The Critical Voice;

A Heuristic Enquiry into the experience of hearing a Critical Inner Voice to deepen our understanding of its meaning and purpose.

Georgina Dyson-Horton, 2020

Index

	Page
Declaration	6
Abstract	7
Introduction	8
Definition of The Critical Voice	8
Research Framework	9
Why Research Into The Critical Voice Was Conducted	10
The Researcher's Personal Motivation	11
The Layout of this Research	12
Literature Review & Theoretical Framework	13
The Aetiology of The Critical voice	14
A Psychodynamic Theory	15
A Transactional Analytic Perspective	17
A Cognitive Behavioural Perspective	18
Inner Speech	20
Research in Relation to Inner Speech	22
Research and Literature in Relation to Critical Inner Speech	23
Self-Criticism	24
Research in Relation to Auditory Verbal Hallucinations and Inner Speech	28
Research Methodologies for Inner Experience and Inner Speech	28
An Existential Perspective	30
Being-in-the-world	31
Existential Guilt	32
I and Thou	32
Hell is Other People	33
Meaning	35
Critique of Literature and Previous Research	36
The Research Question	39
Research Methodology	40
The Researcher's Epistemology	40
Choosing the Research Methodology	41
Heuristic Research	41
Heuristic Methodology	42
Recruitment	44
Recruitment Criteria	44
Advertising	44
Participant Contact	46
The Research Interview	47
Interview Questions	47
The Interview Location and Format	48
Skype Interviews	49
Risk Assessment	49
Consent and Participant Information	49
Demographics	50
Explanation of the Critical Voice to Participants	50
Monitoring	50
Debriefing	51
Ethical Considerations	52

Risk Assessment 52
Clear Participant Information 52
Dedicated Contact Details 52
Clear & Freely Given Consent 53
Participant Distress & Hallucinations 53
Confidentiality 53
University Guidelines 54
Researcher Wellbeing 54
Transcribing the Interview 55
Data Analysis 57
Methodology of Analysing the Data 57
Reflexivity & Use of the First Person 58
The Struggle to Identify Meaning Units 59
Reflexivity & A Learning Process in Identify Meaning Units 60
Identifying Meaning Units 63
Clustering Meaning Units into Themes 64
Meaning Units That Were Not Used 65
Textures 66
Repetitive Statements 66
Approach to Removing Filler Words & Abridging Text 67
Gathering Themes; the Textural-Structural Description 69
Findings 73
Caring for Oneself 74
Learning About Oneself 75
It's Hard to Hear Positive Things About Myself 76
Being Positive is Not Enough 77
Changes Throughout Life & Menopause 78
Menopause 80
Childhood & Parenting 83
It Halts Me 88
Restraint 90
Futility 91
Harsh Judgement 93
Meltdown 95
Self-Blame 96
Adding Fuel to the Fire 97
Impact of Being Interviewed 99
Interconnection 101
Safe Criticism through Social Media & TV 102
Care for Others 104
Internal Dialogue 106
Normalising It 106
Shutting It Up 106
Arguing With It 107
Fighting Back 107
I Wish I Could But I Can't 108
Spurring You On 108
Little conversations with myself 108

Stopping it in its tracks 109
Talk myself out of it 109
Dialoguing Whilst Dreaming 110
Working Out The Next Steps 110
Isolated & Alone 111
Wintertime 111
Time On My Hands 111
Normal Family Life 112
Different Interests 113
Not All Bad 114
Valuing the Critical Voice 114
My Little Friend 115
Considering Options and Accepting the Situation 115
Coping Mechanism 115
Rehearsing Different Scenarios 116
It Makes Me Strive To Be A Better Person 116
It Motivated Me 117
I would like [it] to be 118
Perfectionism & Not Good Enough 119
Not Good Enough 121
Redressing A Balance 123
Reconnecting with me 124
Releasing The Pressure 125
Externalising the Critical Voice Helps 126
Resilience 127
When it Occurs 128
Ever Present 128
A Relentless Critic 129
A Parasitic Work 129
I Just Live With It 129
Context 129
Being Occupied 130
Environment 130
How I Feel 131
Trapped 131
Fear of Being Unloved 132
Summary of Findings & Creative Synthesis 133
Discussion 134
Participants & Recruitment 134
Demographics 135
Limitations of This Research 136
Gathered Themes 137
Caring for Oneself, Being Positive is Not Enough 137
Learning About Oneself 138
It's Hard to Hear Positive Things 138
Changes Throughout Life 139
Menopause 140
Childhood & Parenting 141

It Halts Me 142
Restraint 143
Futility 143
Harsh Judgement & Self-Blame 143
Meltdown 144
Fuelling the Fire 144
Impact of Being Interviewed 145
Interconnection 145
Safe Criticism, Social Media / Television and Care for Others 146
Internal Dialogue 146
Isolated and Alone 147
Not All Bad; Valuing It 147
My Little Friend 148
Considering Options and Options 148
Rehearsal 148
Strive to be Better and It Motivated Me 148
I Would Like [it] To Be 149
Perfectionism 149
Not Good Enough 149
Redressing A Balance & Reconnecting 150
Releasing Pressure & Externalising the Voice 150
Resilience 150
When it Occurs 151
My Critical Voice & Why I didn't use Myself as a Research Participant 152
Self-Reflection & Reflexivity of the Transcripts 154
Contributions for Counselling Psychology 157
Implications for Further Research 160
Conclusion 162
References 164
Appendices 173
I. Recruitment Flyer A4 174
II. Recruitment Flyer A5 175
III. Facebook page 176
IV. Participant Information Sheet 178
V. Written Informed Consent Form 181
VI. Interview Checklist & Questions 182
VII. Risk Assessment of Interview Location 183
VIII. Debriefing Sheet 189
IX. Verbatim Transcripts 190
Interview # One 190
Interview # Two 200
Interview # Three 217
Interview # Four 234
Interview # Five 255
Interview # Six 272
Interview # Seven 284
X. Matrix of Gathered Themes 309

Declaration

This is an original piece of work conducted by Georgina Dyson-Horton as part of a Doctorate in Counselling Psychology through the University of Middlesex and the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling.

Research supervisors have been Dr. Charlotte Harkness, Dr. Simon Cassar and Professor Digby Tantum.

Ethical Approval was gained on the 12th May 2017. The Chair of the Ethics Board was Professor Digby Tantam.

I would like to thank my family for their ever loving support during times that must have seemed like their mum wasn't available. Love is always there even when it doesn't show.

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to discover new ways of thinking about and understanding one's critical inner voice. The critical voice is defined as words that are heard internally, are typically negative towards the self and others and not Auditory Verbal Hallucinations.

The research question asks if there is a meaning or purpose to the critical voice as this has often been overlooked in previous research and literature. Theories on the aetiology of the critical voice come from a Psychodynamic perspective, however by applying an Existential Philosophical perspective it is possible to widen the lens in order to discover more about it.

The chosen methodology is Heuristic which elucidates participant's lived experience and personal meanings. Heuristics provides a richness of data by using verbatim extracts and this showcases the texture and grain of participant's thought processes.

Seven adult women participated in this study aged between 30 and 56. The interviews were semi-structured with emphasis on talking about what was important to them. The criteria for participation were for adults over eighteen and therefore the participant's gender and age range proved interesting.

The results yielded exciting and novel findings, which are grouped into thirteen Gathered Themes, each of which have sub themes. For example, the critical voice is 'Not All Bad'; it can be a 'Little Friend'; it 'Changes Throughout Life' and the Menopause can effect it. It was found that the Critical Voice is connected to one's whole being and also to our external world. Of particular interest are the findings entitled 'Safe Criticism' where participants found ways to be critical without harm to the other.

The implications for Counselling Psychology are that the critical voice can be both a blessing and a curse; it is interconnected within oneself and to our outer world. The findings suggest that it is important to look to our own beliefs and values so that when working with clients we do not inadvertently overlook a necessary function of the client's inner world.

Introduction

Definition of The Critical Voice

For the purposes of this research the definition of critical means negative, disapproving, fault-finding or judgemental. Critical relates to being and experiencing criticism which can be towards oneself, to others or both. Criticism is experienced in a way personal to the individual, that may have come from experience or have developed over time. Whatever the aetiology of the criticism, the meaning will be unique to the individual experiencing it.

With regard to the terminology of voice in this research, this relates to where a thought or thoughts, images, feelings, sensations or bodily responses are translated by the person experiencing them into words that one hears or are formed internally, but not necessarily spoken out aloud.

'Critical Voice' in this research, then, is collectively defined as words heard internally by oneself, that are typically negative and derisory towards the self, others or things. This research does not refer to, nor include to audible hallucinations but to one's own critical thoughts and feelings heard as words. This research intends to keep an open mind with regards to the aetiology of one's critical inner voice but rather explores its meaning, purpose and function as identified by the individual experiencing it.

Firestone's (1986) definition of 'the voice' aligns closely to the researcher's concept of a critical voice:

> *"The "voice" refers to an internal system of hostile thoughts and attitudes, antithetical to the self and cynical toward others.*"
>
> (Firestone, 1986, p.439)

Whilst a definition of the critical voice is provided, the author was mindful that this may not be how others understand or define it. Care was needed in explaining the critical voice to potential research participants so as not to lead them down a route that was not theirs.

For this reason the advertising material identified a range of expressions, thoughts and feelings one's critical voice may have, and the information given to participants gave the research project definition and possible other descriptions that may be experienced. An extract of the Participant Information Sheet is provided for clarification:

> *"My research focuses on what I call the critical voice. I take this to mean "your own voice in your head that critically comments on things". To you this may be recognised as your thoughts or feelings about something to which there could be a range of expressions. For you there may be a number of voices that provide a running commentary, there may be derisory sounds such as an audible sigh, or "grrrr", or a "tut", or an image. This may be one of many interacting sounds, thoughts or voices, amongst a range of internal dialogue.*
>
> *The 'critical voice' may sound like someone familiar, or it may not, it may elicit a range of emotions, or may change your behaviour, affect your thinking, limit your way of living or take you away from something you were doing whilst you are hearing it."*

Firestone (1986) excludes thought processes that are concerned with constructive planning, creative thinking, self-appraisal and moral considerations, however this research takes account of a broader range of internal ruminations, as identified in the theoretical framework and literature review. Firestone's (1986) definition of the 'Voice' also excludes hallucinations as does this research, however, Firestone regards the voice as directly analogous to a verbal hallucination. A brief appraisal of research into audible verbal hallucinations will be considered for referential purposes in the literature review section.

Research Framework

There is a paucity of qualitative research and literature into the lived experience of critical inner speech. Quantitative research, however, exists on changing or eradicating self-criticism. Research into inner speech can aid insight into the critical voice as it gives a wider

perspective but there are limitations to the methodologies used, particularly with regard to the meanings the person attributes to their inner speech.

The theoretical framework and review of literature in this thesis purposely takes a broad lens so that an understanding of the context of the critical voice can be gleaned. Firestone's (1986) theory of the voice is limited as is quantitative research, for example Gilbert et al (2004) because criticism is not an isolated phenomenon. How can we know what criticism is without knowing non-criticism? Dark would be the norm if we didn't have light to show the difference. One cannot exist without the other and it is this researcher's assertion that a holistic approach be adopted in its analysis.

Human beings cannot separate themselves from the world around them; we are inextricably linked and therefore in studying a phenomenon that human beings experience researchers must understand the context in which they live (Waddell, 2007). The experiences that shape our understanding of the world will be meaningful in individual ways, thus as much of an individual's explanation of their critical voice should be shown in research so that a deeper, more insightful appreciation can be sought. Qualitative research methods and analysis provide this insight.

Why Research Into The Critical Voice Was Conducted

Research into the critical voice came about because of the researcher's client work and personal self-enquiry. Clients had reported being self-critical, for example constantly berating themselves such as 'you can't do this', 'they are going to find you out', or I'm just no good'. This was a familiar phenomenon that seemed to be shared by others, including the researcher. This set off a period of reflection and exploration into whether there could be a purpose or function to it, what meaning it may have, and why it existed.

A review of the literature led the researcher to think that there was something missing from how authors had written about the critical voice, assumptions were being made that it was something to be eradicated and managed, and although there were theoretical

assumptions as to its function, little was known about the wider perspective and context in which it occurred. A deeper exploration and analysis could reveal people's personal meanings, and a research question began to develop to facilitate this discovery. Questions such as 'What is the lived experience of hearing a critical inner voice', 'Does the critical voice have a meaning, a function or a purpose', and 'Is there a dialogue that goes on, i.e. a counter-balancing voice' emerged which formulated the three enquiries of the research question.

The Researcher's Personal Motivation

The researcher's personal motivation to undertake this research was a felt-sense that important information was missing from the understanding of the critical voice. It is the researcher's belief that these unspoken voices were not being heard because the methodology used in other studies did not allow for their expression.

The methodology needed to be qualitative to add depth and texture, one that encompassed the researchers own enquiry, one that allowed participants to explore their experience with few boundaries or limitations.

The best research methodology for this study became apparent during the period of reflection, and Heuristics was chosen for its rich descriptive qualities, its search for personal meanings, and the personal commitment on the part of the researcher to use themselves in the process. A key feature in qualitative research methodology is reflexivity, which is a skill that involves transparency and explication of processes. Similarly, it is a useful skill for counsellors to be able to notice their responses to the world around them and then to be able to communicate that knowledge (Etherington, 2004). It was hoped that by researching in this way it would be possible to see into the cracks of previously held assumptions and deepen the knowledge and understanding of therapists working with people who experience critical inner voices.

The Layout of This Research

Following the introduction will be a review of the literature and a theoretical framework which provides a backdrop to the critical voice from a psychological and academic perspective. The backdrop includes a broad contextual framework including inner speech, traditional psychological theories and frames the critical voice within existential philosophy.

The research question follows which provides the rationale for the research and the foundations for enquiry. The methodology section sets out the researcher's epistemological and ontological position, why alternative methodologies were rejected and the process of conducting the research.

The recruitment section shows how participants were recruited and the information they received about the research. The research interview section outlines the interview questions, the format of the interviews, the risk assessment, participant consent and demographics. This is followed by risk and ethical considerations and finally how the interviews were transcribed and the process of analysing the data.

The findings are shown in 'Gathered Themes', which are presented alphabetically so as to remove the temptation of the reader to attach importance or assume hierarchy. The findings show exciting qualities to the critical voice that have not previously been found in a review of the literature or in psychological theory.

The discussion section reflects upon the research process and considers the findings in relation to the theoretical framework and literature review. Implications for psychotherapeutic therapy are considered and also proposals for future study. Finally a conclusion draws together the salient points of the research.

Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

The review of literature and the theoretical framework developed and refined as the research progressed. Initially reading was wide with literature from the modules in the Doctorate in Counselling Psychology informing possible areas for further exploration and previous reading in the study of counselling and psychology.

From the perspective of psychopathology, for example, it is possible to view the critical voice as the hearing of voices and therefore reading was conducted in this area. Research papers that were found to be relevant are noted in the section entitled Research in Relation to Auditory Verbal Hallucinations and Inner Speech.

Psychoanalytical theory directed reading towards Sigmund Freud and this is noted in in the section entitled A Psychodynamic Theory. Existential literature does not specifically reference the critical voice, however when the critical voice is viewed through the lens of one's being-in-the-world and one's relationship to others this adds a perspective that is somewhat obscured in psychoanalytic theory.

Literature that provides the majority of the theory of the critical voice is that of Robert Firestone (1987). Literature reviewed included his books, papers, and a telephone interview with him personally. Firestone's perspective of the critical voice is psychodynamic; however this perspective is limited and static which is why a broader range of literature and ideas are presented in this research paper.

The researcher used open date electronic literature searches using the search words "Critical Inner Voice", "Critical Inner Speech", "Critical Inner Thoughts", "negative inner speech", "critical speech", "inner critic dialogue", "critical inner dialogue", "self-punitive talk", "critical self-talk" and "Inner Critic" using the search engines Google Scholar, Mendeley, and Library Search (previously Summon) on Middlesex UniHub.

The findings of this electronic literature search produced a vast number of results. For example, on the 5th February 2014 using the search engine Mendeley and the search words

"critical inner thoughts", 100,839 results were produced. Of these 100,839 results the researcher reviewed 1,500. Of these 1,500 items, 37 were saved. On the 12th February 2014 using the search engine Summon and the search words "critical inner speech", 5 items proved pertinent and were saved. The results of these searches included books, articles and citations within books.

Due to the numerous results from the electronic literature search, many of the findings are not included in this paper, however the Bibliography section shows some of the items that were reviewed but not deemed relevant due to a number of factors. For example, articles relating to inner speech, the superego, hallucinations, self-criticism that were not referenced were either repetitive or similar to other articles, fell out of the scope of the research question, or were not specific to the findings in this thesis.

The Aetiology of The Critical Voice

Robert Firestone developed the concept of the critical voice, which he called the "Voice" (Firestone, 1987) from his work as a Clinical Psychologist. Firestone stated that the critical voice relates directly to the rejecting thoughts and attitudes of one's parents; "*children repress their anger toward their parents for their (the parent's) rejection and turn it on themselves. […] It is this process of introjection that is responsible for the evolution of the pattern of negative, self-critical thoughts known as the 'voice'*" (Firestone, 1987, p.219).

The theory purports that parent's rejecting covert and overt thoughts and attitudes are a direct replication of actual criticism or an unspoken hostile attitude, so for example parents may or may not be directly critical to the child but their non-verbal expressions will be experienced by the child and internalised. Later in his life Robert Firestone acknowledged that the voice is not limited to parental criticism but can be introjected from society at large; "*it's affected by the experience and the negative experiences that people go through and it could be in relation to society, it could be anything that impacts and has that effect, that emotional effect is to create these primal feelings which are then translated into words*" (Firestone, 2018a).

The critical voice develops from guilt and self-hatred from the child's wants and needs for affectionate contact and love being refused or prohibited because the child feels that they are bad or wrong for wanting or attempting to fulfil them. Guilt also emerges due to the wish of the child to be independent and separate to the parent, thus separating the fantasy bond (Firestone, 1985). The Voice can be critical of oneself or others and is at the core of paranoid suspicion where "*suicide is the ultimate conclusion of acting upon this negative thought process*", (Firestone, 1986, p.439).

According to Firestone, the purpose of internalising the critical voice is to attempt to protect the individual from feeling anxious and vulnerable by rehearsing and predicting negative outcomes. Their feelings of rejection then become self-fulfilling prophesies, which isolates them further.

Firestone developed Voice Therapy which aims to bring the negative thoughts and attitudes into the person's awareness. The purpose is to evoke feelings of compassion and support for themselves and to encourage them to develop their own point of view rather than the introjected viewpoint. Firestone believes that the Voice is maladaptive and inappropriate, and therefore Voice Therapy is seen as a way of eradicating the critical inner voice. Along with his daughter, Lisa Firestone, he has continued to write and has developed scales on the critical voice (see Firestone, 1984; 1987; 1988; 1990; 1991; 2009; 2010; 2011; 2018a; Firestone, Firestone & Catlett 2002).

A Psychodynamic Theory

Robert Firestone is a psychodynamic psychologist and therefore his ideas can be traced back to Sigmund Freud's "*cruel self-depreciation of the ego combined with a relentless self-criticism and bitter reproaches*" (Freud, 1921/1952, p.680-681). Freud proposed the personality concepts id, ego and super-ego, with the super-ego being referred interchangeably as the ego-ideal. The id is a person's unconscious instincts which seek immediate gratification. The ego is partly conscious and mediates the id's desires with the outside world. The super-ego is the introjection of a child's parents on whose conduct the child models him or herself; the child wants to be like his or her parents and therefore identifies with them.

The super-ego can be described as what is expected of a one's higher nature, it exercises the censorship of morals. It judges, using the language of 'you must not …', 'you ought', and this is reinforced over time by influential others such as teachers, society, public opinion, ethics and culture. Ridgway (2009) asserts that one's inner voice is "often the voice of our integrity that reminds us of our principles" (Ridgway, 2009, p.46) so by using the super-ego and the inner voice as reference points, the critical voice can be seen from this perspective.

Freud referred to a special institution called the conscience whose task it is to secure narcissistic gratification from the super-ego by keeping guard and watching over it (Freud, 1914/1952). Freud uses the term Narcissism here to mean the libidinal instinct for self-love and self-preservation that is enjoyed in early childhood. This narcissism is projected onto the super-ego which deems itself to be the "possessor of all perfections" (Freud, 1914/1952, p.407). If narcissistic perfection is not relinquished in childhood, and the child cannot tolerate the critical judgement of others as he develops, then:

> *"His own critical judgement is awakened, he seeks to recover the early perfection, thus wrested from him, in the new form of an ego-ideal. That which he projects ahead of him as his ideal is merely his substitute for the lost narcissism of his childhood – the time when he was his own ideal"*.
>
> (Freud, 1914/1952, p.407)

The conscience has the characteristics of a voice which comments on what we do, from the mundane to the critical, and speaks in the third person. Freud believed that the conscience exists in everyone and enables an understanding of delusions of observations such as paranoia. The conscience is explored in Sartre's (1989) play 'No Exit', which is explored later in this paper.

The question remains as to how the child's critical judgement is awakened unless the aggressive instinct is explored, which arguably is Freud's aggressive component of the super-ego. The child projects his own aggression onto his parent/s which is then

introjected back into the child along with the image of the parent. The child has imagined that the parent shares the same aggressive impulses as himself and in this way, the super-ego is felt to be severe as well as kind in its judgements. The severity of the criticism is responsible for the child's feelings of guilt and worthlessness. Therefore, two co-existing instincts of self-love and aggression combine to form both the nurturing and critical super-ego, which along with the conscience's continual watching accounts for the concept of the critical voice.

Freud's theory of the super-ego is wider than Firestone's 'voice'; Firestone states that the critical voice "excludes those thought processes that are concerned with constructive planning, creative thinking, self-appraisal, fantasy, value judgements, and moral considerations" (Firestone, 1986, p.439) , whereas Freud's super-ego includes parental kindness and the seeking of the satisfaction of self-love.

