure of change in self perception
Rehearsing reality	Separating out comfort in the coaching space and comfort in the real action space Encouraging him to rehearse reality Focussing him on defining success in the real context
Measuring comfort to act	To get a measure of his level of comfort in risk taking in behaving differently Rechecking measure when visualises reality
Assessing behavioural demands	Identifying the need to be a driver and assertive Picking up on what needs to be different in his behaviour in the new role Checking if the demands of the new role are available to him Asking him to focus his attention on demands on self rather than perception of others
Working with the nonverbal	Reflecting nonverbal information to encourage further disclosure Picking up on the nonverbal data of a more certain voice
Supporting thinking	Supporting his thinking Reframing a quality as a behaviour
Testing	Testing out a sense of increased self-belief
Signalling	Positioning of next session as final session

Table 9.2.5

Themes and Concepts in Coaching Session 4

Theme	Concepts
Reconnecting	Checking how much output from last session he was able to operationalize Acknowledging his inter-session writings Reconnect with inter-session writings Inviting him to assess learning from being thrown into the situation he operationalized Reconnecting with intersession writing and theme of previous session
Linkages with previous sessions	Returning to previous session theme that tight focus stops him seeing more widely Summarising the outcomes of his thinking to link with key resilience theme in initial story Return to theme of self belief Using language of a previous visualisation to support his self-perception
Success followed by fear of failure	Reinforce success Signalling that his performance has been exceptional Testing his ability to live with success before fear of failure returns Reflect nonverbal information on his reaction to success
The weight of self expectation	Feedback on his high expectations of himself Pushing him to clarity what the weight of self expectation means Challenging his level of self expectation Feeding back size of his self-expectation Feedback on the level of expectation he puts on himself Feedback on nonverbal information signalling his lost sense of credibility Picking up how he puts himself on the back foot Feedback on the disconnection between his feelings and others perception of his performance Accepting his need not to be glib

Talent as contextual	Feedback on the risk to him that he values himself against a shifting context rather than focussing on his on-going skills Summarising his message to highlight that talent is not an absolute
Understanding the brain freeze	Inviting him to share the feelings that go with being put on the spot Identifying what would be helpful to him in the moment when the brain freezes Seeking out what stops him being solid under pressure
Expertise as contextual not absolute	Feedback that senses his anxiety about being exposed as a non-expert Testing out his need to have all knowledge available to be solid Need to connect expertise to others context not his Providing an example from another context to illustrate the impossibility of having all knowledge Reflecting back the sense that he gives of being the only person with an answer Positioning expertise as needing to be offered against the other person's need
The examined student	Noting his seeing observations as judgements Sharing an image of him as a schoolboy sitting an exam at every meeting Testing out how a senior audience impacts on his sense of self. Extending metaphor of exam to highlight the skills of knowing what to revise
Providing wider framework for understanding his response	Provide a framework for understanding how talent is defined in a business context Framing his emotional response within a psychometric framework he is familiar with
Widening the lens of attention	Widening the lens of attention from himself to how do others see him Recognising triggers for when he needs to broaden thinking Inputting the idea of needing to establish what the other person wants rather than focussing on needing to know everything Summarising his feedback that his thinking has broadened

	Positioning other people's need to know how much time he needs
The leadership lens	Leadership needs a wider lens Separating out leadership of the task from ownership of the content of the task Leadership is not about knowing how to do the best audit Signalling that leaders use resources to support them in meeting the needs of stakeholders Using a different business context to signal that leaders focus on stakeholders
Using others expertise in support of his leadership	Checking out additional resources To highlight how stepping back to view purpose also allows him to see other resources available to him Highlighting that his focus on knowing enough stops him considering who else knows and how he can use them
Planning with the client in mind	Highlighting difference in his preparedness approach if starts from client perspective Positioning the next meeting as an experiment Working with his visual image to invite him to invite what needs to be in his trolley when he prepares Asking him to operationalize planning differently against a live issue Inviting him to paint a detailed picture of what a client focussed approach to preparedness would look like
Transitioning to leadership	Positioning him as a leader Being judged as a leader Positioning him as in transition from expert to achieving leader Positioning him as a leader who has performed well
Focussing on impact not content	Using his language to return focus on his response to a situation rather than the content part Ignoring content and focussing on impact on him
Focussing on resilience resources	Inviting him to describe how he did success Focussing him on resilience resources