The psychodynamic perspective contains many assumptions about the internal interpretation and understanding by the child, as well as the environment the child grows up in. What is missing is the wider picture; how might a loving voice interplay with a critical voice, how might feelings of dignity interplay with feelings of shame? What a psychodynamic aetiology of the critical voice does not show is how the critical voice might be tempered at different points in time, or in what circumstances it comes out.

A Transactional Analytic Perspective

Eric Berne provides similar but further theoretical perspective on the development of the critical voice. Berne (1964) describes Parent, Adult and Child ego states, which are a coherent system of feelings and behavioural patterns. The parent ego state influences a person both directly (i.e. "do as I do") and indirectly (i.e. "do as I say"). As with Freud's super-ego, Berne's Parent ego state is based on the child's perception of the parent. The theory is based upon the precept that everyone has had parents or substitute parents that they carry around inside them, which forms into the Parent ego state. According to Berne, the function of the Parent is twofold;

> "To act effectively as the parent of actual children, thus promoting the survival of the human race […] secondly, it makes many responses automatic, which conserves a great deal of time and energy. Many things are done because 'That's the way it's done'. This frees the Adult from the innumerable trivial decisions so that it can devote itself to more important issues, leaving routine matters to the Parent."
>
> (Berne, 1964, p.27)

Thomas Harris developed Berne's theory of Parent, Adult and Child ego states by purporting that they are collections of recordings in the brain of imposed external events (Harris, 1967). This is in contrast to Berne and Freud's assertions that they are the child's perceptions of their parents. Harris believed that the data is recorded straight, without editing by the child so that actual verbatim and behaviour are recorded. Harris (1967) constructed four possible life positions from the Transactional Analysis perspective; I'm not ok – you're ok, I'm not ok – you're not ok, I'm ok – you're not ok, and I'm ok – you're ok. Harris purported that these life positions are decided by the child at age two to three and these positions do not change over time, unless the fourth position is consciously chosen later in life. The decision as to which position to take is a conclusion based upon the child's experience and environment.

As with the psychodynamic perspective, the transactional analytic perspective appears static and fixed in the way introjection is processed. Both theories do not account for any analysis or affect that the child may have in relation to the perceived criticism such as confusion, disbelief, or incomprehensibility. This may be due of course to the fact that it is impossible to see inside another's head to ascertain their thinking or feeling, one can only interpret from the lens of one's own experience, beliefs and cultural heritage.

A Cognitive Behavioural Perspective

From a Cognitive Behavioural theoretical perspective, thoughts, moods, behaviours, physical reactions and one's environment all interact with each other (Greenberger and Padesky, 1995). One's perception of a situation influences how one responds to it (Beck, 1964; 1995; Ellis, 1962), so different people will react differently to the same situation

according to what they believe and how they think about it, which then affects how they feel and behave. During childhood core beliefs are developed, beliefs about oneself that are strengthened over time by attention to information that confirms such beliefs and discounts other contrary information. Aaron Beck identified automatic thoughts through his client work (Beck, 1976), who defined automatic thoughts as those that constantly go on in the background of a person's inner world; interpretations or misinterpretations about events, self-evaluations, self-monitoring, making predictions about oneself or others and making generalisations.

Beliefs that are critical towards the self are called Negative Automatic Thoughts (NATs). NATs are purported to arise when a person is suffering from a psychological disorder (Bennet-Levy et al, 2004) and can comprise of 'What an idiot!', 'I'm useless', 'You can't trust anyone' to generalisations of underlying assumptions such as 'If I take a challenge of any sort, I'll be bound to fail' or 'That was lucky, they didn't find me out'. Underlying assumptions and core beliefs form part of a schema system, which are deeper enduring cognitive structures, for example a 'perfectionist' schema or a 'world-as-dangerous-place' schema. These schemas bias information that people attend to, so only information that relates to the schema will be stored and will contribute to the persistence of the schema.

Dysfunctional schemas can develop at any point in life, however they are most often derived from childhood. It is the meaning that a person attributes to an event that causes problems; "problems arise from the meanings individuals give to events, filtered through the framework of core beliefs and assumptions which they have already developed through life experience" (Bennet-Levy et al, 2004, p.4).

Traditional Cognitive Therapy attempts to challenge and change NATs whereas Third Wave Cognitive Behavioural Therapy takes a different approach by helping clients develop a different relationship to their NATs. Techniques such as Mindfulness are used where clients are helped to notice and accept thoughts rather than judge them (Hickes & Mirea, 2012). A cognitive behavioural perspective introduces the concept that criticism can be learnt or unlearnt. The aetiology still derives from childhood however learning can be at any point in one's life. In addition, meaning is introduced into how one assimilates the critical voice.

Cognitive theory identifies NATs as part of a psychological disorder, yet without critical appraisal how would evolution continue to develop? Defining terminology such as NATs can be useful in order to identify and treat a debilitating condition yet it can also be punitive and counterproductive by perpetuating the unobtainable state of perfection.

Opening up the theoretical framework further, it would seem wise to explore the literature and research on inner speech so that a fuller description of the phenomena of critical inner speech can be achieved. The researcher's view is that whilst it can be useful to separate out the elements of a phenomenon for descriptive or educational purposes, there cannot be one element on its own without reference to the whole, i.e. how one is interconnected to one's internal and external world. In order to describe something as fully as possible we need to know what the phenomena is not in order to elucidate what it is, therefore, some form of comparison and context is needed. Previous authors on the critical voice or critical inner speech have primarily focussed on the negative or critical elements of the self, and as such have limited the potentiality of understanding of the phenomenon. In order to understand critical inner speech the theories and study of inner speech would provide some context and reference points.

Inner Speech

Lev Vygotsky was among the first to empirically study inner speech (Sokolov, 1972). Inner speech, according to Vygotsky, is a blend of language and thought, which develops from the internalisation of dialogue and external influences. Thought and speech have different developmental roots; thought development has a pre-linguistic stage, and speech development has a pre-intellectual stage.

> "*Inner speech develops through a slow accumulation of functional and structural changes, that it branches off from the child's external speech simultaneously with the differentiation of the social and the egocentric functions of speech, and finally that the speech structures mastered by the child become the basic structures of his thinking.*" (Vygotsky, 1962, p.50-51)

For a very young child the function of speech is an attempt to remain in contact with others and participate in the social world. With regard to why speech turns inward, this according to Vygotsky is because its function changes, such as in preparation for external speech and a way of rehearsing what will be spoken out loud. As speech is internalised it is condensed and simplified, and as a result only the inherent meanings remain; "*in inner speech … a single word is so saturated with sense that many words would be required to explain it in external speech*" (Vygotsky, 1962, p.148). Verbal thought is not innate but formed through a historical and cultural process. A person's sociological and cultural experience and their time in history will influence the character of their inner speech as it develops.

According to Emmerson (1983) "words in discourse always recall earlier contexts of usage, otherwise they could not mean at all … A person's experiences exist encoded in his inner speech" (Emmerson, 1983, p.248-250). Of patients during psychoanalysis, Emmerson continues, the repressed inner realities that are believed to be the id and ego by the psychoanalyst are reflections of social dynamics. Research, Emmerson purports, should not study inner speech in isolation in traditional controlled experiments and therefore it would be wise to research the critical voice outside of the psychoanalytical framework.

Words have a purpose and a function (Emmerson, 1983), they have meanings that are unique to the individual, and it follows that the meaning intended by the speaker may not be the meaning that is interpreted by the hearer. Jackl (2018) states, it is difficult to observe or measure the inner voice, it can only be studied by contemplation or introspection. This is challenging when attempting to research inner speech requiring skills to help the participant elucidate their inner speech and, when spoken out loud, bracketing any assumptions about what the research participant is meaning with the words they use.

Internalised speech becomes part of one's inner life, becomes the voice of our integrity, reminding us of our principles and rarely goes away completely, remaining with us for the rest of our lives (Ridgway, 2009). Inner speech "is crucial in the learning of a second language" (Tomlinson, 2001), it helps to reduce anxiety and gain confidence and control and can contribute to competence in communication. If inner speech increases one's emotional affect and confidence, such as when learning a second language, then does it

have the converse effect when it is negative or as Firestone purports, does critical inner speech exponentially lead to increased anger, guilt and ultimately suicide? Furthermore, what is the interplay between the increase in confidence and control and the negative effects of the critical voice such as shame or worthlessness?

Research in Relation to Inner Speech

Most of the research conducted on inner speech has used quantitative analytical methods, however some researchers have used qualitative interviews as a starting point, for example Puchalska-Wasyl (2015) who used statistical analysis to identify an internal dialogue where two different viewpoints were adopted alternately.

Hurlburt et al (2013) state that inner speech has the same tone, pitch, pacing and emotional qualities as external speech, inner speech can be whispered or shouted. Inner speech does not need to comprise of full sentences, it can be condensed and single words can convey a greater meaning, for example "mmm" may mean "I am thinking of some delicious food that I would like to eat". Inner speech may be directed at oneself or to another person, irrespective of whether that person is present. This is significant when applying this to critical inner speech, which substantiates the argument for broadening the lens of understanding the critical voice.

With regard to rehearsal, Hurlburt et al (2013) found that what is rehearsed internally may not be what is said eventually spoken externally. Similarly, words may be spoken internally by the hearer that do not exactly match the speaker's words. What is happening is that the hearer is interpreting the spoken work according to their own frame of reference, or what makes sense to them.

Morin and Everett assert that "inner speech parallels the state of self-awareness, is more frequently used among highly self-conscious persons, and represents an effective, if not indispensable, tool involved in the formation of the self-concept" (Morin & Everett, 1990, p.337). They continue "if a person's surroundings make it problematic for him or her to discriminate himself or herself from his or her immediate environment, it then becomes difficult for him or her to focus on himself or herself as an object" (Morin & Everett, 1990,

p.339). In a later paper, Morin (2004) develops a model of self-awareness that proposes the existence of three sources of self-information; 1) a social setting which includes early face-to-face interactions, self-relevant feedback, a social comparison mechanism leading to perspective taking, and audiences; 2) contact with objects in the physical environment, self-focusing and reflective stimuli, e.g. mirrors; and 3) bodily awareness of oneself, self-reflection using imagery and inner speech. Therefore, inner speech is contextual dependant on one's environment and interconnected to the world around us.

For Morin, self-awareness and inner speech are connected. Self-awareness embodies the ability to become the object of one's own attention (Morin, 2011a). Self-awareness does not occur in isolation, it is connected to the environment and one's social setting. It involves identifying, processing and storing information about the self. Loss of inner speech following damage to the brain produces deficits in self-awareness (Morin, 2011b).

Morin and Everett purport that people who are self-aware will respond more accurately to assessments on aspects of themselves (Morin & Everett, 1990) because they are more self-focussed. If this is true then it is hoped that the participants in this research project will be able to accurately describe their critical inner voice, dependant of course on the researcher capturing the participant's meaning accurately.

Inner speech can create a psychological distance between the self and mental events it experiences, and in doing so can evoke a problem solving strategy (Morin, 2005). This distance can facilitate self-observation which help to see the problem objectively. Seen through the lens of inner speech, the critical voice's function or purpose could be to rehearse external speech, is connected to self-awareness, is a reflection of one's culture, one's internal and external world, is imbued with idiosyncratic meanings, provides principles for living, and has a problem solving element.

Research and Literature in Relation to Critical Inner Speech

As stated previously, there is a paucity of research into the lived experience of critical inner speech, but there is however a vast amount written on eradicating, managing and dealing with the inner critic. One only has to type in the term "inner critic" to any search engine to

be bombarded with articles, books and video clips ranging from silencing the inner critic (Cox, 2013), to the inner critic and compassionate mind training (Gilbert and Proctor, 2006) to the inner critic and acupuncture (Konefal, 2014), to analysing the inner critic during the process of therapy (Stinckens, Lietaer & Leijssen, 2002a) to identifying neuronal correlates of self-criticism and self-reassurance (Longe et al, 2009).

Kainer (1979) used clinical vignettes with regard to the critical voice as a factor in patients with obsessions. Kainer stated that "each patient had at least one harshly critical parent" (Kainer, 1979, p.277). Furthermore, as children, the patients were made to feel that they were somehow doing something wrong without knowing what the 'right' thing to do was. Perfectionism was also identified as a factor, with one patient unable to choose between ideas because she wanted to make 'the perfect choice' in order to silence the critical voice.

Robert Firestone developed his concept of the critical voice and Voice Therapy as a result of his clinical observations and psychological discussion groups rather than by conducting research (Firestone, 2018a). Robert and Lisa Firestone developed the Firestone Assessment of Self-Destructive Thoughts (FAST) which is an assessment tool for use in clinical settings. FAST assesses self-destructive thoughts, self-harm and suicide risk on a continuum of negative thought patterns.

Research into critical inner speech has lacked human experiential depth, it lacks what it feels like to live with criticism on a daily basis. What is missing is an understanding of non-clinical research participants. Assessment tools provide a guide but do not enable a bigger picture that is unique to the individual's world.

Self-Criticism

Paul Gilbert, along with colleagues, has produced a number of research papers on self-criticism over the past two decades. Gilbert describes self-criticism as self-devaluation, self-condemnation and self-attacking. He developed self-report scales out of his clinical work which were "typical reasons and functions that depressed patients have offered about their own self-criticisms" (Gilbert et al, 2004, p.36), for example, The Functions of

the Self-Criticising/Attacking Scale, and The Forms Of Self-Criticism/Attacking and Self-Reassuring Scale.

The Functions of the Self-Criticising/Attacking Scale begins with a probe statement such as 'I get critical and angry with myself' and this is followed by 21 possible reasons for self-attacking, for example 'to remind me of my responsibilities'. Participants have to rate the items on a five-point scale. The Forms Of Self-Criticism/Attacking and Self-Reassuring Scale is a 22-item scale that measures the forms and styles of participant's critical and reassuring self-evaluative responses to a setback or disappointment. As per the Functions scale, a probe statement is provided such as 'when things go wrong for me…' and this is followed by statements that participants have to rate on a five-point Likert scale, for example 'I am easily disappointed with myself', 'I have become so angry with myself that I want to hurt myself'.

For Gilbert, self-criticism is a complex process with different forms and functions which are mainly evolutionary in nature. For example, a defensive submissive response to threats from others (Gilbert, 1992; Gilbert & Irons, 2005); to try to improve oneself and to prevent errors, or out of frustration by lashing out at oneself, or self-hatred (Gilbert, 1997); coercion from dominant animals is used towards subordinates in order to elicit compliance (Gilbert, 2000); linked to shame-proneness (Gilbert & Miles, 2000); to prevent the self from taking risks, thereby retaining a subordinate position (Gilbert, 2002); and self-correction and persecution (Gilbert et al, 2004).

High levels of self-criticism have been found to be linked to social anxiety disorder (Iancu, Bodner & Ben-Zion, 2015), psychopathology (Castilho, Pinto-Gouveia, & Duarte, 2015), and eating disorder pathology through feelings of shame (Carter, 2018).

Self-criticism seems to be something that is learnt; "we are not born useless, unworthy, disgusting, etc. Rather in early life we are made to feel that way by the treatment of others because we may not have any other experiences or resources by which to refute their condemnations" (Lee, 2005, p.348). Both Lee and Gilbert's views correlate to Firestone's

belief that criticism is not inherent in human nature, rather it develops through our interaction with, and interpretation of, our environment.

Over the past two decades Nele Stinckens and colleagues have produced a number of research papers on the inner critic. The concept of the inner critic was introduced by Eugene Gendlin and it can be described as a strong normative voice which blocks people (Stinckens, Lietaer & Leijssen, 2002b) and interferes with one's organismic experiencing process (Stinckens, Lietaer & Leijssen, 2013a). The inner critic is rigid, critical, judges negatively, chatters, nags and repeats itself relentlessly. It can be characterised by the words 'must' and 'ought'. It represents the norms and expectations in society which dominate one's own intuitive experience.

This societal approach firmly connects the individual with their social environment and moves away from the developmental stance of the individual perceiving the world in relation to their parents or caregivers to acknowledging a person's need for both autonomy and connectedness. There are similarities however to the Psychodynamic concept of the superego in terms of the judgments of the caregiver, which could be expanded out to society at large 'you must not do …'. Similarly, this conceptualisation of the inner critic can be likened to one's negative automatic thoughts from Cognitive Theory whereby the interpretation of external information becomes one's own inner belief system.

Both Gilbert, Stinckens and their respective colleagues' studies attempt to change criticism through therapy, Gilbert by the use of compassion and acceptance (Gilbert et al, 2004; Gilbert et al 2006; Gilbert & Proctor, 2006), and Stinckens by internalising the therapist's accepting and understanding attitude (Stinckens, Lietaer & Leijssen, 2002a; Stinckens, Lietaer & Leijssen, 2002b; Stinckens, Lietaer & Leijssen, 2013a; Stinckens, Lietaer & Leijssen, 2013b). Due to the individualistic nature and meanings a person attributes to their self-criticism a flexible approach offers the best chance of change according to Stinckens, Lietaer & Leijssen, (2013b). By tailoring the approach, the function of the inner critic can be considered and the person helped to achieve what they need. This approach to therapy takes account of the function of the criticism, addressing what the criticism is trying to achieve rather than trying to eradicate it because it is deemed unproductive.

Indeed, as Dennis Palumbo states "*the problem with silencing or banishing the inner critic is that it confirms the idea that there's something wrong with you that needs to be fixed. It suggests a perfectible "you" in the future who's unencumbered by such conflicts*", he continues that the inner critic is a necessary part of who you are and "*provides us with the ability to discern our likes and dislikes, to form opinions, to make decisions. It reinforces the faith in our subjective experience that allows us to choose this rather than that. We need a sense of judgement to navigate the world*" (Palumbo, 2012). This opinion aligns with the researcher's whereby one needs to be able to judge in order to make decisions, however the researcher accepts that when the critical voice becomes so loud and overwhelming some form of other voice needs to activate in order to take a balanced view.

More systematic research is called for rather than attempting to characterise the inner critic based on clinical impressions (Stinckens, Lietaer & Leijssen, 2002a), furthermore, Gilbert et al (2004) say that therapists should explore the functions of self-criticism in detail with clients, elucidating the possible aggressive/disgust feelings and emotions that accompany self-criticism. It is the researcher's view that research should be conducted on the individual's own experience of their criticism rather than the therapist's interpretation of a client's criticism. Moreover, regarding the development of self-criticism scales for mass use does not adequately illuminate the texture of an individual's experience. Clearly there are similarities across people in terms of functionality and form of critical inner speech but if the ultimate aim is to help the individual come to terms with their own critical voice then it is at the individual level that research needs to focus its attention.

The research into self-criticism does not take account of criticism towards others; the process is purported to be only directed towards the self. Surely if one develops self-criticism from one's environment there must be a two way process; an externalisation of criticism as well as internal. It is the externalisation process that is missing from such research and requires consideration.

Research in Relation to Auditory Verbal Hallucinations and Inner Speech

Robert Firestone links the inner voice to suicide and Auditory Verbal Hallucinations (AVHs) (Firestone, 1986), stating that AVHs are an extreme manifestation of the critical voice. McCarthy-Jones & Fernyhough (2007) agree citing neural correlate evidence; AVHs result from abnormalities in the transition between condensed and expanded dialogic inner speech and are mis-attributed as coming from an external source. McGuire et al (1996a; 1996b; 1996c) provide further evidence for neural correlates of AVHs and inner speech with findings indicating a failure of AVH hearers to activate the normal monitoring of inner speech.

Similarly, Langdon et al (2009) questioned patients with both Schizophrenia and AVHs and non-voice-hearing participants on their experiences of hearing voices, if present, and their inner speech. They found no discernible differences in the hearing of voices and inner speech between the two groups. Although Langdon et al's (2009) research asks participants about their experience of inner speech, it provides a quantitative methodological analysis. The researcher authoring this paper feels that a greater depth of understand could have been highlighted by using qualitative methodology in order to showcase participants lived experience of inner speech and voice hearing.

Legg and Gilbert (2006) found that the degree of hostility of the AVH changed with the degree of stress in other aspects of participant's lives. This is particularly interesting because if AVHs are an extreme manifestation of the critical voice as Firestone (1986) suggests then there may be a correlation in the non-voice hearing population whereby the greater the degree of stress correlates to the greater degree of hostility of the critical voice.

Research Methodologies for Inner Experience and Inner Speech

A theme that runs through the inner speech literature is "*we also need to understand what the experience is like"* (Moseley, 2014) and to this end research methods such as Descriptive Experience Sampling (Hurlburt & Heavey, 2001; Heavey & Hurlburt, 2008; Hurlburt et al, 2013), and the Varieties of Inner Speech Questionnaire (McCarthy-Jones & Fernyhough, 2011; Alderson-Day & Fernyhough, 2014) have been designed. These

approaches aim to explore the phenomena of inner experience and the phenomenological properties of inner speech respectively.

Descriptive Experience Sampling (DES) records inner speech at random moments of time using a beep method. Research participants are asked to record their inner speech at the time a beep on their mobile phone sounds throughout the day. Research participants are then interviewed in detail about their experiences and the results identify the actual inner speech and experience of the participant during those moments.

The limitation of this method of data collection is that DES does not take account of the idiosyncratic personal meanings behind a person's inner speech despite being designed "*to produce high fidelity descriptions of randomly selected pristine inner experience*" (Hurlburt et al, 2013, p.1477). The iterative nature of using DES as a research tool enables participants to distinguish what the actual inner speech meant to the participant by expanding on condensed speech, for example "milk" meant "I must remember to buy milk at the shop". However, the method does not go beyond this expansion to fully explore the meanings that are "saturated with sense" (Vygotsky, 1962, p.148) with the participants. It may be that the inner speech that was recorded was not particularly meaningful and that focusing research on the critical element of inner speech may in itself contain more meaning to the individual.

The Varieties of Inner Speech Questionnaire (VISQ) is a self-report questionnaire which aims to assesses the quality of the participant's inner speech in terms of four characteristics; dialogicality, evaluative/motivational content, condensation and the presence of other voices. Data is statistically analysed. The VISQ also identifies psychopathological variables across clinical and nonclinical populations, assessing for anxiety, depression and AVHs.

Alderson-Day and Fernyhough (2014) accept the limitations of VISQ and suggest using qualitative methodology as a supplement to assessing subjective experience due to the trade-off when attempting to gather statistically meaningful data. Similarly, the researchers who used DES fail to go on to elicit a deeper understanding of the research

participant's inner speech, what it meant to them, or how the speech affected them. Arguably, DES elicits marginally more meaningful data than a self-report questionnaire, however, both of these research tools fail to yield a rich and accurate description which shows the texture and grain of the research participant's experience and verbatim.

Heavy and Hurlburt (2008) in their findings using DES found that higher frequencies of inner speech were associated with lower levels of psychological distress. This is contrary to Fernyhough's (2004) findings with regard to AVHs which result from stressful conditions or cognitive challenge. Legg and Gilbert (2006) similarly found that the degree of hostility of AVH's changed with regard to the levels of stress in the participant's lives. If increased inner speech reduces psychological distress, then why do AVH's become more hostile when an individual is stressed? From this research one might wonder if the answer lies in the meaning of the individual's inner speech, what is going on in the individual's inner world and what is the nature and purpose of their inner speech?

An Existential Perspective

Research closest to this researcher's methodology investigated the lived experience of inner speech using phenomenology. Vivian Waddell (2007) followed Van Manen's (1990) approach to phenomenology in order to explore the lived experience of hearing an inner voice and inner voice experience (IVE). Waddell's definition of inner voice experience encompasses a voice with no identifiable external referent and could be a voice construed by the hearer to originate inside or outside the head. This definition is slightly different to the definition of the inner voice in this research; that the critical inner voice is your own and recognised as your own thoughts and feelings. A similarity of definition, however, is the exclusion of auditory hallucinations with regard to the voice hearing.

Waddell reports on how the participant felt about their voice, how it affected them and what it meant to them; *"Hearing a voice speak to her had the effect of cutting through her concerns, taking her to the very core of her own being […] the voice seemed to remind her of her deeper self and her relation with existence"* (Waddell, 2007, p.41). Waddell's research is not motivated towards eradicating or changing the experience but shines a light on it, as a natural phenomenon that contains meaning to the individual experiencing it.

Waddell cites Martin Heidegger's (1927/1962) concept of being-in-the-world (*Da-Sein*) in order to explain the hearing of voices as a natural human phenomenon; "*a person is always a 'being-in-the-world' and cannot be separated from the world. Thus to understand people, one must understand their context, that is, the worlds or situations in which they live*" (Waddell, 2007, p.37). Waddell's aim was to describe the essential nature of the phenomena of the inner voice experience 'as it is', rather than as a pathological aberration. Waddell's reference to Heidegger's Da-Sein, or the 'being there' of existence looks at IVE in a different way to previous researchers such as Firestone (1986), Siegrist (1995), McCarthy-Jones & Fernyhough (2007), Morin & Uttl (2011), and Perrone-Bertolotti et al (2014); Waddell provides an existential perspective by her choice of methodology and by not pathologizing the hearing of voices, rather studying people's lived-in-the-world experience.

Being-in-the-world

Martin Heidegger was fascinated by the poetic word and language (Farrell Krell, 1977). He thought theory to be limited, favouring ontology; studying the nature of being human (Dreyfus, 1991). In Being and Time, Heidegger explored the concept of Da-Sein, which refers to Being-In-The-World (Heidegger, 1927/1962), suggesting an interconnectedness and care for others and the world around us. We are both similar and different to others, we notice the differences in the other and may criticise them for it if they don't fit with our notions of how things should be or how we wish ourselves to be. We reject that difference but without a difference we would not be able to appreciate ourselves as separate beings. In the same way, we cannot fully separate ourselves from others and thus we find ourselves in a constant state of flux between intimacy and separation.

Our perception of other people's thoughts and feelings, our relationship to them is part of our experience in the world. Heidegger's ontology provides an adjunct to the developmental theories of Freud and Firestone, which focus the attention on the development of the individual. Heidegger suggests an uncertainty to being, a constant process of change to the world into which we are thrown. Human beings are always being-with-others, inextricably linked with them whether they are physically near or apart due to

our memories and perceptions of others as we carry them around with us. Therefore, in order to study one's critical voice we must consider the context in which we exist.

Existential Guilt

Firestone (1987) identified the phenomenon of existential guilt within his patients who experienced critical voices. Existential guilt relates to the feelings a person has when they are guilty of transgressions against themselves (Yalom, 1980). Firestone's definition includes the guilt of hurting others; "*people feel strong guilt feelings when they act in a manner that goes against their stated goals and real preferences. They are basically depriving of themselves when they are opposed to their own point of view, but in addition, they feel bad about hurting others who depend upon their love.*" (Firestone, 1987, p.223).

Heidegger's view of guilt encompasses a sense of morality, having responsibility for oneself and others; it is a fundamental part of Dasein (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Both Firestone and Heidegger's definition takes account of one's interconnectedness to others, in particular those who are important to us and our sense of responsibility to them. It denotes a care for others, and when our care falls short of how we would like to treat ourselves or those close to us we feel guilty and indebted. There is also the sense of how things 'ought' to be within this lack of achievement, that somehow we should fulfil our goals or behave in the best way possible towards others. The difference between Firestone and Heidegger's ideas about existential guilt is that Firestone describes a 'one-way' route; from external to internal, whereas Heidegger's description references a constant process of change. This distinction is important when considering how as individuals we view ourselves and our critical voice because relationships are back and forth, reactionary in the moment.

I and Thou

When looking at the nature of relationship and ourselves in relation to others, the work of Martin Buber requires consideration. Buber's I and Thou was a mystical and philosophical poem (Smith, 1937). Buber elucidated the nature of relationships between people and things from the viewpoint of the individual. The I-Thou relationship is primary; it is characterised by a full, open, non-exploitative, non-stereotyping meeting, and relates to communion with God. Despite the direct translation of the German word 'Du' meaning

'you' in English, the term 'Thou' is used to reflect the reverential nature intended (Kaufman, 1970). The I-It relationship, by contrast is one that is casual, exploitative, objectifying and demeaning (Feltham & Dryden, 2004).

Buber wrote "*The attitude of man is twofold, in accordance with the twofold nature of the primary words which he speaks. The primary words are not isolated words, but combined words*" (Buber, 1923/2010, p.3). Buber purports that the primary words of I-Thou can only be spoken with the whole being where nothing of oneself can be withheld. He cites a baby's instinct to make contact with another human being, and the sense of interconnectedness between two humans. Furthermore, the longing for the Thou is bound up with one's soul and contact with the Thou is contact with eternal life.

The 'It' is experienced by the 'I' as separate; there is no relation or mutuality with the 'it', the connection is one way from the 'I' to the 'It'. The concept of I-Thou and I-It in terms of the critical voice can be viewed from Robert Firestone's developmental perspective that parent and child are one and the same (I-Thou) until separation is realised and there is a push away from the parent's perceived criticism (I-It). The objectifying of the 'it' distances the other, perhaps because the pain is too much for the 'I' to experience. The pain would be the perceived external criticism that becomes self-criticism where the 'I' feels they have done wrong (Kainer, 1979), exacerbates feelings of self-disgust (Gilbert et al, 2004), is relentless and bitter (Freud, 1921/1952).

Hell is Other People

Criticism can be found in fictional literature and Jean-Paul Sartre's statement "Hell is Other People" (Sartre, 1989, p.45) provides another aspect to the study of the critical voice and of relationships. Sartre's statement is taken from his play 'No Exit', which highlights the inescapable prison of our own assumptions and constructs about how we see the world, and how we think other people see us. The play is comprised of three characters; Garcin, Inez and Estelle, who are trapped in a room together which they understand to be Hell in the afterlife. There is a bell to call the valet but the bell does not always work and the door remains locked.

The characters struggle with their own beingness; trying to explicate who they are to the other characters or wish to be seen as, whilst trapped in their own personal worlds. Inez reflects early on that due to the nature of their imprisonment "*each of us will act as torturer of the two others*" (Sartre, 1989, p.17), believing that in Hell there must be a torturer. Garcin, on the other hand choses to believe that it would be easy to live together without ever taking notice of the others "*I think I could stay ten thousand years with only my thoughts for company*" (ibid, p.17).

In a poignant passage of dialogue, Estelle and Inez question their existence and sense of themselves:

> Estelle: *When I can't see myself I begin to wonder if I really truly exist. I pat myself just to be sure, but it doesn't help much.*
>
> Inez: *You're lucky. I'm always conscious of myself – in my mind. Painfully conscious.*
>
> Estelle: *Ah yes, in your mind. But everything that goes on in one's head is so vague, isn't it? It makes one want to sleep. [She is silent for a while.] I've six big mirrors in my bedroom. There they are. I can see them. But they don't see me. They're reflecting the carpet, the settee, the window – but how empty it is, a glass in which I'm absent! When I talked to people I always made sure there was one nearby in which I could see myself. I watched myself talking. And somehow it kept me alert, seeing myself as the others saw me."*
>
> (Sartre, 1989, p.19)

The passage speaks of authenticity and transparency; Estelle is constantly aware of how others might see her, ever vigilant to the presence of others and their perceptions. Without her reflection she simply does not exist. Sartre may have been thinking of Freud's (1921/1952) concept of the super-ego in his depiction of Estelle; stuck in the position of seeing herself from the outside (or believing she can see herself as she thinks others see her). Similarly Berne's (1964) Parent ego state bears a similar resemblance to Estelle's

position by maintaining a constant vigilance and directing her to behave in certain ways for the benefit of others.

This researcher's reflection of the message of the play is to take Sartre's 'Hell is Other People' and expand on it; it is not that other people are 'Hell', it is our own internal dialogue, our own beliefs about ourselves that is the inescapable Hell that we imprison ourselves in. We cannot escape our Da-Sein or conscience, it is part of us as we are part of our world. This raises the question of why we imprison ourselves in our own internal world, the internal world comprising of our external world as we perceive it and our internal world as we experience it.

Meaning

"*Meaning […] is implicit in our experience of reality. We cannot tolerate meaninglessness"* (Spinelli, 1989, p.7); human beings are meaning makers, in order to understand our world we need it to make sense otherwise we feel anxious and disturbed. For Sartre, life is absurd, there is no inherent meaning, humans are thrown into this world and "*condemned to be free*" (Sartre, 1948, p.34). Humans are free to choose how to live and what meanings to attribute to one's experience of the world; "*I emerge alone and in anguish confronting the unique and original project which constitutes my being; all the barriers, all the guard rails collapse, nihilated by the consciousness of my freedom"* (Sartre, 1943, p.63).

This idea places responsibility on us as individuals to determine ourselves, to determine our thoughts and actions. If, as Sartre purports there is no God with a higher purpose for us then we must choose that purpose for ourselves. The Danish Philosopher Soren Kierkegaard struggled throughout his life to identify his purpose; "*the thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wished me to do; the thing is to find a truth which is true for me, to find the idea for which I can live and die*" (Kierkegaard, 1835/1958, p.44).

It is interesting to note that Kierkegaard talks of faith and God's purpose for him, yet at the same time searching for his own truth, his own unique idea to live by, one which he would die for.

Sartre's idea of 'emerg(ing) alone and in anguish' in search of a purpose appears to echo Kierkegaard but Kierkegaard, unlike Sartre, believed that one's purpose was sent from God out there waiting to be found. For Kierkegaard the looking was a key aspect to his way of being, finding it impossible to understand his life; "*life can never really be understood in time simply because at no particular moment can I find the necessary resting place from which to understand it backwards*" (Kierkegaard, 1843/1985, p.89).

Albert Camus also references the search for meaning in his work 'The Myth of Sisyphus'; "*the meaning of life is the most urgent of questions*" (Camus, 1942/2005, p.2). It is urgent because if there is no meaning to life then there is no point to life and therefore one might as well not live. Yet, Camus continues "*the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart*" (Camus, 1942/2005, p.20) cannot be unheard, it requires attention. For Sisyphus, life seems absurd endlessly rolling the rock up the hill only to have it roll back down again. What is the point in that, and why does he continue with this pointless endeavour? Sisyphus's purpose must lie in the meaning he attributes to the task, which lies in his back story, his memories and the reason he came to be in the position he is in.

Victor Frankl offers another aspect to meaning, which is that through struggle itself can meaning be found (Frankl, 1959/2004). Frustration is a part of life, "*an indispensable prerequisite of mental health*" (Frankl, 1959/2004, p.109), and a change of attitude towards the frustration can bring about a different sense of purpose. Frankl provides a potential rationale to Sisyphus's struggle; that once the search for meaning is successful then not only can happiness ensue but also the capability to cope with the suffering.

How individuals interpret what is meaningful to them will be unique to their particular set of circumstances, their past, their life experience, their context in the world. People perceive things in context (Spinelli, 1989), we interpret and construct things through selective attention and we hold on to those constructs because they are meaningful, for us they have a purpose.

Critique of Literature and Previous Research

> "*If language is always a means of interaction with the world, it is perilous to study it in isolated environments or in traditional controlled experiments*."
>
> (Emerson, 1983, p.252)

Quantitative methodologies limit our understanding of a psychological phenomena due to the difficulty of reducing a complex issue into statistical data. Thoughts, feelings and behaviour are contextual and subject to individual perception and can lose their individual meaning when presented in research papers. The critical voice contains personal meanings and idiosyncrasies which dedicated enquiry and immersive research can help to explicate so that a greater understanding can be gained.

Firestone's (1984; 1987) theory of the 'Voice' offers a limited perspective on the internal critical voice. Looking at the critical voice only through the lens of the critical element loses the humanness of the phenomena. People are affected by their surroundings "*for it affects me as I affect it*" (Buber, 1923/2010, p.10). Therefore studies and literature must include the broader perspective of inner speech and personal meaning in order to provide the framework in which the critical voice operates. Primarily the research question in this study focuses on the meaning and purpose of the critical voice, but it also includes the surrounding internal voices that may or may not be present.

The review of the psychological literature on critical inner speech and self-criticism has mainly produced psychodynamic theories authored by men, such as Robert Firestone, Sigmund Freud and Paul Gilbert. Whilst this paper is not intended to take a political stance on gender and the lack of writing by female psychologists, the question of how critical inner speech and self-criticism theories would look if produced by women from a different psychological perspective requires some consideration and will be explored in the discussion section. This issue is of particular significance because out of all of the people that came forward for this research, only one person was male.

The review of literature on self-criticism with regard to participants also highlighted the widespread use of undergraduate students, some of whom were studying psychology. The methodology section of this paper identifies the criteria for participation in this research and it is noteworthy to mention that psychology students were excluded for this reason.

Whilst the theoretical framework provides a grounding for the critical voice, the methodology and findings provide the structure and colour. By using a qualitative methodology it is possible to dig a little deeper into a phenomenon, explore meanings and feel what it is like to experience a human phenomenon through the eyes of another person.

The methodology section follows which explains how this study was realised, why such a methodology was chosen, and provides a detailed description of the steps taken.

The Research Question

The research question was identified following discussions with a range of people, primarily tutors and fellow students, and then honed with the research supervisors during the research proposal planning stage. Questions that focussed the researcher's thinking included 'what is the purpose of the research?', 'why research this topic?', 'is the critical voice the same for everyone and if not, how might it differ?', 'how can these differences, if any be captured by the research questions'?

Explorations into this topic needed to be open ended and the researcher should adopt a 'blue sky thinking' approach in order not to limit participant's meanings or responses. The research question emerged into three enquiries:

1. What is the lived experience of hearing a critical inner voice?
2. Does the critical voice have a meaning, a function or a purpose?
3. Is there a dialogue that goes on, i.e. a counter-balancing voice?

Having formulated the research question the research methodology was selected from a range of possible methodologies.

Research Methodology

The Researcher's Epistemology

A qualitative research methodology was chosen as this reflected the researcher's epistemological and ontological position; knowledge is gained through lived experience and the study of other's experience. Reality is understood in context. Qualitative methodologies allow for a greater depth of understanding of a research phenomenon, use reflexivity, and are oriented towards discovery rather than verification (McLeod, 2003). Qualitative methodologies also seek to redress the balance of power between researcher and research participant (Etherington, 2004).

Reflexivity involves transparency, being open about what and how decisions are made. Etherington explains "*Reflexivity is a skill that we develop as counsellors: an ability to notice our responses to the world around us, other people and events, and to use that knowledge to inform our actions, communications and understandings"* (Etherington, 2004, p.19).

The researcher also feels that qualitative research methodology is a joint endeavour between the research participant and the researcher, but more than this, there may be a process of change as a result of the research. Whist this research is not measuring change and the research question does not focus on a process of change, by allowing ourselves to be known and seen by others in the endeavour to discover more about the phenomenon there is the possibility of finding new perspectives and meanings in our lives (Etherington, 2004).

By talking about something personal to us we transform our lived experience into language which becomes a narrative. Narratives are stories containing meanings and are audience driven (Kohler Riessman, 2008). Interview participants tell stories about themselves and researchers construct stories, or themes from the data. There is a socio-cultural and historical aspect to a narrative; "*Narratives are composed for particular audiences at moments in history, and they draw on taken-for-granted discourses and values circulating in a particular culture"* (Kohler Riessman, 2008, p.3).

Choosing the Research Methodology

The above perspectives led the researcher to a narrowing of the choices for obtaining the best fitting research method. Quantitative methods were ruled out due to the depersonalisation of the individual experience in favour of statistical data. The research method needs to best fit the research question, which is a search for the lived experience in order to more fully discover critical inner speech, and in doing so must also acknowledge the researcher as an integral part of the research.

Whilst the telling of one's story is a narrative, the researcher felt that using Narrative Analysis was moving too far away from the individual's lived experience to a broader viewpoint of the phenomenon. Discourse Analysis was considered as this could be argued to fit with the linguistic nature of speech and inner speech, however Discourse Analysis aims to *"gain a better understanding of social life and social interaction"* (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), and the focus of this research is not about social life but about personal meanings.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was considered as it is *"concerned with trying to understand lived experience and with how participants themselves make sense of their experiences"* (Smith, 2018). Equally, Hermeneutic research such as Van Manen's (1990) approach explores personal meanings and lived experience and was used by Vivien Waddell (2007) in her exploration of the inner voice experience of ordinary people. However, these approaches do not completely meet all the requirements of the research question as they do not take account of the researcher's intrinsic involvement in the research. Therefore, it seemed that only one research method was suitable to approach the research question; Heuristic.

Heuristic Research

Heuristic research seeks to discover more fully the essence or meaning of a phenomenon by *"obtaining qualitative depictions that are at the heart and depths of a person's experience"* (Moustakas, 1990, p.38). It involves an internal search to find meanings and realisations relevant to a person's experiences; it is autobiographic. Douglas and Moustakas explain: *"it requires a subjective process of reflecting, exploring, sifting, and*

elucidating the nature of the phenomenon under investigation. Its ultimate purpose is to cast light on a focussed problem, question, or theme." (Douglas and Moustakas, 1985, p.40). The researcher is inextricably involved in the research process, indeed, their passion and engagement drives the research.

As stated in the introduction, this research came about because of the researcher's work with clients who recognised an inner critical voice, and the researcher's own critical inner voice. To conduct research without declaring a personal interest would be inauthentic as it does not take account of any potential influence the researcher may have on the research participant. "*People modify their behaviour, including their talk, in accordance with different social contexts*" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p.37), therefore transparency, reflexivity and self-inquiry are essential requirements of Heuristic research. Reflexivity enables transparency of the researcher's values and belief, furthermore "*reflexivity adds validity in research by providing information about contexts in which data are located*" (Etherington, 2004, p.37).

Heuristic Methodology

Heuristic methodology, as described by Clark Moustakas, best fits the research criteria for this research study due to its use of rich description, texture and grain of the participant's verbatim, the search for personal meanings and self-inquiry. The following is a précised account of Moustakas's (1990) stages of research:

Initial Engagement - This is the passion that holds a researcher's interest in the research, the question that gets followed through to the end. Here the researcher will deepen their enquiry, with a view to the implications for their field of work. The initial engagement involves a dialogue with oneself, and a commitment to be receptive to the underlying meanings of the question. There is an inward looking to one's tacit knowledge (a knowing without being able to formulate this into words) and allowing one's intuition to flow without obstruction (the bridge between tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge). The research question will develop from this initial engagement.

Immersion - Once the research question has been formed, the researcher will immerse him or herself in it, it will become part of their world and life for a period. This helps to fully become aware of all that relates to the question, and to discover as wide a variety of settings and contexts as possible.

Incubation - Incubation is the stepping back from concentrated focus in order to allow all the aspects to settle and arrange themselves tacitly. It is the 'sleep on it' phase of silent creative integration.

Illumination - Illumination is akin to the 'eureka' moment. The researcher is open and receptive to answers; qualities, clusters of qualities, themes, meanings and understanding become synthesised or integrated into new awareness.

Explication - This is where the themes and elements that have been illuminated are described and explained in detail. Researchers will do this by being as aware as possible of themselves, attending to their beliefs, judgements and thoughts through focusing, indwelling, self-searching, and self-disclosure and noting these as separate to the data from the research participants. The researcher will need to be careful not to distort or miss what is there but bring out the richness in as much detail as possible.

Creative Synthesis - This is the final phase of the research where everything is brought together. The researcher will be thoroughly familiar with the data, meanings and themes. These will then be arranged into core themes, whilst still keeping the detail of the verbatim transcription. Moustakas (1990) states that for creative synthesis to occur the tacit dimension, intuition, and self-searching need to be present.

Recruitment

Recruitment Criteria

The criteria for participation in the research interview was:

1. Adults who were over the age of 18. Children were not considered suitable due to ethical reasons of informed consent.

2. The participant must recognise that the critical voice is their own and not an audible verbal hallucination (AVH). The rationale for this was that prior research and discussion papers had been conducted on the critical voice and AVH (see Langdon et al, 2009 & Firestone, 1986).