Getting the measure	Getting the measure of how often the worst case scenario happens Measuring his current resilience level Quantifying how long he needs before responding Extrapolating his most feared situation
Accessing mindful self	Confirming his ability to hold a thought without it becoming a burden Reflecting back his ability to use a mindful approach
Capturing insights	Reflecting his insights re his ability to work well without preparation Giving time to record outcomes of his thinking
Checking understanding	Checking understanding
Working his language	Working his language to signal listening
Summarising	Summarising key pieces of content
Mirroring	Mirroring back key statements
Magnifying	Magnifying his point to test its validity Magnifying his point to encourage him to take a more discriminated position
Testing	Testing out how a senior audience impacts on his sense of self
Sustaining Change	Inviting him to find a way of sustaining his learning Providing an example of sustainable action to provoke his thinking Inviting him to find a way of sustaining change that is workable for him Ensuring his sustaining anchor is one that will support and not irritate him
Closing	Positioning the final piece of work as him writing his final narrative as he is now Inviting feedback on the coaching process Explaining next steps Explaining what I will do with the data Explaining where I am in the research process Reassurance on how material will be used

Appendix 9.3

Themes from Reflexive Writings

Table 9.3.1

Comparison of Themes in Reflexive Writings after Diagnostic Session

C	J
Collecting the story	Collecting the story
Encouraging expansion	Expanding the story
	Listening to language
Putting together key words for their consideration	Using their language
	Listening for imagery and metaphor
Unearthing the hoped for ending	

Table 9.3.2

Comparison of Themes in Reflexive Writings after Coaching Session 1.

C	J
Widening vs. focussing tension	Re-examining the story
Challenge to access resourceful self	Cognitive challenging
Matching	Matching
Story as macro-narrative	
Seeing movement	

Table 9.3.3

Comparison of Themes in Reflexive Writings after Coaching Session 2

C	J
Beginning challenge	Challenge to stay present
	Challenge to own resources
	Challenge of owning what he trusts
	Challenge not to retell the story
Revealing the unspoken	
Experimentation	
Moving the story on	
Holding up reality	
Encouragement	
Affirming	

Table 9.3.4

Comparison of Themes in Reflexive Writings after Coaching Session 3

C	J
	Normalising
	Identifying resources
	Looking more confident
	Working visually
	Linking
Facing reality	
Working with need for structure	
Following his energy	

	Challenging him to own his own claims vs. relying on others	
	Noticing shifts of which he is unconscious	
	Noticing language change since taking action	
	Future focus	

Table 9.3.5

Comparison of Themes in Reflexive Writings after Coaching Session 4

	C	**J**
	Ending of old narrative	Letting go of the old
	Sustaining resilience	Accessing resilience resources
		The power of mindfulness
	Embarking on new narrative	Working on future self
	Recognising arc of the coaching relationship	Linking learning

Appendix 11

Evidence of Achievement

2011

How to Build Resilience. Coaching at Work 6,3,54-56	May/June 2011
ACPi Webinar on Career Resilience	16th June 2011
ACPi Webinar on Coaching to Rebuild Resilience	21st July 2011
Association for Coaching: Coaching for Resilience Seminar One day workshop: Career Coaching for Resilience January workshop attracts 5.25 CEE units from ICF)	18th and 19th October 2011 12th October 2011 and 18th 2012

2012

CIPD Toolkit on Building High Performance Co-authored (Rita McGee) toolkit, including contributing sections on individual and team resilience	June 2012
ACP UK Conference: Keynote Address on Resilience Looking after Your Clients and Your Own	23rd June 2012
ACP UK Conference: Workshop on Narrative and Coaching	23rd June 2012
Coaching at Work Conference: Developing Resilience Working with Narrative	12th July 2012
Masterclass University of Chester: Coaching for Resilience (one day workshop attracts 7.00 CEE units from ICF)	19th September 2012
Made Visiting Professor University of Ulster Business School for contributions on coaching and resilience	September 2012

2013

Career Counselling Services Alumnae Event Career coaching and narrative	22nd January 2013

London Business School Sustaining Your Career Resilience seminar MBA alumnae	9th February 2013
Reed Global HR Directors Network Looking after Resilience: Your organisation, Your team and You.	27th March 2013
Association for Coaching Ireland Conference Keynote address: Career resilience: looking after your own and your clients	26th April 2013
CIPD Building resilience for high performance Seminar for HR practitioners	8th May 2013
Co-active Coaching European Conference Keynote address: Living the narrative we create	17th May 2013
Brighton University DProf Methodology Conference: Working with narrative	31st May 2013
EMCC 2013 Research Conference Session entitled Coaching for Resilience	27th June 2013
Association for Coaching Bulletin article on the use of narrative in coaching	July 2013
Awarded Honorary Legacy Fellowship by Career Development Institute for work on career issues	July 2013
EMCC 2013 Research Conference Book.(editors Po Lindvall and Professor David Megginson) Paper entitled: Understanding the process of regaining resilience within a coaching relationship	Published August 2013
La Fosse Associates Seminar for IT Chief Information Officers on resilience	October 2013

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