3. The participant should not have a prior relationship with the researcher. The rationale for this is that a prior relationship may alter the interview process or prejudice the researcher's view of the transcript by making assumptions about the participant's meaning.

4. Psychotherapy students were excluded as they are not sufficiently representative of the general population and generally are over researched, in addition prior research had focused on undergraduates (see Hurlburt et al, 2013 & Morin & Uttl, 2011).

In order to ensure that the participant recognised that the critical voice was their own and not an AVH, as per criteria number two, the researcher asked participants to confirm the absence of a current or previous diagnosis of auditory hallucinations or psychosis. This was done verbally when arranging the interview on the telephone, set out in the flyer, and at the start of the interview, the details of which will be stated later on.

Advertising

Participants were recruited using a range of formats; by putting flyers up locally (see appendix i); by presenting the results of the pilot study at a British Psychological Society

(BPS) talk; via a dedicated Facebook page (see appendix ii); by direct mail attaching a flyer to doctor's surgeries in Jersey, and by word of mouth.

In addition flyers were sent or posted on the following websites; via direct mail to contacts on LinkedIn; on the researcher's Facebook page requesting it be re-posted by the researcher's 'friends'; on the BPS South West Facebook page; on the Society for Existential Analysis Facebook page; on the World Congress of Existential Therapy Facebook page; on the Jersey Counselling and Psychotherapy Facebook page; on the Counselling Psychologists UK Facebook page; on The Tara Centre's Facebook page; on the Networking Jersey Facebook page; and on the researcher's ResearchGate page.

The flyers were printed in two sizes; A4 and A5 and contain a brief overview of the research, the criteria for participation, some brief information about what to expect, the purpose of the research and the researcher's contact details. The A4 flyer, in addition to this, gave a definition of the critical voice and prompted questions to consider about the critical voice.

The flyers were put up in the following locations and permission was sought and obtained prior to display:

- local supermarket community notice boards
- coffee shops
- sports centres
- churches
- pet shop
- community centres
- dentist waiting room
- school staff room
- hairdresser's staff room
- libraries
- tax office staff room.

Some unsuccessful requests to put up flyers were in a Yoga studio, and large supermarkets. Similarly, no response was received from the doctor's surgeries, the government organisation, or an educational establishment.

Participant Contact

With the exception of two participants who expressed interest by word of mouth, participants primarily expressed their interest by email to the dedicated research email address. An email reply was sent thanking participants for their interest and attached to this email was the Participant Information Sheet (see appendix iii) and the Consent Form (see appendix iv). The email asked them to read the information and to reply with their availability for interview.

Upon receipt of confirmation of interest in being interviewed further email correspondence took place to arrange the interview day and time. Two participants used the dedicated mobile telephone number to confirm interview arrangements. For face-to-face interviews directions to the site were sent once the interview was confirmed. For Skype interviews, details of the researcher's Skype address were sent by email and the participant was asked for their Skype address (see section entitled Skype Interviews).

The participants that were interviewed were not chosen but were the first to confirm acceptance to be interviewed. Seventeen people expressed an interest in the research in total, seven of which were interviewed and ten who either did not respond following receipt of the Participant Information Sheet or did not confirm an interview time.

The Research Interview

The chosen format of the interview was a semi-structured phenomenological interview. The rationale for this format was so that participants could answer as openly as possible, and it was made clear to the participant at the start of the interview that they should say what was important to them rather than feel they had to answer the questions, which were guideline interview questions. Speedy (2001) advises against orchestrating the interview as far as possible. The researcher discovered in the research question stage that different people held different conceptions of what constituted the critical voice, and therefore the researcher did not want to limit the participant's responses but to encourage discussion.

Interview Questions

The interview questions were developed and honed from the research question and the chosen methodology. The guideline questions, with possible prompts, were as follows:

- Are you aware of a critical element to your thoughts and inner speech?
  a) Can you describe what it is like? e.g. is the critical voice directed towards yourself, others, or a combination?

- Do you have an example of a situation or situations when you experience your critical voice?

- How do you feel when you experience your critical voice?
  a) Are there any feelings associated with it?

- Are there particular times that the critical element of your inner speech is more dominant or noticeable?
  a) Can you tell me about that?

- What happens in those moments that you are describing?
  a) Is there some kind of dialogue that goes on for you?

- Do you think the critical voice serves a function or a purpose?
    a) i.e. does it help, hinder, are you indifferent or something else?

- What do you make of your critical voice?
    a) Do your feelings towards it change over time, or in different situations?

The researcher used an interview checklist (see appendix v) by way of a prompt at each interview, which included the criteria for participation, the interview questions, a list of the participant sheets to be given to the participant and demographics. Demographics collected included Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Profession, and Geographical location (see below).

The Interview Location and Format

Five face-to-face interviews were conducted at the researcher's private counselling practice in Jersey, and two were conducted over Skype. The location of the Skype interviews for the researcher was the researcher's home office. The researcher ensured privacy at each location and suggested that the Skype participants ensured they were in a private setting as well.

Face-to-face interviews were considered preferable for the interview format, however not enough participants from Jersey came forward, so Skype interviews were considered. The rationale for the preference of face-to-face interviews was threefold; the personal nature of the phenomena and the potential for distress; some of the nuances of interaction can be lost due to poor connectivity with Skype; and also the privacy at the participant's end could not be controlled by the researcher.

The rationale for considering Skype as an interview format was due to three reasons: three individuals from the United Kingdom expressing an interest in participating following the Facebook posts; by that point the researcher had gained experience at conducting the research interviews; and the researcher was familiar with using Skype having used it as a medium for counselling.

Chair's Action was sought to conduct the final interviews over Skype and this was granted. The three individuals who had expressed an interest in taking part in the research were contacted and two of the three individuals took up the offer of a Skype interview.

Skype Interviews

A dedicated Skype address was set up entitled "CriticalVoice Research" using Microsoft. The Skype profile showed the dedicated Middlesex University email address and mobile telephone number, and a picture of the researcher. The participant's Skype address was added as a contact by the researcher prior to the day of the interview. On the day of the Skype interview the researcher checked that Skype was working and there were no problems with connectivity. At the appointed time of the interview the researcher sent a message to the participant asking if they were ready and asked them to start the Skype call.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment of the interview location was conducted during the research proposal stage (see appendix vi) and briefly again prior to the start of each interview in case of any change. The potential hazards were noted and mitigated and there were no other potential hazards or risks that required further attention. The risk assessment was approved by the Ethical Committee.

Consent and Participant Information

At the start of each interview the participants were asked if they had read the information sent to them and asked to confirm that they met the participant criteria. Both written and verbal consent to conduct the interview was obtained with one copy of the consent form being retained by the participant and one copy being retained by the researcher and stored in a locked filing cabinet. For participants who were interviewed over Skype the consent form was obtained prior to the day of the interview via email. The participant was asked to print off and sign the form and to scan it back. Once printed off by the researcher and filed, the consent form was deleted from the researcher's computer.

Verbal and written permission was sought to record the interview, which was done using a small digital recorder. The researcher explained that at any time the interview could be

halted, and permission to use the data withheld by the participant. Each participant acknowledged an understanding of this and agreed to proceed. There were no issues regarding the giving or obtaining of consent from participants.

Demographics

All of the participants identified as female and Caucasian. Their age range was between 30 and 56 years of age, specifically 30, 41, 43, 51, 54, 54, & 56. Their professions included self-employed (2) student (2), social worker (1), teaching assistant (1) and midwife (1). Five of the participants were located in Jersey and two were located in England. Demographics will be explored further in the discussion section.

Explanation of the Critical Voice to Participants

The researcher explained the definition of the critical voice that was being used in this research study and asked the participant to explain their understanding of it. The interview then proceeded and the research questions were asked where appropriate within the participant's dialogue.

Monitoring

Throughout the interview the researcher monitored the participants for signs of distress by listening to the participant's tone of voice, speech patterns, observing non-verbal communication and general demeanour. As an experienced counsellor, the researcher felt she had the skills appropriate to identifying client's emotions and therefore it would be possible to transfer these skills to the research interview. As the focus of the interview was on recreating the lived experience (Moustakas, 1990), the interview could have been very challenging for the participant (McLeod, 2003). If the participant had felt distressed but after a period of discussion felt able to continue, the researcher would have ensured that express permission to continue with the interview was given by the participant.

In addition, any signs of hallucinations or hearing voices was monitored. The researcher's previous experience was a manager and trainer for mental health charities and as such has knowledge and skill in working with people who hear voices. Typical signs of audible verbal hallucinations (AVHs) include the voice hearer being distracted, looking at a certain place

other than what is expected, pausing between speech, being visibly distressed or showing inappropriate emotions to the situation. Had the researcher noticed any of these signs the interview would have been halted, the criteria for participation would have been discussed and the interview gently brought to an end. The researcher would have contacted the research supervisor as soon as possible following the end of the interview. None of the participants interviewed showed signs of AVHs.

Debriefing

At the end of each of the interviews the researcher conducted a verbal debriefing with the participant asking them what it was like to be interviewed, and if at any time after the interview they had any questions about the research they were invited to use the contact details on the Debriefing Sheet. The participants who were interviewed face-to-face were then handed the Debriefing Sheet, with the exception of the first interview where the researcher emailed the Debriefing Sheet. For participants who were interviewed over Skype the Debriefing Sheet was emailed at the end of the interview. The Debriefing Sheet for Jersey participants contained local organisations that provided sources of support, and the Debriefing Sheet for Skype participants contained both local and UK organisations that provided sources of support.

The Debriefing Sheet thanked the participant for their participation and identified the name and contact details of the researcher, the name and contact details of the researcher's supervisor, the title of the research, the name and address of NSPC Ltd and Middlesex University (see appendix vii).

Ethical Considerations

The nature of the critical voice brings in itself ethical issues when asking participants to talk about their critical inner speech and how it impacts them. Indeed, as Firestone (1986) discovered in his research into the critical voice "*people became angry and defensive when they receive certain types of feedback about their behaviour*" (Firestone, 1986, p.441). Whilst the purpose of the research was not to give feedback to the participant about their critical voice or behaviour, the researcher considered the possibility of the participants becoming distressed, tearful or emotional during the course of the interview. Talking about one's criticism towards oneself could have raised a number of feelings, and therefore the researcher needed to be particularly sensitive to the questions asked and the emotional state of the participant.

Risk assessment

A risk assessment of the location of the interview was conducted to minimise any risks and ensure any potential health hazards had been accounted for and considered (see above section entitled Risk Assessment).

Clear Participant Information

The material that was to be seen by potential participants had to be clear and contain information about the nature and purpose of the research, what could be expected, the researcher's contact details and in some cases the research supervisor and the college's contact details (see Flyers, Participant Information Sheet and Debriefing Sheet). The research criteria were identified on the advertising material, and either confirmed verbally or over email prior to the interview, as well as at the start of the interview. Transparency is a key aspect of Heuristic research. The researcher felt that transparency should not be limited to the researcher's reflexivity but should extend to the research as a whole.

Dedicated Contact Details

The researcher dedicated contact details purely for the purposes of research, which comprised of a UK mobile number and the researcher's Middlesex University email address. This ensured a separation of roles to other aspects of the researcher's life, such

as personal life or counselling profession, and the potential of confusion on the part of the participant.

Clear & Freely Given Consent

At the start of the interview the participants were informed that at any point they could halt the interview and withdraw their consent for their data to be included in the research (see above section on Consent). Consent was requested both verbally and in written format, and a copy of the written consent was given to the participant as well as kept securely by the researcher. Ensuring participants are given comprehensive information in order that they can make an informed choice to participate is an important ethical consideration due to extracts of their verbatim being used (Kohler Riessman, 2008).

Participant Distress & Hallucinations

The researcher considered the appropriate steps to take should the participants become distressed, and these are identified in the above section entitled Monitoring. The researcher also considered the possibility of people with critical verbal hallucinations coming forward for interview, perhaps mis-interpreting or mis-reading the advertising material. The procedures that would have been put in place to deal with this situation are identified in the above section under Monitoring.

To mitigate the risk of distress, anguish, or questions about the research after the interview a Debriefing Sheet was developed (see above section on Debriefing). Organisations were identified for sources of support, such as counselling agencies and mental health charities.

Confidentiality

The researcher held confidentiality and anonymity to be a key factor in participation, particularly because some of the sample base were located in Jersey, which is a small 9 x 5 mile island with a population of around 100,000 people. Any identifying features or information needed to be changed so that the participants could remain hidden behind the data. For example, the term 'spiritual experiences' was chosen by the researcher as the original term used by the participant could potentially be identifiable within a sector of the local population. Care was taken to find suitable alternative words so that the verbatim

was not watered down in substance. Trust needed to be established in order for the participants to speak openly, and assurance as to anonymity played an important role in this. A final check of the transcript and verbatim extracts was undertaken prior to submission and inclusion in the thesis in order to ensure that identities had been adequately disguised.

University Guidelines

Middlesex University guidelines were considered and adhered to, as well as research and ethical guidelines provided by the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling.

Researcher Wellbeing

In terms of support for the researcher, it was agreed that the researcher be in private Psychotherapy throughout the course of the research due to the nature of the research topic and the Heuristic methodological process. The Doctoral program requires continued research supervision with two research supervisors, and these supervisors were chosen for their skill and expertise in the methodology and subject matter.

Transcribing the Interview

The digital file recorded on the digital recorder was copied onto the researcher's personal desktop computer and once transcribed was deleted from the digital recorder. The interview was transcribed by the researcher in a Microsoft Word document using a foot pedal to operate the speed of play whilst typing. Each transcript was headed with the number of the interview and the date of the interview.

The researcher's personal desktop computer is password protected and solely used by the researcher. The password is known only to the researcher.

With regard to transcribing the interview, all of the words were transcribed, including "err's" and "um's" as they add to a fuller description of the dialogue. Also included were any pauses in speech and any significantly noticeable extraneous noises or non-verbal communication.

Each interview was transcribed using a three-column format; in the first column a letter was assigned for the speaker, i.e. "P" for the participant's verbatim and "R" for the researcher's verbatim; the second column contained automatic numbering for each section of the speaker's verbatim; and the third column contained the verbatim. By way of example the formatting looked like this:

P	66.	*Yeah, I suppose it does expand to other programmes, my husband and I wouldn't, don't tend to watch a lot of reality TV, and I wouldn't necessarily criticise a drama, cause you're watching a drama*
R	67.	*Mhm*

Each section of speech was allocated a number so that meaning units could be referenced and easily located within the transcript. The rationale for assigning a number per section of speech rather than per line on the page was because numbering each line interrupted the natural flow of speech. Unlike Discourse Analysis where specific points in the verbatim

are analysed, Heuristic Analysis identifies meaning units which may run over more than one line.

During the transcription process comments were inserted using the 'New Comment' function in Microsoft Word. The comments contained reflections on the researcher's responses to the participant, how the researcher's questions or introjections may have affected the participant's responses, and any other elements that were not captured within the verbatim itself. At the end of each transcription a 'Self-Reflection' section was added which included the researcher's reflections and thoughts about the interview and the research participant.

The transcript was then revisited and checked for accurateness by listening back to the interview whilst reading the transcript. All of the participant's "err's, um's, intakes of breath, and audible exhales were captured and punctuation was inserted as appropriate to the emphasis, pauses, and speech as it was spoken.

The transcript was then saved and allocated a number; #1 for the first participant, #2 for the second and so forth. Each transcript was password protected in Microsoft Word, which encrypts password protected files. In addition the 'Read Only Recommended' was selected to ensure the document could not be accidentally altered when being accessed at a later date. Each transcript was given the filename of the number of the interview and the date of the interview, so for example "Interview One 20.09.17".

A copy of this document was made for the purposes of anonymising the transcript so that it could be attached to the appendices of this thesis (see appendix viii). In this transcript all of the comments and personal reflections were deleted and any identifying data such as names or locations were changed in order to ensure anonymity. The filename of this document was the number of the interview and the word 'Transcript', e.g. "Interview One Transcript". By using "Save As", the document maintained the same password protection and read only recommendations. The clean transcript was printed and filed under 'Transcripts' in a lockable filing cabinet.

Data Analysis

Methodology of Analysing the Data

In order to analyse the data, the researcher chose Moustakas's (1994) modification of Stevick (1971), Colaizzi (1978) and Keen's (1975) methods of analysis. Moustakas's (1990) original work on Heuristic research provided an informative framework yet failed to offer a structured comprehensive method of analysis with which to follow. An alternative could have been to use Colaizzi (1978) as it is structured and specific, however this method of analysis involves modifying the words of the research participant, and the researcher wished to stay true to the actual verbatim in order to elucidate texture, grain and authenticity.

A description of the steps Moustakas (1994) identified in his modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of analysis are as follows:

1. Obtain a full description of your own experience of the phenomena, using a phenomenological approach.
2. From your verbatim transcript:
    a. Consider each statement with respect to significance for description of the experience.
    b. Record all relevant statements.
    c. List each non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements, which become the 'meaning units' of the experience.
    d. Relate and cluster the meaning units into themes.
    e. Synthesise the meaning units and themes into a description of the textures of the experience, including actual verbatim.
    f. Reflect on your own textural description and create a description of the structures.
    g. Construct a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences.
3. Repeat steps 2a. – 2g. above for each of the research participants.

4. Finally, construct "a composite textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience, integrating all individual textural-structural descriptions into a universal description".

(Moustakas, 1994; p.122)

The steps suggest that the researcher becomes a research participant by going through the interview process themselves (step 1). The researcher did not follow this step due to the nature of the phenomenon and its impact on the researcher. This was discussed with the researcher's supervisor and in psychotherapy and it was agreed that the researcher's experience of the phenomena would be elucidated through an integrative approach to the work itself by reflecting on the phenomena and the research questions from several different perspectives; by considering the relevance for eliciting a description of the phenomena, by reflecting on any answers and how the questions felt, and finally, the researcher's reflections on the participant's responses. By using this approach the researcher's own experience of the phenomena should shine through the steps as they proceeded, a process that required reflexivity and transparency. Further rationale can be found in the discussion section.

The researcher at times immersed herself in the data, took time out to pull back and consider connections, jumped back in and then an explication of the findings. This is indicative of the Immersion, Incubation and Explication stages of Heuristic methodology. Due to the nature of the research topic this proved a difficult process. The immersion into the data was at times hard work and the negative emotions weighed heavily. The data had to be read and re-read from several different aspects to ensure that the themes went together coherently.

Reflexivity and Use of the First Person

The following section is written in the first person to reflect the researcher's connection to the data and the personal struggle with the Heuristic process. The section also includes the researcher's critical voice in action and reflexivity.

Once I had read through the transcript and saved an anonymised copy for the appendices, I took a break to allow the contents of the interview to settle (Incubation). I then came back to the transcript and began to try and identify meaning units.

The Struggle to Identify Meaning Units

Firstly, I created a copy of the "Transcript" document using the "Save As" function, which would be used to highlight the meaning units. I did this by using Text Highlighter Colour in Microsoft Word. The filename of this document was the number of the interview and then 'Highlighted Statements' (e.g. "Interview One Highlighted Statements").

I started out feeling overwhelmed at how to analyse the data, and so I left it for a while. As Moustakas does not provide a definition of a meaning unit per se, I initially struggled to begin the process of identifying what constituted a meaning unit. I went back to Moustakas's 1990 and 1994 texts and re-read the process of data analysis. Unfortunately this did not help much as it was somewhat theoretical rather than practical. I began to feel that the method of analysis I had chosen was in fact far too complicated and that I should change my methodology and so I contacted both research supervisors outlining my proposal to change the method of analysis to Moustakas's original, and far simpler, method of analysis.

Whilst waiting for their responses, I decided to re-read the transcript a couple of times and try and see what I could find (step 2a). I began pasting some of the significant phrases on a separate page (step 2b) with little cohesion or understanding of what I was trying to identify. I was identifying what seemed significant to me but it felt rather random due to the fact that I wasn't sure exactly how I was supposed to know what bits were significant.

Both research supervisors replied saying that it could be possible to change the method of data analysis at this point, however my primary supervisor suggested we talk it through. When we spoke on the telephone, I couldn't find the words to argue my case, and I realised that I had wanted to change the method because of my own lack of confidence and feelings of not being good enough. It all seemed a little too academic for 'a bear of very little brain' (A.A. Milne, 1926) . My supervisor and I discussed the methodology, and she suggested

that I try tackling just one page and send it to her. This felt possible, and I laughed when I realised that my self-doubt had been behind my proposal. Following the telephone call I found that I could in fact do what I set out to do and I had completed a page of analysis before the end of the day.

During my struggle some of the questions I was asking myself were "*what if what I think is a meaning unit is not a meaning unit*?" (This question suggested that I thought there was a 'right' or commonly identifiable meaning unit that I wasn't capable of finding.) Another question was "What if I think something is significant and other people don't?" (This suggested that I thought my work was not as good those in a 'higher authority' and I wouldn't be able to hold my own ground when questioned.) My critical voice was insidiously at play, making me doubt my ability.

Reflexivity and A Learning Process in Identify Meaning Units

In order to break through the struggle to identify meaning units I chose to initially analyse one question from the interview questions from the pilot study transcript. I chose to colour code the meaning units based on a perceived category; Critical, which I highlighted in red; Compassionate, which I highlighted in blue; and Neutral / Learning, which I highlighted in pink. I found this quite difficult to adequately categorise each unit as some of the units could fit into either category, and I began changing some of the colours, which then became confusing trying to track the changes. I transferred the meaning units onto a separate page (step 2c), and then transferred them again into a table keeping all the coloured units together. These meaning units in the table then developed into themes (step 2d).

I then synthesised the meaning units into a description of the textures of the experience (step 2e), essentially pulling the statements together in a cohesive way but using the language of the research participant. I struggled to identify a structure of the experience as different from the texture, but through imagination and wondering (which Moustakas (1994) refers to as imaginative variation), I re-worded the research participant's narrative into my own sense of their narrative (step 2f). I then sent this off to my supervisor questioning whether this was the right way to do it, but also feeling a little bold by wanting to carve out my own way of doing it.

Whilst waiting for a response I pondered whether this way of colour coding was a good way of analysing the whole of the transcript, not just for the one question. As I read from the beginning of the transcript I noticed other meaning units and assigned a colour to these. Continuing in this way I began to question whether this was too random, so I went back to my research question and the purpose of my research. I re-grouped my thoughts and focused my attention on the three principle questions:

- What is the lived experience of hearing a critical inner voice?
- Does the critical voice have a meaning, a function or serve a purpose?
- Is there a dialogue that goes on, i.e. a counter-balancing voice?

I then went back to the transcript and looked at it in terms of significance of the description of the research participant's lived experience of hearing a critical inner voice (step 2a), and I colour coded these statements into grey. I then highlighted statements relating to meaning, function or purpose into blue, and statements relating to dialogue into green.

From there I continued with each step as before; listing each statement (step 2b) onto a separate page under its heading, one for each question as above. Then clustering the meaning units into themes (step 2d), and then synthesizing them into a description of the textures of the experience (step 2e). I then took a break to reflect on this description in order to construct a description of the structure of the experience (step 2f). I also had questions and self-doubt which halted further analysis so I took another break to let things settle, which Moustakas (1990) refers to as incubation.

One of the questions I had was "am I looking at the data clearly, as it is, am I applying epoché as I should do". The honest answer I came back with is no, I am not. The reason I am not is that I am conducting research for a specific purpose, so per se, I cannot horizontalize each and every section of verbatim because otherwise the research would have no focus, there would be no point to asking a research question or conducting research at all. However, am I applying epoché to de-mist my own assumptions and thoughts from what the research participant is saying, and what I think they are saying. So

then yes, to the best of my ability I am being clear about what are the participant's words and what my reflections are.

The process was confusing and at times I was full of self-doubt, as can be seen in the above description of the analysis process. My critical voice was in the background saying "*you can't do this*", "*you must do this properly, you're not doing it right*" and I believed this voice, I fell for it every time. What kept me going was the realisation that behind this critical voice is the yearning to do a good job; I wanted to do the best I could to showcase the research participant and this under researched phenomenon. It seems my critical voice drives and halts me in equal measure.

Immersing oneself in the data, looking again and again at what is there is part of the methodology (Moustakas, 1990), furthermore "*skills required are developed as one tries to make sense of (the) transcript*" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Rather than thinking that I am not doing the analysis properly, I realise that my self-doubt, my earnestness and my struggle is in fact part of the research process.

Further reflection on my methodology during a discussion with my research supervisor brought about a realisation that even looking at the data through the lenses of the three research questions was still filtering the data, and that horizontalizing each meaning unit, irrespective of a theme would elucidate the phenomena in a clearer way. So again, my justification outlined above for using the three questions is also an example of the dialogue of my critical voice and impatience. Indeed, there is some truth in my argument, but no argument is necessary when the transcript is viewed without filters or intentions.

I returned to the transcript once again and highlighted the meaning units in one colour; yellow (step 2a). I then transferred them to another document to list all the meaning units (step 2b). Then I checked that I had captured all the relevant meaning units from my previous lists highlighted in different colours ensuring they were not overlapping (step 2c). This was a difficult task as some of the meaning units could be broken down into key phrases but by doing this lost some of the context of the meaning and so I listed both of these units despite their duplication. At this point of the analysis I felt it was better to

record more than I might use so as not to lose the nuance. I would then make the decision at a later time whether to use the fuller description or the shortened phrases. I then removed the highlight colour from all of the text for ease of reading.

Identifying Meaning Units

Identifying what constituted a meaning unit as I have stated above was a difficult process. By returning to the three principle questions within my research question and the purpose of my research I was able to focus my attention on the participant's verbatim. Much of verbatim contains phrases that are filler words, for example "kind of" and "you know" and where these appeared within a meaning unit, I abridged the text to remove them (see section entitled 'Approach to Removing Filler Words and Abridging Text').

The following extract shows an example of how I identified a meaning unit using the Text Highlighter Colour in Microsoft Word, the text that is highlighted in yellow is the meaning unit and the text that is not highlighted was omitted:

> *"I can't remember what it was this morning, you know I was stood at the window of my room and the voice came along and said "you know this is never going to stop hurting" and erm, literally just, well actually I can look at it like that **or** I can look out this window and see what a lovely day it is out there and I can move through the day feeling positive" (T.1.P.104)*

The first phrase *"I can't remember what it was this morning, you know" (T.1.P.104)* did not strike me as a meaning unit because it appeared to be reflective rather than about the participant's critical voice. The first meaning unit *"I was stood at the window of my room and the voice came along and said "you know this is never going to stop hurting"" (T.1.P.104)* is a description of an instance that the critical voice occurred, and also an example of the participant's critical voice. The next few words *"and erm, literally just"* I deemed filler words between two separate meaning units with the second meaning unit speaking about how the participant was trying to dialogue with the critical voice *"well actually I can look at it like that **or** I can look out this window and see what a lovely day it is out there and I can move through the day feeling positive" (T.1.P.104)*. Arguably the two meaning units could go together to form

a larger meaning unit about reflection on the critical voice but at the point of analysing the transcript I decided to separate them to distinguish the example from the dialogue.

Once I had highlighted all the meaning units in the transcript, I copied and pasted them into a new document in a list format, which I saved using the same filename formula as before, e.g. "Interview One Meaning Units". Alongside each meaning unit I referenced the location of the meaning unit using the number of the transcript (T), whether it was the participant (P) or the researcher (R) speaking, and then the line number, e.g. "T.1.P.100".

The rationale for referencing whether it was the participant or the researcher speaking was originally because I noticed that in the interview, I used different words in summarising what the participant was saying, and on occasion would leap ahead of the participant and they might reply with simply a "yes", and so I wanted to capture this theme. As I went through the process of analysing the Themes and Textures, I eventually removed the researcher's narrative as these meaning units did not seem necessary as they were captured elsewhere in the participant's narrative, and this is why all the references use the term 'P' rather than 'R'.

During the transfer stage of copying the meaning units from the "Highlighted Statements" document into the "Meaning Units" document I transferred all of the meaning units rather than remove any repetitive units as indicated in Step 2.c of the Heuristic analysis process. The rationale for this was to capture as much of the meaning and data as possible and then at a later stage I could filter out any repetition.

Clustering Meaning Units into Themes

The next step involved clustering the invariant meaning units into themes (step 2d). To do this I used the Save As function to create a copy of the document entitled "Stuff I haven't used yet" and prefixed this document with the number of the transcript. I then created another new document entitled 'Themes' using the same filename formula as before, e.g. "Interview One Themes" and cut and pasted meaning units from the document entitled "Stuff I haven't used yet" into the 'Themes' document. This was to ensure that I did not

inadvertently miss out any meaning units, to keep track of which meaning units I had used so far, and to enable work to be carried out in stages.

I listed each meaning unit underneath a proposed theme heading. The themes seemed to emerge from one or two meaning units, some themes became clustered and others were broken down further into separate meaning units. An example of a proposed theme that emerged from clustered meaning units is shown as follows:

> **Incapacitating / It halts me**
>
> *I know it's a personality trait, definitely but it's something that has become erm, incapacitating (T.2.P.44)*
>
> *it will stop me from erm, from going forward from erm, completing tasks (T.2.P.44)*
>
> *from succeeding, from feeling satisfaction in what I've done (T.2.P.46)*
>
> *but I went through so much trauma in my younger years that I, I'm now kind of like held back by all these traumas (T.2.P.283)*

Some of the themes linked and flowed together from one to another and others were in opposition. Where the meaning units could have fitted into different themes, I shaded the duplicate meaning units or text so as to identify the duplication. This was so that I did not end up using the same meaning units across different themes. For themes that were similar I used a larger bold heading to identify the overarching theme, and a smaller font in bold for the under-arching theme headings.

Meaning Units That Were Not Used

There were some meaning units that I did not use as they didn't fit anywhere or add to anything. For example in response to my question "*so there's no particular points where it comes out more, or less, or anything like that?*" (T.2.R.27) the participant replied, *"professionally definitely, erm and in my relationships" (T.2.P.28)*. This meaning unit didn't seem to add anything further to other themes that had been identified, however in order not to lose the meaning unit I wanted to keep it in the document entitled "Stuff I haven't used yet" in case a theme emerged from the other transcripts when constructing the universal description.

Textures

The next step for each transcript was to identify a short description of the texture of the experience (step 2e). In order to do this I created a copy of the "Themes" document and renamed it "Textures", again with the prefix of the interview number; e.g. ""Interview One Textures". In this document I further clarified and condensed the theme headings and inserted a sub-heading narrative which summarised the meaning of the theme, often using the same words that the participant had used. I then condensed the participant's actual verbatim underneath. To clearly identify the texture from the verbatim I used a black font colour for my textural description and a blue font colour in italics for the participant's verbatim, using speech marks to signify the start and finish. An example of a texture is as follows:

> **It's Ever-Present**
>
> The participant is aware of her critical voice all the time, it is ever-present.
>
> *"I'm aware of it all the time, (T.4.P.44) it's still there the next day and the next day (T.4.P.382), but more so recently I think" (T.4.P.80)*

Repetitive Statements

Any repetitive statements that I removed during this final process I pasted into the document entitled "Stuff I haven't used yet" pertaining to the relevant interview participant's transcript. However, I kept some repetition in where it emphasised the quality of the way the participant was speaking, for example in Transcript Four the participant spoke about her spiralling thoughts:

> *"just focus on that, just focus on something, stop all, stop the spiral [...] thoughts like that, and then that will help, (T.4.P.528-532) it breaks the thoughts, the cycle [...] but then they still come back again" (T.4.P.536-538)*

Had I removed the overlapping speech it would have read:

"just focus on something, stop the spiral […] thoughts like that, and then that will help, (T.4.P.528-532) it breaks the thoughts, the cycle […] but then they still come back again" (T.4.P.536-538)

The second statement does not have the same phonetic quality or pace and reads very differently. By keeping in the overlapping repetitive speech it shows more of the participant's thought process and natural speech.

Approach to Removing Filler Words and Abridging Text

Some of the participants used a lot of filler words, such as "err", "um", "kind of" and "like". As noted previously, I transcribed all of the spoken utterances that the participant made and these appear in each participant's transcript. I considered whether to keep these filler words in the participant's verbatim in the final analysis as they could contain meaning in themselves, however I felt I did not want to interpret what the meaning of an "err" or "um" meant to the participant as it could have been any number of things from a struggle to find the right words, to being distracted by other thoughts etc. Therefore, on balance I felt that ease of reading my analysis of the participant's verbatim was my preference rather than disruption to the flow. By way of example the following extract shows the actual verbatim: "*it will stop me from erm, from going forward from erm, completing tasks*", which when the filler words were removed became "*it will stop me from, from going forward, from completing tasks" (T.2.P.44)*.

Other examples of filler words the participants used were "kind of" and "like", which I removed; for example *"it made me kind of want to withdraw a bit and feel very kind of to, to be very self-attacking and to feel very kind of anxious"* (T.6.P.60). Once the filler words were removed the verbatim read *"it made me want to withdraw a bit and feel very, to be very self-attacking and to feel very anxious"* (T.6.P.60). I felt this helped the reader to understand the meaning more clearly without being distracted from the filler words.

I also some abridged of the verbatim as it was repetitive and distracted from the essence of the meaning; for example "*it feeds, or has been part of, or is a **symptom** of my anxiety, I have an anxiety erm, disorder, erm that was only diagnosed a year ago, erm, and I know*

that that is part of what fuels that anxiety" (T.2.P.30) was abridged to *"it feeds, or is a **symptom** of my anxiety, that is part of what fuels that anxiety" (T.2.P.30)*. Where only a few of the words were omitted due to abridging a comma seemed to suffice rather than the standard "[…]". The rationale for this was that in the above example the flow of the verbatim would have been disrupted considerably and would have looked like: *"it feeds […] or is a **symptom** of my anxiety […] that is part of what fuels that anxiety" (T.2.P.30)*.

Where the participants verbatim went over two or more numbered sections, for example where I spoke in between the flow of the participant's speech, I used the standardised "[…]" to show a break in verbatim and the referencing will show the line numbers from start to finish (i.e. (T.5.P.200-202)).

One of the participant's verbatim appeared to flow rapidly, and the meaning unit centred around being taken advantage of. I removed a middle section of the verbatim to condense it making it more comprehensive but felt the meaning unit should stay as long as it is to show the intensity of the participant's feeling. The whole section of verbatim is shown here and the section in grey was the section I removed;

> *"I have to cook, the dishes, the mess you know so, it really, really, **really** annoys me if somebody says, 'I've loaded the dishwasher for you' FOR ME! FOR ME! And sometimes I will actually say this 'ok so, which of those dishes were mine?' and sometimes I will just in my head start having a little rant like 'why would I, why would you think I'd' you know, this is all in my own head 'why would you think I'd want to do this, why would you think this would be a choice in life', and I'll go on and on like that 'I'm sure if you were doing it you'd **love** this for a life', I've actually said to my daughter 'when you grow up don't have a family, don't get married and don't buy a house until you've done **everything** else you want to do' and I know that the first time she meets a bloke that she likes that will be it, end of, but I admit I'm at that stage where I'm like you know 'why would you think this is ok that I have to do, why would you think I want to do it, why would you"'* (T.7.P.292)

Gathering Themes; the Textural-Structural Description

A construction of the structures of the experience then began to emerge (step 2f) which developed into textural-structural description of the meaning units and essences (step 2g). I called this 'Gathered Themes' as this title made more sense to me as a 'textural-structural description of the meaning units and essences' seemed to be somewhat elusive.

To identify the Gathered Themes I used my knowledge and understanding of all of the themes across all the transcripts (i.e. using imaginative variation and creative synthesis). This process also involved printing out the documents that contained the 'Textures' and the 'Stuff I haven't used yet' for each participant, which I stapled together. I then annotated them by hand in pencil with additional possible themes to the themes identified in the sub-headings.

In order to gain some sort of organisation as there was a lot of data to handle I developed a matrix using an Excel spreadsheet (see appendix x). The matrix was somewhat similar to analysing data numerically as each theme was marked where it appeared in each of the transcripts. I felt that I needed to have a system that was easy to identify which theme appeared in which transcript so that it made the handling of the data more systematic and less overwhelming.

Themes were listed horizontally and transcript numbers were listed vertically across the columns, i.e. T1 through to T7. The appearance of a theme was recorded in the corresponding cell of the theme and the transcript number using a tick "✓". Where the opposite of the theme appeared in the transcript, this was marked with a "И" symbol, for example in the theme 'Ever Present' *"I'm aware of it all the time" (T.4.P.44)* would be marked with a tick and *"it's not there every day" (T.4.P.384)* would be marked with opposite symbol.

Additional columns were entitled 'Score', 'Opposite' and 'Related Themes'. These columns were for the total number of times that the theme appeared (Score), and the total number of times the opposite theme appeared (Opposite). Where the theme appeared in all of the transcripts "All" was entered into the Score column rather than the total number.

Where a theme appeared in the transcript that was similar to the theme listed, for example the participant had not used the same words but the sense was the same, a tick was put into the box but marked in grey font. For example, a similar theme to 'Redressing a Balance' was 'Reconnecting with Me' which appeared in transcript number two, and therefore under the theme 'Redressing a Balance' a tick marked in grey font was identified under the column for transcript number two (T2). In the final stages the theme 'Reconnecting with Me' became a sub-theme of 'Redressing a Balance'.

Further columns were added entitled "Related Themes", which identified any themes that were related to the listed theme, so for example 'Not All Bad' could also be related to 'My Little Friend', 'Coping Mechanism', 'Break', 'Strive to be Better', 'Safe Criticism' or 'Rehearsal'. Some of these related themes were included in the gathered theme, whereas some of them fell under different gathered themes. The 'Break' later became 'Externalising the Voice' as this fitted the theme better.

To start the process of gathering the themes I filtered the Score column using the filter function in Excel. I firstly filtered for "All", so as to identify the theme that appeared in all of the transcripts. I then continued this process identifying the highest numerical score down to the lowest. I created new Word documents giving each a possible title of the gathered theme which comprised of a global title and various sub-themes, i.e. 'Harsh Judgement' was the global Gathered Theme, with 'Meltdown', 'Self-Blame' and 'Fuelling the Fire' being sub-themes. I then saved these documents under a folder entitled "Gathered Themes".

In order to create the gathered themes I used both the Excel matrix and the printed document comprising the Textures and Stuff I hadn't used for each participant, which contained my handwritten annotations. Starting from the beginning of the document of the first transcript I copied the theme from the digital document into the new gathered theme document. Once copied and pasted I then shaded the text I had copied into grey font in the original document in order to keep track of which text I had used so that I was not duplicating verbatim. I continued this process for each of the transcripts.

Once all of the extracts for that theme were copied over I then read through the document and wrote a short opening paragraph about the gathered theme and used sub-headings where variances occurred. Under each sub-heading I wrote a brief statement about the verbatim. Each piece of participant's verbatim was grouped into separate paragraphs so that participant's words were not mixed with those of other participants.

As I worked through the gathered themes documents some of the themes did not seem to fit and therefore I moved them back into the original document. For example I originally put the following extract into the 'Harsh Judgement' gathered theme, because "*verbalising, being horrible and aggressive to other people outwardly that's destructing **you**" (T.7.P.532)* could be seen as harsh and judgemental, but it didn't seem to fit in with the other extracts which contained sub-headings of 'Self-Blame' and 'Fuelling the Fire'. Therefore it was cut and pasted back into the participant's Textures document. I later used the extract in the 'Safe Criticism' gathered theme because 'I'd rather destroy me than destroy you' fitted better with sentiment of not wishing to hurt another:

> *"making excuses not to run, being an addictive personality, that's self-destruction (T.7.P.530), verbalising, being horrible and aggressive to other people outwardly that's destructing **you** and I don't do that […] so I internalise, so I'll destruct, I'll destroy me […] and I'll, I'll have internal conflicts for **me** […] so I don't want to upset you, offend you […] I don't want to engage with you" (T.7.P.532-540)*

The process of identifying the gathered themes was initially straightforward, however as the process continued this became harder as some of the themes overlapped either in their meaning or the context the participant was describing. Consequently having initially located some of the extracts into one gathered theme I then moved them into another because they fitted better there. For example, the following extract was originally in 'Harsh Judgement' but when looking at when the critical voice was present, it felt more at home under the heading of the gathered theme entitled 'Alone'. Although the sentiment includes anger and harsh judgement, it speaks more of feeling isolated and alone, which seemed to be behind the harsh judgement:

*"a lot of my close friends they still have children so they're really busy […] and it was the same when I had my daughter […] all my friends are younger than me, so I again felt isolated then because I had post-natal depression, I felt isolated (T.4.P.190-194), I can be at ***** for dinner […] and I can feel isolated in that situation as well (T.4.P.576-578), my daughter was like a month old, ***** served me dinner at eleven o'clock at night, I was breastfeeding! She serves me fucking dinner at eleven o'clock at night, so you know they're in a different zone to me totally (T.4.P.590), I can feel excluded there as well yeah, yeah, yeah (T.4.P.584), and I'll just sit there going 'oh for fuck's sake'" (T.4.P.582)*

In order to not duplicate any verbatim text across the gathered themed documents I used the search function in Microsoft File Explorer in the Gathered Themes folder to search for words in the file contents. This enabled me to locate which themed document the word existed in so that a detailed search could be carried out in the document itself. This method was also a good cross-check that all of the extracts had been used and to then identify by annotation on the paper document where the extract was located.

As this process progressed I was then able to solidify the title of the gathered theme and write a short description of the findings in each of the documents. Time was needed for this final piece of work in order for me to feel that the data was presented as best as it could be, and in a way that showcased what each participant had to say. The discussion section will explore which clustered meaning unit went into which gathered theme and why.

This final piece of work took some time because I wanted to feel that the data was presented as best as it could be, and in a way that showcased what each participant had to say. This was partly my critical voice coming into play; the internal fight between perfectionism, being beyond criticism and the frustration of the existence of the conflict battling with impatience.

Findings

This section details the findings of the study which elucidates extracts of verbatim from participants and synthesises the themes into a coherent form. The following key shows the formatting and meaning of the characters used in participant's verbatim:

- Participant's verbatim is in "speech marks," *italicised* and in blue font.
- Worlds shown in **bold** are where the participant used emphasis.
- "[…]"denotes abridged verbatim where there is a break in speech, i.e. where speech occurred over more than one line (e.g. (T.5.P.200-202)).
- A comma "," shows where there was a natural pause in the speech or where filler words were removed (i.e. "err/like/kind of").
- (Bracketed) words denote nonverbal communication or add information about what was happening.

The findings are presented in Gathered Themes, which are listed in alphabetical order with a summary and Creative Synthesis at the end. Each Gathered Theme has a global title with sub-titles that reflect aspects of the global title. The thirteen global titles are:

- Caring for Oneself
- Changes Throughout Life & Menopause
- Childhood & Parenting
- Halts Me
- Harsh Judgement
- Impact of Being Interviewed
- Interconnection
- Internal Dialogue
- Isolated & Alone
- Not All Bad
- Perfectionism & Not Good Enough
- Redressing A Balance
- When It Occurs

Caring for Oneself; Learning About Oneself, It's Hard to Hear Positive Things, Being Positive Is Not Enough

Caring for oneself is not easy when you are self-critical and is often overridden by taking care of others; the focus is outside of oneself rather than towards or for the self. One participant said that she had no idea how to care for herself, only how to self-sooth. She felt she knew what she ought to do but in practice this did not happen:

> *"I always come back to reading that you need to learn to self-care and be gentle with yourself, look after yourself. I have no idea how to do that. Apart from self-**soothing** as in overeating, you know, things like that or, locking myself away just to be alone at home and quiet and not answering the phone, apart from that kind of self-soothing, I don't know what it is to be **gentle** with myself, (T.2.P.52) I have no idea how to self-care, I have no idea, I've got the theory" (T.2.P.407)*

Another participant spoke about coming to the realisation that her work was affecting her health, and indeed exacerbating her critical voice. She was able to recognise that this was not good for her and to take action to care for herself by changing jobs.

> *"And that's one of the reasons why I'm going to give up [the job] this summer because I just feel I need to do something that's less life and death […] and less critical, (T.5.P.330-332) I think doing a more gentler job might just be the right thing for my health really […] mental and physical health" (T.5.P.362-364)*

A third participant spoke about being fed up with caring for everyone else and stepping back to re-focus her care on herself, as she had reached a point of saturation:

> *"'If this is the rest of my life it's not going to be caring for everyone else' that seems to be the common thread […] of that role that you have as a mum, of everyone expecting you to nurture and be there and you're the, you're the backstop all the time […] you're the wicket keeper and then you reach an age where you go 'mhm ok then so for **me** that's stopping now' and everyone else is*

going 'no, no please don't stop that, please don't stop that', you know, so I think that's my overriding narrative at the moment" *(T.7.P.78-82)*

Learning About Oneself

Learning about oneself can be harsh but it can also be transformative if you are prepared to be courageous. Participants spoke about situations where confronting your critical voice can change the way you see it, which then enables you to re-frame your perception about yourself and your life. This can, however, cause you to be more critical about being self-critical in an effort not to be so self-critical:

"Well I remembered it from then onwards thinking I mustn't be so hard on myself […] what it changed was that I must be careful not to say that to myself, *(T.5.P.114-116)* *so it just made me reflect, self-reflect and, and sort of be critical about being so critical about myself"* *(T.5.P.126)*

Learning can be healing; once you recognise your critical voice and you are brave enough to engage with what it is trying to say to you, it is possible to see it for what it is. For this participant , this began during spiritual healing experiences where she engaged with her shadow side which revealed her motives, why she reacts the way she does and not to take the critical voice at face value:

"Once you've seen and recognised something then you can really start working on how to fix it, (T.1.P.192) *you know you just need to gather the tools"* (T.1.P.194)

"Plant medicines that are taken in ceremonial circumstances that can teach us huge amounts about ourselves, and give us the possibility to see that actually that's, its, it's just wrong […] we have to go very deeply into our own shadow side, into our own darkness to do that, then the experiences will show us how we're thinking, what we're thinking, and allow us to see that those thought processes are extremely disruptive for us, for our wellbeing and for our daily lives, and eventually for people surrounding us" (T.1.P.16)

Other forms of learning, such as education can help you to understand yourself better. For this participant, having counselling and taking a degree in psychology and sociology helped her to learn about herself, reframe things and like herself more:

> *"In my mid-twenties I did about eighteen months of counselling, (T.3.P.118) it was only afterwards I was able to reframe things and think about things in a different way, (T.3.P.296) so I like myself more, I think also doing a degree in my early thirties and thinking learning more about you know, psychology, sociology, all those kind of issues, and being able to do something so I not only was I liking myself more but I was then able to do something that was more productive, (T.3.P.118) some of the stuff I learnt in my degree I actually watch myself play out, so I've watched myself kind of going back" (T.3.P.122)*

Knowing oneself and what it means when you behave in certain ways helps with understanding oneself and others around you. This participant spoke about how her emotional intelligence aided her to manage her emotions:

> *"There's always been an underlying emotional intelligence, I think I've always been quite emotionally aware of my own emotions, how to manage them, and not to let them get the better of me so I've always been aware that when I'm feeling low or when I'm feeling angry, the best thing to do about that is work that energy out, do something with that energy, (T.3.P.187) have an awareness of how I was feeling and why, how other people were feeling and why they might be feeling that way" (T.3.P.192)*

It's Hard to Hear Positive Things About Myself

If you are self-critical it can be hard to hear people say positive things about you when you feel that what is underneath the façade people seem to see in you is not how you feel about yourself. What they are thinking is not correct and therefore you want to make them aware of this difference in order to correct their misperception, be more truthful and authentic.

"I find it really difficult to hear positive praise, (T.6.P.166) people are so like 'oh yeah you use silence and then when you do say something it's really well worded', (T.6.P.160) people were saying you seem so calm I wish I could be like that, and me feeling incredibly uncomfortable with that […] especially in a group setting where you've got 8 people saying really nice things about you" (T.6.P.174-176)

*"Somehow I seem to have developed an ability to not **look** anxious […] I look very **calm** apparently, (T.6.P.150-152) I don't think people would know that I'm self-critical and that calmness is a façade, (T.6.P.164) 'you're wrong, you think I'm calm but actually I'm not' […] I need to tell you that actually you're wrong because of the nice things that you think, are wrong.' […] they're saying things that aren't true and that's, that's not ok, they can't think that I'm calm if I'm not"(T.6.P.180-188)*

Being Positive is Not Enough

Trying to be positive instead of being critical is just not enough. According to one participant there needs to be more interconnection between the heart and the head for you to really feel that you have value and worth. Simply telling ourselves that we are good enough needs to engage the emotions because the critical voice is so powerful:

*"I had all the things up on the mirror that I could see; 'you are, I am a wonderful person blah blah blah' and that **can** work, and it **can** help, but it's not enough […] it's nowhere near enough […] because you know by that time, that critical voice is so **powerful** that a few positive words, they kind of help, we take it in intellectually, there's a great deal that we take in intellectually that doesn't actually hit home in our emotions, in our hearts"* (T.1.P.204-208)

*"We don't **know** it until we feel it […] so sitting and intellectually saying 'yeah well I understand this and I know I'm a really good person and blah blah blah' while you're actually cut off from your heart to your head, that's not going to work, (T.1.P.212-214) and I might have just kind of gone 'that is not true! I am worth, I have worth' but I didn't actually truly believe it" (T.1.P.202)*

[It] Changes Throughout Life & Menopause

Participants spoke about their critical voices changing throughout their lives. Change had occurred for a number or reasons; for some it was a catalyst, for others a response to significant events or personal circumstances. Depending on the experiences you are going through the critical voice will be more prevalent if the experiences are perceived as negative or outside of your control, or less prevalent if you feel comfortable.

For one participant, the critical voice "*got worse and worse with age"* *(T.2.P.275)* whereas another participant reflected on times in her life where things were difficult, she felt out of control and the critical voice was really bad. Now her circumstances have changed she feels loved, is financially sound and consequently the critical voice is different:

> *"I'm no longer a single mum on the dole, with no money, living in a house full of damp and no food. Now I've got a great job, a great house, plenty of money, I'm not in that situation,* *(T.3.P.238)* *It wasn't down to me, it was down to other people or down to other things but I had no control over that* *(T.3.P.226)* *I just thought here I am stuck with no money and how I don't know what to do about this and all these things are happening and I've got no control over it"* *(T.3.P.232)*

> *"I think your critical voice really depends on where you are in your life, I mean I think if you are in a fairly negative place then your critical voice is going to have a much bigger impact or if you're able to, if you're in a positive place I think and even in, in different times in your life it will play a very different role"* *(T.3.P.370)*

> *"I also think meeting my husband, I think just the acceptance from my husband and having that mutual love and respect which I'd never really had before has also impacted on the way I feel about myself, he* ***really*** *does contain me, being nurtured by him. When we first met I spent all my time sitting on his knee (laughs) just being loved, I think that has had a huge impact being in that relationship"* *(T.3.P.122)*

The critical voice can lessen over time as you mature. Being able to reflect back on your life allows for a greater distancing of past memories where you remember the critical voice being a horrible experience:

> *"I think although its maybe not so much now at the moment but certainly in the past when it's been more difficult, it's been a horrible experience"* *(T.6.P.212)* *it's in a place where, although it will continue for a little while, I am able at the moment more to put it aside and to really join the discussion and look at the positives […] I'm not spending the whole day in my head listening to this voice,* *(T.6.P.60-62)* *it's at a distance […] I'm looking back as an observer on it"* *(T.6.P.68-70)*

Being older and more mature can bring about a different perspective of the critical voice; that of find it amusing. This seems to be coupled with finding stupid things you do amusing rather than berating yourself for your stupidity, and also being able to verbalise this. This participant reflects upon how she handled things she thought were stupid in the past, and how she handles them now. The difference is that she now no longer pushes them under the carpet as they occur but laughs and talks about them:

> *"It amuses me I think now, I think now I'm older and more mature it, it's more of a, although it's critical, it's more of an amused (exhales) just kind of eye rolling, whereas in the past it may have been more, much more critical and much more, putting myself down,* *(T.3.P.100)* *now, it's not so much, I'm just amused by the stupid things that I do"* *(T.3.P.102)*

> *"In the past I would have just pushed it under the carpet, not told anyone,* *(T.3.P.132)* *now I'm much more likely to say some things to my husband whereas you know, 'today I left the car at home and then I walked to work and then when I needed to go to a meeting and I walked out the office and thought oh where have I left the car?, I've left the car at home' (laughs)"* *(T.3.P.132)*

Catalysts can provoke a dramatic change in how you feel and behave. Previously mild mannered and considerate people can suddenly become curt and direct if the

circumstances demand immediate action. In this extract the participant experienced the abrupt transition from being a child to parenting her parents, which thereafter affected how she behaved towards others and felt in herself:

> *"I think there was the catalyst for me […] I **know** the time that happened was when my mum was diagnosed as being terminally ill […] and I suppose up until then I had been more inclined to pretty things up and put too many words in and make it palatable to people if it was unpleasant news and, and then I thought 'well we just need to cut through that now and just get on with it', and I said to my dad 'she's out in the kitchen and she's worrying about blah de blah, and she thinks you're not going to be able to cope because you can't use the dishwasher, the washing machine blah de blah', 'Come in tell her that you can cope' and he went 'no cause I can't' and I went 'wrong answer! **You** get your backside out there and tell her you can cope […] because that's what she needs to hear and it ain't about you now' […] my mum had always been the matriarch, at that time she was showing vulnerability that I'd not seen"* *(T.7.P.346-354)*

> *"And I felt fiercely protective of her then […] and from that point on I think I've taken that approach both in my own head and outwardly […] to say to people, you know, in the most pleasant way possible,* *(T.7.P.358-362)* *I am quite direct with people, not rude or unpleasant but I will tell them if there's a problem because I don't see the point in skirting around it […] I've not always been like that"* *(T.7.P.342-44)*

Menopause

The menopause was reported as having had a significant impact on four of the seven participant's critical voices. The menopause was cited as changing how the participants felt about themselves, their lives and those around them. The menopause had affected them in different ways and their acceptance or non-acceptance of how they were feeling varied accordingly.

The Menopause caused feelings of confusion and forgetfulness, which led to increased worry for the participants. There were feelings of loss; the loss of perceived efficiency,

professionalism, confidence, or concentration. Participants spoke about a part of themselves dying and this brought about a difficulty in coping with this loss. A part of their personality as well as the physical change to their body seemed to be inescapably irredeemable.

> *"It does worry me about becoming more confused, it does worry me about becoming more forgetful, more anxious, more angry because they're all the emotions that I don't want to have and I've worked really hard […] to get away from them,* (T.3.P.282-284)

> *"The menopause doesn't help of course […] that's kicked in as well and that's robbed quite a bit of my confidence,* (T.5.P.416-418) *I think the confidence, it's all wrapped up so it's just that I can't cope with the changes in my career […] as well as I did,* (T.5.P.424-426) *my concentration is less and my memory is less so I just think well, you know it's not so easy to cope here,* (T.5.P.428) *a bit, bit worried cause I think is this the slippery slope now to older age […] and this is just hormone changes and that's, that's not the critical voice bit of it, it's just […] an anxiety there […] it feeds in"* (T.5.P.442-446)

As well as the loss of parts of themselves that they did not want to lose, there was also the reduction of feelings of anger which brought about a sense of calmness. For this participant this is one of the benefits to the menopause because it brought a happiness that wasn't always there before:

> *"Going through an early menopause as well, I think a lot of my anger was linked to my hormones so when those stopped and now I don't have hormones I'm much calmer and much more, my mood is more flat, that constant up and down, I'm just generally content,* (T.3.P.120) *I'm no longer angry, I'm just generally fairly happy"* (T.3.P.124)

Losing one's purpose in life coupled with going through the menopause brought on feelings of sadness and loss. Some of the participants shed tears at various points throughout the

research interview, and as noted in this extract were conscious of being on the verge of tears. Here the participan talks about how she feels in relation to her friends and her husband:

> *"I might start crying but I do cry a lot so don't take any notice of me, (T.4.P.178) I suppose because I am 54, I think it's menopause, I've got other friends the same age as me and they do the same thing, they just start crying and they don't feel like they're good enough and they feel like their kids have left home, their kids don't want them anymore, the husband's sailing or doing whatever he's doing and then they just feel like 'well what have I got now?'" (T.4.P.182)*

Menopause was spoken about as the death of one stage and the birth of another. This transition period brought on internal conflict where stark feelings arose such as not wanting to be here anymore, lacking in tolerance where previously there was forgiveness, and an increase in arguments both internally with oneself and externally with others. The menopausal change was in turn bringing about change in the participant's relationships:

> *"Menopause to a degree is you know, it's an ending of the productive period of your life, (T.7.P.366) it's a death of one period but is the birth of another period […] that's why there's a lot of internal conflict. Personally, I think that's why a lot of women around my age get that conflict of 'why do you think it's ok that you come in and sit on the sofa all afternoon and don't cook your own food and wait for **me** to come in three hours later and stand cooking for everyone, why is that **ok** for you?' Well from their point of view its ok cause that's always been how it's been" (T.7.P. 368-370)*

> *"More since I've become pre-menopausal and menopausal, I've had quite stark feelings of 'I don't want to be here anymore, I don't want to look after people anymore, I don't want to, if this is my life I, I need to change it.'" (T.7.P.48) I'm unforgiving of other people's mistakes, I'm not tolerant if I feel people aren't treating me […] or, being respectful. Previously, I'd want to make the peace, and now I'm 'd'you know if that's us, that's fine for me' […] I don't need anyone', (T.7.P.58-62)*

Childhood & Parenting

Most participants spoke about their critical voice as having developed from childhood and have quite distinct memories of its aetiology; *"it comes from childhood, I remember it, as long as I can remember I can remember telling myself off"* *(T.5.P.86)*.

The critical voices of parents still echo years through to the present, affecting thinking, feelings, and behaviour. Memories such as hearing parents argue, of being told how to behave, what to do, what not to do and how to do better has shaped participant's lives.

A child doesn't yet have the worldly understanding that adults have, and consequently can blame themselves for their parents arguing. If there are no safe and trustable people to talk to, the child is unable to make sense of events or consider events as normal; *"As a **child** you know, you, you very much take it all in"* (T.1.P.76).

In the following extracts participants describe the very first memory they had when they experienced that first moment of being criticised and how they tried to make sense it:

> *"**Certainly** for me it began when I was a child, in fact I have a very distinct memory of being, I don't know maybe seven or eight and that critical voice was always there from a very young age, (T.1.P.38) my family life was incredibly dysfunctional, my parents were arguing and I was lying in bed and **very clearly** the thought came to me 'this is my fault, if I wasn't here they wouldn't be arguing'" (T.1.P.34)*
>
> *"It's actually linked to when my parents split up, (T.2.P.269) that's when the fear started, when the anxiety started, when the perfectionism started, when the need to **please** started, because you're torn between two parents, both of them trying to brainwash you, so it, it **was** really a mind constricting time and so that's why it's so clear, that's why I know how and when it started, I know the situations, I was very carefree before that, I started living in a paradise lost environment" (T.2.P.273)*

The rules we learn in childhood echo throughout our lives. These rules not only come from our parents but the socio-cultural environment we grow up in. Participants spoke about how as a child they accepted the rules and were expected to comply with them. These extracts show how as a child you were expected to be invisible, not talk about your feelings but deal with them on your own:

> *"Drawing back on this inner voice I think as the guide to what behaviour was expected of me […] and how I was supposed to live I suppose, (T.5.P.190-192) you had to be presentable, you had to look pretty, or look decent, or behave yourself well, and so drawing your attention to me was not something that was encouraged, in fact it was frowned on" (T.5.P.154)*

> *"I tie that back to the way I was brought up in a very sort of Victorian you know, you don't express, 'boys don't cry'" (T.7.P.254)*

> *"I think some of it comes down to the time and the social status of how you're bought up, my mum and dad were both from quite big working-class families, of the 'children seen and not heard generation' […] I was expected to behave in a very adult way, I was never encouraged to talk about my feelings […] so I think that's where that need to have a little bit of a tantrum on my own in my bedroom when I was growing up because that was **not** something that would have been tolerated (T.7.P.116-122), girls don't talk about their feelings, you don't talk about your periods, none of that, 'No. No, let's not talk about that'" (T.7.P.256)*

> *"there was a very strong, you know, this is the way you do things (T.7.P.138), if you can convince a doctor you're ill, you can stay home […] other than that 'taraa, you're off to school' (T.7.P.134-136), there was no blurred line between them being parents or mentors or friends, they were parents" (T.7.P.256)*

> *"'Smile and the whole world smiles with you, cry and you cry alone' and that's very much what they used to say […] mum and dad" (T.5.P.168-170)*

Rules learnt in childhood can be hard to unlearn, they become rules for life. Even though you may be an adult with many years of experience of being a parent yourself, the echoes of your upbringing remain;

> *"I think what other people think of me is important and I try not to let it rule me, but it was very much how I was brought up"* *(T.5.P.152)*

A strict upbringing, such as the Victorian upbringing referenced by another participant, shapes the critical voice's love for rules. Being the oldest child, this participant keenly felt the difference between how she was parented and how here younger siblings were parented. Here she describes how she can still hear her mother's harsh voice today:

> *"I'm very close to my mother and I feel that the way that I was brought up was quite, quite strict. I was the first child and the strictness was not there so much for the other children and I was the only daughter so we were always together and I'm very close to my mum but I hear her strictness come through,* *(T.5.P.160)* *it's sort of her voice, it's not her but it's her, it's, it's the way I've been brought up,* *(T.5.P.166)* *she was very harsh"* *(T.5.P.256)*

The participant also spoke about how her mother was fierce about her own weight and critical about the participant's grandmother's weight. The participant was unable to emulate this harsh dietary regime and as a consequence felt her mother's displeasure:

> *"She was fierce about weight, she's fierce about her own weight […] her mother was very obese and she said 'I'm never going to be like that' and she never has, very strict with herself but of course I couldn't keep up with that,* *(T.5.P.264-266)* *I have a sweet tooth and she was very cross with me for becoming tubby, I suppose when I was nine, ten I felt her displeasure, well no, no, her embarrassment for me being slightly overweight I mean now it's laughable because I wasn't wildly overweight but then it was an issue"* *(T.5.P.268)*

Parental aspirations and expectations affect participant's critical voices. Pressure can be felt by a child whose parents see potential in them and want the best for them, however the perceived pressure can be a burden to the child. The child comes to believe that there is no room for slowly learning something and learning from thier mistakes, instead the sense is that they have to perform straight away. The second extract reveals this fast tract expectation as a teenager:

> *"I was born with that potential […] that intellectual potential, or creative potential, my parents saw that in me […] and that's why they put that pressure on me, (T.2.P.303-307) knowing I had that potential has always been more of a burden […] I was the seventh wonder in my parent's eyes, I was destined for great things in a way, I was always given the **best gear**, straight away all the whole gear for oil painting when I barely did water colours, and that kind of made it harder […] You've gotta perform straight away, you've gotta perform rather than building those blocks, those stages of, of, I was going to say mediocrity, of building your skills, of building your abilities, your knowledge and all that and getting to that point where your potential can actually express itself, (T.2.P.297) it was more of a trip up, more of a hindrance" (T.2.P.293-299)*

> *"Never done the whole learning stages and mistakes you do when you're a teenager, when you're looking for yourself and all that and then all of a sudden I had to be an adult and pay my bills and look after myself, (T.2.P.317) and you're expected to act like an adult and know what to do, have that maturity, I was always a very mature child but not for these things, not for relationships and things like that […] knowing that potential so 'why am I not there?'" (T.2.P.333-335)*

Being a parent oneself can make you reflect on your own experience of being parented and how you don't want that same experience for your own children. Effort is made to be a different kind of parent to your children than the type of parenting you received. In the following two extracts participants talk about how they have reflected on the best way to be a parent in terms of the development of the critical voice by comparing their approach to that of their parents, and also what their parents might think of their own parenting:

"She's a very interesting person because she's very hard on herself, very hard on herself and I think that's where I get it from. I've listened to how she's responded to herself much like my son did with me, and that's quite an interesting link really, and so I've learnt the mechanism that she has for herself (T.5.P.252) *she just thinks of other people before herself, she's quite sacrificial in the way she lives, she would do loads for other people and loads for the family, you know, she's not harsh with other people, it's with herself"* *(T.5.P.260)*

"My daughter and I have a different relationship and I've not yet decided which strategy is best from a parenting perspective, *(T.7.P.258)* *my daughter's a lot more open with me than I was ever able to be with my mum,* *(T.7.P.126)* *I don't know if my dad would see my upbringing the same as I do* *(T.7.P.266)* *I think him and my husband's dad were both quietly critical of us not forcing her into school when she was having her panic attacks, I suppose if my mum had been alive I may have pushed further, pushed* ***her*** *more, pushed [my daughter] more, but that wouldn't have been a good thing"* *(T.7.P.264)*

Participants spoke about how the words and tone of voice their parents used affected them, creating beliefs such as not being clever or good enough which continue throughout their lives. The occurrences do not need to be frequent, as this participant explains:

"My father had a lot to do with stuff as well, I remember once he was always questioning me, like doing the maths and he was going 'come on add this up, add this up' and I couldn't add it up quickly in my head so that made, I think that is one little thing that went back to, you know 'I'm not clever enough', *(T.4.P.242)* *he didn't do it a lot but there was a time when he did do it, it might have just even been one day but it was enough to shatter me"* *(T.4.P.248)*

"my father would always be with one of the paintings, it was always never 'ooh that's very nice' it was always 'ooh well you should have made your sun a bit more yellow'" *(T.2.P.38)*

[It] Halts Me; Restraint & Futility

An aspect of the critical voice is where it halts or limits you from doing or saying something, it can stop you in your tracks completely or just limit you for a short while. Stopping and thinking about what you are doing or about to say can serve a useful function depending on how you perceive the process, what you say to yourself or how much you want to do the thing you were about to do.

The critical voice can be harsh and incapacitating; , it halts action with statements such as *"no, you can't!"* *(T.6.P.20)* or *"you look ridiculous in that"* *(T.5.P.142)*. It stops you from living the life you would like to live or from being the person you would like to be. It can also halt your thinking, stop you from exploring ideas and possibilities in your mind. The results of this harsh stopper can be incapacitating, leave you feeling unsatisfied or that you will never achieve you dreams:

> *"Then there's thoughts that make me stop doing something, or thinking I can do something and the voice says 'don't even **think** you can do that, don't even **think** you can say that,'* *(T.5.P.134)* *'don't even **think** you should go there, you could go there,'* *(T.5.P.136)* *or 'don't even **think** you should think that',* *(T.5.P.138)* *it's like a full stop for me, it means I can't, I can't take something further"* *(T.5.P.138)*

> *"That's the 'come on', it jolts me and makes me think I've got to do better […] 'what are you thinking of' it's a very much another jolt, it's 'what are you thinking of, what are you' you know, 'you can't, you can't be serious"* *(T.5.P.92-94)*

> *"I'd love to dress in a bohemian style, I'd love to dance madly, I'd love to let my hair down, and I just can't do that,* *(T.5.P.206)*

> *"It's something that has become incapacitating, it will stop me from going forward, from completing tasks […] from succeeding, from feeling satisfaction in what I've done"* *(T.2.P.44-46)*

The critical voice can make you more cautious to engage with others which leads to a withdrawal from interaction. The anxiety of wanting to speak but not being sure how you will sound creates an internal dialogue between your critical voice and your wants and desires. If the critical voice is successful in talking you out of doing the thing you wanted to do, not only do you reproach yourself for spending too much time dialoguing, but the critical voice then reproaches you for not doing what you wanted to do after all:

> *"Wanting to get in before the critical voice starts again cause I […] had that awareness that if this continues too long I'm just going to get kind of caught up in the dialoguing with this voice, and the moment passes […] then I don't do it, and then ended up doing that awkward thing where two people start speaking at the same time […] so then I was 'no, no, no, you say, you say it' and then the voice is just back going 'oh look you've interrupted somebody, you can't contribute in a group discussion'"* *(T.6.P.38-44)*

> *"At the start feeling more positive, so feeling energised and curious […] a little bit confident like 'ooh I've got something that I think will be helpful to the discussion' […] that dips a little bit when the critical voice comes in and a little bit of anxiety creeps in linked to those thoughts 'what if this isn't relevant' etcetera, and it's an immediate spike in feeling very anxious,* *(T.6.P.86-90)* *it added fuel to the critical voice so it made me kind of want to withdraw a bit and feel very, to be very self-attacking"* *(T.6.P.60)*

This participant recognised that by taking immediate action when she wanted to do something like running she could bypass the internal dialogue which would inevitably lead to not going for a run:

> *"Another time where I have lots of conversations in my head are if I decide to go running and I used to have to run first thing in the morning, because otherwise it just don't happen, because there are far too many things in my head tells me are much more important […] like painting the ceiling or cutting*

the grass, things that I would not normally want to engage in […] and I can come up with lots of very creative excuses to not do things" *(T.7.P.518-522)*

Restraint

The halting aspect of the critical voice can also serve as a restraint. Being able to restrain yourself from immediately speaking saves face, saves embarrassment and shows consideration to others. It can show you your values as in this extract where the participant likes the way she is considerate, means what she says and says what she means:

"The critical voice has served a function, I very much value wording things in a way that feels, feels ok, I like that I don't jump in with stuff generally, I like that the voice has made me develop an ability to phrase things in a way that seems to really convey what I mean […] the critical voice limiting my spontaneity and forcing me to really consider how I use words and language" *(T.6.P.214-216)*

The critical voice can stop you from doing something stupid, or forcing you to consider how you speak to someone rather than be impulsive or saying something that you later regret.

"At some point it does serve a purpose in as much as, if you can learn to work with it, it can actually stop you doing some really stupid things" (T.1.P.130)

Another function of restraining yourself from immediately speaking your criticism can be that it is a crisis management tool, a way of filtering what you want to say before you say it. One participant likened her feelings to that of a coke bottle that had been shaken up. By restraining herself from expressing her anger she could have the internal dialogue with the critical voice which meant that the anger would subside and not spill out in an explosion:

"You've got a Coke bottle that you've shook up […] you can take the lid off and the contents will explode or you can keep the lid on and you know at some point that will subside to the point that you can take the lid off and it will be ok, *(T.7.P.166-*

168) I'm going 'ok so what are my options here', (T.7.P.172) I'm going to keep a lid on this until I decide what's the best move […] crisis management" (T.7.P.176-178)

Restraining oneself from criticising others in the moment also serves the purpose of maximising the effect of what you want to say to someone. Rather than be seen as 'nagging' or constantly critical, choosing your moment to speak helps the message to be heard by the listener. This is not always possible of course, however this participant explained how this was important for her:

*"It depends on I suppose how relaxed I feel, so if I'm trying to get an assignment ready to submit and everyone's expecting **me** to still do the housework and do the cooking and everything and I'm trying to meet a deadline […] so then I might verbalise that and say 'that's not reasonable' but I'm a firm believer that if you moan too much people shut their ears so I pick my moments, (T.7.P.380-386) I can't maximise the effect of what I'm saying if I say it now […] I want to achieve a certain outcome […] I'm going to do it at the time when I think people are most receptive to what I'm going to say" (T.7.P.390-394)*

Futility

The critical voice can also lead you to feel that something is futile or pointless, which leads to gradual inaction or a full stop. One participant explained that the result of being openly criticised in a group situation caused her to feel small and humiliated. She felt it was pointless to speak up and defend herself because it would be a waste of time and energy, furthermore the others would remember her defence more than her humiliation. By saying nothing she could protect herself by suffering in silence rather than cause a scene where she would be embarrassed even further.

*"I felt smaller than the others, (T.2.P.206) rational mind thinking 'they won't even think about it in 10 minutes' whereas if I pipe up and try and defend myself and look good and explain why […] **that** they'll remember (T.2.P.212-214) if I had said 'yes but I used the one you sent me!, I only did what I was told' basically I would have embarrassed myself all the more, (T.2.P.210)*

Futility and despondency can be the result of the dialoguing of the critical voice. Looking back over your life and the choices you made, the dreams you had but did not pursue, or the advice you took but wish you hadn't. The critical voice repeats itself until you feel that there is just no point in doing anything.

One participant spoke about regretting not going to art college at a young age, which was what she wanted to do but was advised not to. Now, she feels unable to pursue her dreams, because she is stuck with what the critical voice repeats to her:

> *"When I was fifteen, sixteen I wanted to go to art school […] and the career guidance teacher at school said 'you don't want to do that, you don't get a job out of that' […] so I never did, (T.4.P.132-136) I was the eldest of eight kids and I needed to go to work cause you know there's not much money at home and all that kind of thing, (T.4.P.240) I think 'well if I did an art degree and go back to what that woman said, well what am I going to do with it?' (T.4.P.146) but I can't afford to do that […] I can't afford to just take a year off work" (T.4.P.124-126)*

Harsh Judgement; Meltdown, Self-Blame & Fuelling the Fire

The critical voice can be harshly judgmental both of oneself and others. Harsh judgement of oneself can be quite violent, the voice can be destructive where you tell yourself off for something or put yourself down; *"oh this isn't going to work, you're wasting your time blah blah blah"* *(T.1.P.94)*.

Self-judgement can be *"a reprimand"* *(T.5.P.86)*, where the critical voice tells you off for something you have done that contravenes perceived cultural courtesies or how you think you should behave. Interrupting someone was spoken about by one participant as something you should not do, so when she did this she berated herself. The critical voice does not take account of an inadvertent mishap, nor any other mediating factors (such as in this example the group facilitator later invited her to say her point), but recollected previous times where she interrupted, and this exacerbated her anxiety:

> *"'oh look you've interrupted somebody, you've spoken over somebody,* *(T.6.P.44)* *oh nobody wanted to listen to this, they've only come back to you because they were being kind, really your point doesn't add anything to the discussion',* *(T.6.P.50)* *and then the voice is going 'yeah you did that last time where you accidentally spoke at the same time as somebody' then it's that continuing anxiety of 'what is everyone thinking about me'"* *(T.6.P.60)*

Similar to self-judgement, judging others by your own standards, your cultural and moral expectations can eat away at you if others don't comply with them. However, this externally directed criticism can soon turn inwards when you feel you should be more compassionate towards others, leaving you feel conflicted:

> *"I think that where the critical voice really comes in is of course comparing myself to others, to society, to what would be expected,* *(T.2.P.333)* *I can be very judgemental towards other people if they do a what's called a half arsed job, I look down on that and I know it's not a good human value, we all have our strengths, our different values, and that does eat away at me, every day it does*

eat away because I know that I need to be more compassionate, more understanding of people who are maybe ***different*** *from me"* *(T.2.P.126)*

Some judgements of others can be quite stark or shocking and at times the internal narrative can be unknowingly externalised:

"I probably have said to myself 'I wish people were dead' […] that's probably the common thread, *(T.7.P.322-324)* *I have a lot of moments in the car when I'm driving, a lot of moments where sometimes I talk out loud as my daughter tells me where I'm criticising other people's driving or being very annoyed at them* *(T.7.P.242)*, *but a lot of the time it's just going on in my head"* *(T.7.P.244)*

The narrative of the critical voice contains words like 'should'; I should be doing this, I should not be doing that. The critical voice can remind you of how you should behave but your desires conflict with the voice, and if the desires win the critical voice then reprimands you. The judgement does not necessarily need to be harsh and can be conversational:

"I have a voice in my head that if I'm doing things wrong I sort of tell myself off *(T.7.P.40)*, *I have those conversations where 'well I should eat more healthily cause I could do with losing a bit of weight and I am 50' and then I have 'but I really like a bag of crisps' and I have a chat with the bag of crisps, that sort of thing where I know if I didn't buy it, it wouldn't be there but they call me and I go running, so those sorts of light hearted conversations where you know you shouldn't but you do and I'm reprimanding myself"* *(T.7.P.298)*

However the critical voice can be very harsh, harsher towards yourself than you would ever want to speak to someone else and this raises the question 'why is it ok to speak like that to yourself?' The critical voice can be demeaning and constant which leads to further judgements of yourself and what you do:

"It's the old exercise of 'well if you were to hear someone else say that to someone […] would you find that normal? And ***no*** *definitely not, it would be*

*quite violent at times, it would be totally unacceptable to see that happening to someone else, but to **myself** it's not something that I even know how to change, (T.2.P.56-58) very self-critical, very, very negative, very demeaning, (T.2.P.20) it's a **very harsh voice**, (T.2.P.52) it leads you to always, judge your output, whatever that output is." (T.2.P.88)*

Meltdown

Destructive narratives can lead to meltdown or tantrums out of sheer frustration. The meltdowns can escalate and de-escalate quickly, and are usually in response to an external event. The event triggers a value or belief such as *"nobody gives a shit about me" (T.7.P.296)* or where you feel you have been overlooked:

"I can get very 'I wanna die, I don't want to be here, I can't do this', I'm having some sort of meltdown. Once the moment's past I think what a ridiculous thing to think and say […] but I can really lose the plot really quickly sometimes, like if I can't find a parking space […] and I need to get to an appointment (T.7.P.68-72)

*"My son the other week made himself and his girlfriend a cup of tea and was going to walk up the stairs and I said 'oh! no cup of tea for me then' and he went 'no' and I was expecting him to go and make one and he didn't and I **absolutely** had a meltdown […] because it's not the cup of tea […] it's the principle of the cup of tea and what that says to **me** […] it's almost like I'm going 'right now I think I'm worth this and if you don't agree then we have some conversations to have'" (T.7.P.334-340)*

"it was all sort of going on and I just flipped and I went in the lounge and I went 'everybody's got their own problems, everybody blah, blah, blah but I'm going through the bloody menopause, nobody gives a shit about me" (T.7.P.296)

"I suppose really the word I've not used yet that at its worst is a tantrum […] I can stamp my feet, I can feel like pulling my hair out, I grit my teeth, I'm just out of control physically as well as mentally" (T.7.P.592-598)

Self-Blame

Telling oneself off and blaming oneself appeared as a theme for three participants, and this links in with judging oneself harshly. The blame can be automatic, the narrative usually contains 'should' and can leave you feeling belittled.

Blame comes automatically and quickly. It is only upon reflection that consideration can come as to whether it really was your fault but by then the damage is done. The critical 'shoulds' appear, *"I felt that I should have done it, I should, and I felt an idiot"* *(T.5.P.466)*. Mistakes can be blown out of proportion, particularly those that are picked up by someone else and these usually result in apportioning huge blame onto oneself:

> *"I do tend to blame myself first […] and then **much** later on I think actually that it might not be my fault but like **always** you know, it's very quick 'huh, that's my fault, I should have done that better' or 'oh gosh that was forgotten, that was, that was me'"* *(T.5.P.458-460)*

> *"If someone picks up a mistake I have made I take it really badly […] it's a proper let down **to** myself,* *(T.2.P.168-170)* *it's that voice always saying 'of course they're looking down on you now because you made a mistake'* *(T.2.P.190)* *I take it as a massive blame, a massive telling off"* *(T.2.P.194))*

The shame and self-blame from long ago in one's life can still be keenly felt. In the following extract the participant recalls an event in her early career when she felt belittled and this led to her blamed herself for failing to perform the job that was expected of her:

> *"When I was nursing, this was way back in the eighties, I was doing night duty relief which meant I was on a different ward each night and the nursing officer used to do a ward round at one o'clock, two o'clock in the morning and she would expect me as the nurse in charge to remember thirty five patients and all their diseases and why they were there, and she would shine a torch at each bedside and I would have to say the name and the diagnosis of the person and*

she was furious if we forgot or just didn't know and it never, ever crossed my mind that this was an unreasonable expectation that somebody who walked in at that ward at nine o'clock and by one o'clock needed to know everything. But it didn't cross my mind for years […] and feeling absolutely gutted if I got it wrong and feeling that I was a hopeless nurse and all of that and I just think now how unreasonable and I'm really quite cross about it that I was made to feel so belittled […] it did such damage to my confidence as a nurse, (T.5.P. 462-466)

Adding Fuel to the Fire

Having others criticise you can lead to a fuelling of the fire of your own self-criticism. Mistakes made public can be crippling, the humiliation and criticism that you are already giving yourself is brought into the open and you feel exposed. External criticism is like to *"a tonne of bricks"* (T.5.P.374) raining down on you, *"it's like getting a beating, you remember it"* (T.2.P.257):

"I was so embarrassed, I took it like a ***failure****,* (T.2.P.200) *I know that I will remember that event, next time […] in a much harsher way,* (T.2.P.251-253) ***I*** *lived it in such a, with such a feeling of embarrassment that that's going to stay with me, not the positive of learning from your mistakes but more the 'I don't ever want to feel that again'"* (T.2.P.257-259)

"I'm already deeply self-critical so then if I'm criticised at work it's just like raining down on my head a tonne of bricks […] because I already know that I could have worked better, or I could have done something different, I don't need other people to tell me […] so when they do tell me it's, it's, it's so hard to take" (T.5.P.374-378)

The type of job you do can exacerbate your critical voice. If the job requires constant evaluation and accountability, this can ramp up the internal criticism:

"I think the job means that that's always there and it has to be there to some extent, you have to self-analyse, you have to critique your actions, you're always thinking 'can I learn from this experience?' […] and it feeds into that, (T.5.P.326-328)

*I did an MSc and I felt that it **taught** me how to be even **more** critical, (T.5.P.338) I remember doing the critical evaluation module and then about a year afterwards thinking 'wow it's just upped me even more, upped my critical abilities even more' […] you can't unlearn it, (T.5.P.340-342) you could say it's tailor made for somebody like me, somebody that's self-analysing and self-critical" (T.5.P.324)*

[The] Impact of Being Interviewed

Every participant spoke about the impact to them from taking part in this research and a theme emerged that participants had either never spoken about their critical voice before or had not reflected on its nature before; *"I haven't actually thought of it as the critical voice but when you'd put that on the title, suddenly I thought that's what it is […] That's it! That's it! That's it!"* *(T.5.P.26-28)*

By taking part in the research participants focussed their thinking on their critical voice and as a consequence felt that taking part had been a good thing for them. They also felt that it would be a beneficial subject to research. They had not until this time actually looked into what having a critical voice was like, had not considered it before, and thought they were alone in experiencing it. Some participants said that they simply had no awareness they were being critical all the time.

Knowing that the critical voice was experienced by other people and the subject of research was important to participants; they wanted to be involved so that it might help others in the future but also to understand and help themselves. Having someone bear witness to their critical voice was very important:

> *"It's really good that you get, that you understand,* *(T.5.P.308)* *it's been really good to do this, I thought it would, I thought it would be good, just to know that it's not just me, I think that's really important to know […] that other people have this critical voice,* *(T.5.P.549-551)* *I think it's important for me to know that you've heard it and you've acknowledged it and you know that it happens enough times to people that you actually want to study it […] more and that it's a, a recognised issue that people have"* *(T.5.P.555-557)*

For one participant it was hard to describe her critical voice as she felt she wasn't very good at explaining her feelings or verbalising what was happening in general. She struggled to find the words, preferring to provide examples of her critical voice in action.

Becoming aware of one's criticism can lead to taking responsibility for it, the responsibility we have towards others on how we are being and the responsibility we have towards ourselves for how we are being:

> *"We don't accept responsibility for what we're actually creating ourselves,* (T.1.P.44) *it's a very easy trap to fall into, very fine line, I think attentiveness (inhales) is very necessary"* (T.1.P.132)

One participant relished the time and space to be able to explore her critical voice without boundaries, being able to talk about it felt freeing. Talking about oneself in such an open way also felt a little indulgent but also enriching:

> *"It doesn't always make sense but that's a lot of the nature of what goes on in my mind, there's a lot of pulling both ways, so I've just tried to just react basically, not overthink, that is really quite freeing, it's really quite, for* ***me*** *quite therapeutic,* *(T.2.P.423)* *to not worry if it doesn't make sense, but to let the thought follow its, its trail and see where that leads, I was interested in taking part because I think it's (pause) enriching, I suppose it was also maybe a bit selfish as well, because in a way it was an opportunity for me to explore, explore without the boundaries, I think it was a good wander in the woods in a way"* *(T.2.P.427)*

Interconnection; Safe Criticism, Social Media & TV, Care for Others

The theme 'Interconnection, Social Media & TV, and Care for Others' speaks of the interconnectedness of ourselves to our world and our physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. The critical voice is not an isolated phenomenon within each individual, it exists as part of ourselves and in our relationships to others and the world around us.

Your critical voice has an impact on your health and wellbeing, the thoughts, feelings and emotions are seen to be interconnected. Three participants spoke about how they believed that their current health conditions are a result of years of negativity resulting in a physical manifestation:

> *"I have an auto-immune condition right now which I **believe** which is directly linked to that, those thoughts, those feelings that I had for **many,** many years and so finally it does manifest physically because you know, your thoughts and your feelings are part of your whole,* (T.1.P.66) *it's a feeling that comes with it […] it's connected to a feeling, to an emotion* (T.1.P.56-58)*"*

> *"I've developed hypertension and I wonder if that's an element of it, always on the […] state of alert (T.5.P.358-360), damages my mental health actually"* (T.5.P.380)

> *"I went through so much trauma in my younger years that I'm now held back by all these traumas, through life's experiences I have been knocked down quite a lot" (T.2.P.283)*

Participants spoke about a sensitivity towards others which they found to be hard work and unsettling but it also served the function of judging situations or being able to manipulate people. This was reported as a blurring of the boundaries between oneself and others or being able to pick up on atmospheres in a room:

> *"Half the time you're not sure whether it's your feeling or someone else's, (T.1.P.254) It (said hesitantly) begs the question 'is it your own critical voice or is it*

a shared critical voice?', (T.1.P.256) maybe it's our own critical voice that is responding to what we've picked up from others" (T.1.P.268)

"I am someone who is very emotional, very sensitive, I can pick up the atmosphere in a room as soon as I walk in, I feel people, by small tiny body language things, it makes for a very wobbly base […] the emotions will always take over in me" (T.2.P.409-413)

*"I'm quite good at reading people […] in reading other people's body language, that have proven to be right […] I'll know **most** of the time what buttons to press and when to press them" (T.7.P.398-406)*

Safe Criticism through Social Media & TV

Being able to be critical towards posts on social media without actually posting a reply, or being critical towards people on television means you can express your criticism without the other knowing you are doing so. This provides a 'safe' way of being critical as there are no direct repercussions from the object concerned. It also shows a care for others, you do not want them to hear your criticism or offend them. Finding a way to be safe with your criticism shows your awareness of the other's feelings, that we are not islands but interconnected to the world around us.

Being critical to others who are on social media or the television provides a way to vent anger and frustration without directly affecting the other. People on television or social media cannot hear you criticising them, you can do this without fear of reprimand, unless of course you post a reply. Typical ways participants were able to do this was when watching programs like Gogglebox, the news, or when viewing social media posts about someone's wonderful house, or holiday, or family. Being directly critical to another person was not something the participants would normally do, or could do in their work environment so this safe outlet was useful to them:

"Watching Gogglebox, I often think disparaging comments about people, (T.3.P.58) I wouldn't necessarily criticise others in my day to day life even when I'm just out

and about in public,(T.3.P.58) I think the people on the telly are there to be criticised […] 'what is she wearing, what does she think' all those kind of things, (T.3.P.62-64) they're not going to hear me, not going take offence, it doesn't really matter" (T.3.P.324)

"You see people like 'look at these wonderful holidays' and 'oh my wonderful family' and 'my wonderful hou' and you're like 'I don't have that, you know, am I a failure, why, should I have that? I'm supposed to have that, everyone's got that, everyone wants that', but it's difficult to distance yourself" (T.2.P.343)

*"Very hard on myself but also very hard on other people so if I'm watching the news I'm very cynical and sarcastic, you know my asides are very cynical and sarcastic about politics and I feel very **despairing** about the world, and so I'm critical about them" (T.5.P.238)*

As well as serving the function of being able to safely criticise others, watching people on social media can also serve the function of learning about yourself. It can help you to see that you are falling into the trap of comparing yourself with others and finding yourself wanting. The learning point comes when you realise that it is not good for you to do this. This extract shows the participant's emerging awareness of this and the steps she took:

*"I started realising that I was really falling into this whole feeling bad about myself comparing to others, and saying to myself 'you should, you should be this and you should be that' and, and it was affecting my, my, my morale definitely, and since I've cut off, I've seen the difference, **very** quickly, in a matter of, of a couple days" (T.2.P.345)*

Another form of safe criticism towards others is where the criticism is performed through the medium of a cartoon character. In the following extract the participant spoke of her 'Mutley Moments' where the cartoon dog Mutley from the television series Penelope Pitstop expresses unintelligible words such as *"mrah, mrah, mucking mucker" (T.7.P.44)*. This enabled her to be composed on the outside in relation to the object of annoyance but to express her annoyance internally:

"I have a Mutley in my head so when other people annoy me I have an internal thing that I'm composed outside but inside I'm 'meshing, mhah, mhah', (T.7.P.46) *say I'm having an argument, either I try to verbalise how I'm feeling and the other person's not getting it […] or, it's a situation where I can't because they're in a car and I'm in a car,* (T.7.P.200-202) *or perhaps I'm going round the supermarket and there's little old lady in front of me and every time I try to overtake her she gets back in my way,* (T.7.P.204) *when probably most people would use expletives I just 'mucking shucking'"* (T.7.P.206)

The final theme of safe criticism is where the criticism is turned inward towards the self rather than being directed towards others. The sentiment is 'I'd rather destroy me than destroy you' and this reveals a desire to not harm or offend the other:

"Making excuses not to run, being an addictive personality, that's self-destruction, (T.7.P.530) *verbalising, being horrible and aggressive to other people outwardly that's destructing* ***you*** *and I don't do that […] so I internalise, so I'll destroy me […]I don't want to upset you, offend you […] I don't want to engage with you"* (T.7.P.532-540)

Care for Others

Caring for others is a narrative that participants spoke about, particularly in being able to express their critical voice without harming the other. In addition to this care was the kind of care for others to not be so critical towards themselves. It is a recognition in the other of the other's self-criticism, the recognition of the pain that brings, and not wanting that for them:

"I've since recently heard one of my colleagues say it when she's forgotten something at work, or done something that she thought, and she, she says to herself 'oh I'm such an idiot' and I instantly put my hand on her arm, I've done it a few times now, and said 'don't say that to yourself, just don't say that to yourself, that's not right"' (T.5.P.118)

Wanting to a good role model to others was spoken by one participant who recounted a time when she called herself an idiot in front of her son. She realised that the way she spoke to herself was recognised by her son who tried to comfort her, and this made her realise that he, in turn, could copy her self-criticism which she didn't want him to do:

> *"When I was collecting my sons from school in the car, I meant to collect another child at the same time, but I completely forgot about him and I got half-way home, and then suddenly I realised! Gosh I've forgotten Josh!' and so I said to myself 'you **are** an idiot, you **are** an idiot, idiot, idiot, idiot', and then from the back after a long pause, my son suddenly said 'I love you mummy'. He was trying to reach out to me to comfort me, but it made me think I don't want him to learn that way of thinking […] I don't want him to learn that thought sequence from me," (T.5.P.110-112) he could recognise something very hard about the way I was talking to myself […] that he didn't like and that he wanted to somehow comfort me" (T.5.P.122-124)*

Being aware of the effects of your own self-criticism can help you to help others cope with theirs. One participant spoke about strategies she has learnt that she imparts on to her daughter such as "*I tell her to just tell herself 'its fine' you know, tell herself she's doing really well, and I think that's the little head inside that you say to yourself 'yeah I'm doing really well actually'" (T.7.P.474)*.

Strategies that she imparts, as well as being comforting, can also be a rebuttal to be used in a future scenario:

> *"My daughter said to me 'you have so many put downs' and I go 'yeah I know but I've had a lot of years to develop them, I have a little stash in my head of things that I will say to unpleasant people if they're being rude to me and I give them to her so in this scenario, next time that happens, say this'" (T.7.P.552)*

Internal Dialogue

Dialoguing with the critical voice featured in every transcript in different forms. This ranged from trying to normalise or reason with the critical voice, to having an internal narrative discussing the pros and cons of a situation, to trying to refute what the critical voice was saying, or to making a conscious choice to see different options. For some participants the dialogue only comes with reflection or a while after the critical voice.

Normalising It

Experiencing a critical voice can become your normal way of being, it is part of who you are and what you do. There can be a rationalisation that everyone has conversations in their head, and that it is normal to feel up and down:

> *"Part of me just thinks 'well this is just normal, lots of people think, analyses stuff and they have down days and they have up days and all that as well' […] and then I've talked to other people and they feel the same […] so then I think 'oh well it's no big deal, you've just got to kind of go through those days and then you have your good days'"* *(T.4.P.212-218)*

Shutting It Up

One participant spoke about deciding to shut the critical voice up by bringing in another voice which resulted in a dialogue. She noticed things changing from that point onwards where she started to feel better within herself, more positive:

> *"I think the dialogue possibly began when I started changing that […] that thought pattern, that that thought feeling self-criticism. What started happening was that I had just started feeling better, I just started feeling better about myself and feeling more positive.* *(T.1.P.110-112)* *I think, you know, you have to bring in the other voice as if to shut that one up […] or to at least start going 'well actually you might be wrong'"* *(T.1.P.120-122)*

Arguing With It

Similar to bringing in another voice to shut the critical voice up is arguing with it. The dialogue can be a rebuttal or a way of mediating and reasoning with it. This is a technique that participants spoke about that they had learnt in order to manage their critical voice. The dialogue can be feisty, placatory or reasoned:

> *"I've learnt to mediate or mitigate against it so I'll listen to the critical voice and then another part of me will say 'oh come on, come on that's, that's too much' […] and sometimes I'll actually swear (laughs) and say 'fuck it I'm going to do it anyway.'* (T.5.P.388-390) *So there's a sort of reasoning voice through it, through the middle of it […] that's saying 'you don't have to, you don't have to accept that criticism, that's too much"'* (T.5.P.392-394)

> *"The voice saying 'you don't need to be perfect' is me trying to get better, trying to let go a bit of that perfectionism, trying to heal myself,* (T.2.P.110) *nobody's perfect, I* ***know*** *it,* (T.2.P.124) *you don't need to be 100% perfect every time […] on everything, sometimes 80% is enough"* (T.2.P.104-106)

Fighting Back

The dialogue can take the form of two different personas: the child and the adult. The child plays the role of the critical voice that is emotional and demanding whereas the adult plays the role of the rational, confident, ameliorating parent. This can be felt as a constant fight with the outcome dependant on how the participant is feeling at that point in time:

> *"The emotional child in me was like 'huuuh! I've done wrong, I need to defend myself. And then straight away the adult in me, the intellect came in and said 'whoa! Hey it's not all that bad, don't make it any worse', and so there's always, there is always that fighting inside,* (T.2.P.231) *the adult with the rational mind saying 'listen to me, I've got this. I've got this, I can sort this out' […] but the child has got so much power"* (T.2.P. 407-409)

I Wish I Could But I Can't

Another example of the internal dialogue is the rebuttal of the critical voice to things you would like to do. The 'I wish I could but I can't'. This dialogue will continue to deflate any ideas for action and always has a ready response:

> *"I got up this morning and I do all my jobs that I kind of do, and then I go 'right, I've got time now, what am I going to do' and then I'll think, or there'll be a WhatsApp from the family and I'll think 'oh, that'd be nice if I could go and see them.' Can't do that, and I'll think 'right what'll I do' and then I just think 'well, what' yeah so it'll be dialogue like that going on in my head"* *(T.4.P.336)*

Spurring You On

The internal dialogue can also be a useful way of spurring you on, enabling you to take action when you feel anxious or angry. Instead of the rebuttal of the critical voice wearing you down, feeling angry with it motivates you to defy what it is saying:

> *"I'd thought 'oh yeah I want to say something about this' […] So I thought 'yeah I think this is kind of relevant and it will be helpful for the rest of the group', and then (exhales) there was that pause where I hesitated, and then had a critical voice saying 'no you can't say this, people don't want to hear this, they don't want to hear about your experience, you're just gonna interrupt the session, don't be so stupid,' which I guess made me more anxious […] about wanting to share, so made me continue to hesitate. But I was kind of like 'No actually I think this* ***is*** *relevant and I think it's ok to share, and this is a group I know'* *(T.6.P.18-24)*, *'stop telling me I can't do this', and a little bit angry at myself for having this voice,* *(T.6.P.30)* *that spark of anger made me think 'no I want to say this, I'm in a point where I actually want to contribute to the group discussion'"* *(T.6.P.36)*

Little conversations with myself

Having little conversations with oneself can provide useful information and advice. The dialogue can be seen as a way of talking things through with yourself where you are able to take stock, give yourself the advice you would give to someone else, or reassure yourself:

"All through my life had little conversations with myself, (T.7.P.84) talking myself into doing these things that I may be finding completely out of my comfort zone, (T.7.P.140) telling myself things, the sort of advice I would give to other people, I'll give to myself (T.7.P.144) it's more like there's two sides to my conversation in my head" (T.7.P.174)

Stopping it in its tracks

The internal dialogue can be a way of stopping the critical voice in its tracks. Similar to 'Shutting it Up', the function is to cease its relentless diatribe but in a much kinder way. It is not always easy to do this and it is not always an effective way of quieting the voice:

*"There was a brief moment of 'you're never going to get better', but now as I said previously, I'm pretty much able to, to change that, just stop it in its tracks and go 'actually, you know, I can look at the day through **your** eyes' or I can actually look at the day and go 'Wow! Anything's possible today' or 'today could be full of **love**', or 'I've got another day to do this in' […] switching that thought off before it can really do too much damage, (T.1.P.96-98) I don't necessarily always give myself those possibilities but I do make a conscious decision to decide to focus on at least one of those possibilities" (T.1.P.102)*

Talk myself out of it

The internal dialogue can be a way of talking oneself out of being critical. In variance to 'Stopping it in its tracks', what happens is that the dialogue with the critical voice gradually peters out naturally by talking about the positive things the participant has in her life and then by taking action:

"Sometimes then I don't give a fuck about any of it and I just think 'well, you know, my life's fine' cause I don't have any pressure, I don't have this, or that, (T.4.P.402) then I suppose, I suppose I talk myself out of it, (T.4.P.646) so I say 'right well if we get up and we go and do something' or I do this or do that" (T.4.P.650)

Dialoguing Whilst Dreaming

An unusual finding was spoken about by one participant who is aware of dialoguing whilst dreaming. When she was having a bad dream she would reassure herself that it was just a dream and that she could wake up at any time:

> *"I also find I can be quite logical even when I'm asleep so if I had nightmares or bad dreams I would tell myself when I'm asleep that it is a dream […] it's nothing to worry about, it's a dream […] and if I chose to wake up it will end so, I'd, I'll do that and I **know** I do that when I'm asleep"* *(T.7.P.148-152)*

Working Out The Next Steps

Dialoguing can help to work out what the next steps are. One participant spoke about this type of dialoguing as a dialogue between herself and the critical voice where she answers it back out aloud. The act of externally verbalising her discussion with the critical voice helps her to work out a better way of doing something, which in turn builds resilience in her:

> *"There is a bit of a dialogue that goes on so I would 'oh ***** what have you done that for, oh da da da' and then I may, I may answer that 'oh well never mind because now we can do this, or […] 'don't write that in the email', 'yes but if I write this then I'm not sure how to word that'"* *(T.3.P.150-152)*

> *"It can help me, have a thought process so it sometimes actually verbalising your thinking helps you see the next steps and think what to do now 'ok well that's not worked, what, what, what can we do more' […] it helps build resilience particularly in me"* *(T.3.P.266-268)*

Isolated & Alone

Having a critical voice can be very isolating, and lead to questions such as *"why am I the only one who does this?"* *(T.6.P.124)* It can make you wonder if there is anything wrong with you when you don't see others being so critical, or hesitant or unsure of themselves. These feelings can lead you further down the road of loneliness and isolation.

Being alone or having nothing to do can exacerbate the critical voice because there is more space for it to run free. Participants cited that being able to distract themselves seemed to help, for example meeting up with friends, having things to do, or going out for a walk.

> *"I know it's worse if I feel lonely and I do feel lonely quite a bit, when I feel I'm at my lowest ebb,* *(T.5.P.412)* *I think my mood affects the voice, so the voice is more prevalent when I'm alone and I've got less to do,* *(T.5.P.284)* *I don't like being alone, I find it's where the voice is free to talk"* *(T.5.P.290)*

Wintertime

Wintertime was cited as exacerbating the critical voice for two participants because they loved to go out walking, however the weather is unpredictable in winter so this was not always possible. Their critical voice is not so noticeable during the summer months:

> *"I think also wintertime is a time when I get lower emotionally and I think there's more time in the winter to think about things cause you're not out and doing stuff and […] you're not in the sunshine"* *(T.5.P.282-284)*

> *"Some days you can't go walking, and I do get seasonal affective disorder […] desperately, I know I get that, I don't have this so much in the summer"* *(T.4.P.342-344)*

Time On My Hands

Having time on your hands with nothing to do exacerbates the critical voice. One participant struggled to come to terms with the life she was now living, her daughter had gone to university and she had lost her purpose, lost something that would keep her busy:

> *"I've got all this time, cause my daughter's gone and left to university and the job that I have I quite like it but it's probably not enough, (T.4.P.84) I've got so much time on my hands and it's just I want to fill that time, I'd like to have more, much more going on […] if I had more kids I'd still have more things to do because, maybe I regret not having another one, so if I had another one I'd still have another one at home" (T.4.P.390-394)*

> *"I don't want to be on my own, (T.4.P.298) sitting at home with a sketch book on your own, well I'm still lonely then […] and the loneliness is part of it" (T.4.P.320-322)*

Normal Family Life

Different life circumstances can affect the critical voice. One participant recalled how her life growing up was full of hustle and bustle, there was always someone popping in, phone calls happening, or something going on and this was a normal part of her life when she was young. Now her life is considerably different, she is largely on her own in a big house and far away from her birth family feeling isolated and alone:

> *"I feel very lonely over here because it's only me and then all my friends are busy, it's just, I think it's that family thing I think, you know where you can just go around and have a cup of tea with your mum or something, (T.4.P.194) I grew up in a large family and I'm used to all this around me all the time […] and now I don't, and I always assumed that would be there" (T.4.P.438-440)*

> *"With my husband, it's us two now my daughter's gone so we've got to kind of rebuild. He's going to buy a big boat and he wants to sail it all round the Caribbean […] but he hasn't said to **me** you know, it would take him five weeks, he was going to leave me **on my own** (said in a high pitched voice) so not only*

has my daughter left me but my bloody husband's going to go and leave me. I'm living in this great big fucking house all on my own" *(T.4.P.414-416)*

Different Interests

Having friends with different interests can feel isolating. For example if most of your friends drink alcohol and you don't then the prospect of going to the pub is not very attractive. If your friends have children but yours have grown up and moved away, the similarities between you seem a distant memory. There may also be differences in hobbies, which further isolates and leave you wondering if you have anything in common left:

"A lot of my close friends they still have children so they're really busy […] and it was the same when I had my daughter […] all my friends are younger than me, so I again felt isolated then because I had post-natal depression" *(T.4.P.190-194)*

*"I can be at *****'s for dinner […] and I can feel isolated in that situation as well,* *(T.4.P.576-578)* *my daughter was like a month old, ***** served me dinner at eleven o'clock at night, I was breastfeeding! She serves me fucking dinner at eleven o'clock at night, so you know they're in a different zone to me totally,* *(T.4.P.590)* *I just fake it don't I, and just stay there"* *(T.4.P.598)*

However, being on your own does not always exacerbate the critical voice, it can be something to be treasured, for example when you can take possession of the sofa all to yourself:

"I actually like being on my own sometimes, my husband says 'oh you know, I've got to go away for a night' I think 'great, I've the sofa to myself' and I don't mind that, I'm actually kind of alright being on my own" *(T.4.P.300)*

Not all Bad; Valuing It, My Little Friend, Options, Coping Mechanism, Rehearsal, Strive to be Better, It Motivated Me, I Would Like [it] To Be

A theme that emerged from most of the participants was that their critical voice was 'Not All Bad'. There were aspects that they rather liked about it or found some benefit to it in some way. This may be an alien concept, and indeed to one participant it was, however two participants called it their 'Little Friend'. One participant said it gave her the ability to consider her options, and that it was a coping mechanism.

Other participants said that the critical voice provided a rehearsal function and motivated them to strive to be a better person. Finally, the critical voice can also provide the function of problem solving.

Valuing the Critical Voice

Seeing the critical voice as serving a useful function rather than being detrimental is an alternative way of looking at it. One participant spoke about how, in a group they had been discussing their critical voices and was surprised to hear that members of the group valued it, it served a useful purpose. As she began to think about it she was able to reflect on the things she valued, such as taking the time to word things well, and the internal dialogue helped her to do this:

> *"There were a couple of people who really embraced their critical voice, saw that the function their critical voice was to support them to keep striving, to keep being ambitious and trying to achieve things, they really didn't want to get rid of their critical voice (T.6.P.208-210), it was really kind of interesting to hear that some members of my cohort really, really valued the function of having a critical inner voice […] that's quite a weird thing to think about" (T.6.P.226-228)*

> *"I very much value wording things in a way that feels ok, I don't jump in with stuff generally, I like that the voice has made me develop an ability to some of the time phrase things in a way that seems to really convey what I mean" (T.6.P.214)*

My Little Friend

Two participants spoke about their critical voice as a little friend. The critical voice has grown with them as they mature, keeps them company and has the comfort of a long term friendship or marriage. You know where you are with your little friend:

> *"I suppose I'd liken it to friendship so when you're young you have quite intense friendships but not for very long periods so you don't really get to know little friends at infant and junior school very well, (T.7.P.562) it's a bit like a long-term relationship like a long-term marriage or friendship that you feel comfortable with someone, you can finish their sentences, I sort of know with my internal voice where things are going" (T.7.P.588)*

> *"I quite like it […] it's like a little friend" (T.3.P.304-308)*

Considering Options and Accepting the Situation

Having a discussion with your critical voice can help solve a problem, help you to look at all the options. Internal discussions can bring about a resolution or, if action is not possible, find a way of accepting the situation:

> *"If I get a problem I sit there and I analyse the problem and then in order to be able to put it in a box in my head somewhere I have to have some options, if there aren't any options then I need to accept that and just keep the lid on (T.7.P.252) talk about ways of doing things better […] thinking things through, planning things out (T.7.P.40-42) and discuss in my head my options and then become accepting of whatever is the only option, or act upon one" (T.7.P.162)*

Coping Mechanism

The critical voice can also serve the function of being a coping mechanism. It helps you to cope with a situation, which was considered a good thing:

"And so I would have those conversations about that as ways to develop coping mechanisms and I think I still do it now, (T.7.P.252) in some ways I think that's a good thing because I think that developed in me coping mechanisms" (T.7.P.132)

Rehearsing Different Scenarios

The critical voice can help you to rehearse different scenarios so that you can be prepared in the future. In the following extract the participant relates how unpicking an unpleasant situation that occurred in order to work out how she could have dealt with it differently is helpful. Once understood, her responses can then be rehearsed for future use:

"I don't like confrontation, say you'd had an argument with somebody or something had happened in a shop, then I'd go home and I would rehearse numbers of different scenarios on how I would have liked to have behaved but couldn't […] for whatever reason […] in some ways that's helped me going forward because then as I've got older and sometimes those situations or kinds of situations re-occur […] I've rehearsed […] what I'm going to say so then I'll just come back at people like that" (T.7.P. 542-550)

It Makes Me Strive To Be A Better Person

The critical voice can help you strive to do better, to be a better person. This can be through pushing yourself to connect with your full abilities, by believing that you are better than this, by doing the right thing, by being the best you can be, or by motivating you:

"I'd like to think that it makes me better, (T.2.P.278) that it makes me strive to give better, or more, but more in the good sense, to, that it pushes me to connect with what I, with my full abilities rather than maybe be a bit lenient or, or, or lazy with, my, my, my daily way of being […] I believe that I, again maybe it's, it's, it's my, my self-doubt, but I believe that I have a great potential, and that through life's experiences I have been knocked down quite a lot, and that with that critical voice it's maybe somewhere that little potential inside me saying 'you're worth better than this, you know you can do much more'" (T.2.P.281-283)

"It helps me develop skills, my skills so whatever I chose to do I'll try and do it to the best of my ability and I'll critique myself along that path […] until I've got somewhere with the skill, whatever it can be, sewing, playing an instrument, learning a language, you know, whatever it is, (T.5.P.482-484) *I suppose there's an invisible expectation on myself to, to, to achieve things, to demonstrate that I'm not an idiot"* (T.5.P.490)

The punishing, critical voice's purpose here is to push you to be better, akin to the purpose of a cheerleader but sounding like a Sergeant Major. It knows you can do more, it speaks of your values that you should do more and it is impatient with you for not doing so.

It Motivated Me

The critical voice can ignite your rebelliousness to prove something or someone wrong. A casual put down from someone can be enough to motivate you to prove to them that you are capable, that you can in fact do the thing they imply you can't do. One participant related an incident from twenty years ago by a respected male consultant who belittled her dreams of one day doing a Masters / PhD. Years later she achieved this ambition, and believes that the retort from the consultant had motivate her by tapping into anti-feminist narrative:

"He turned to me and he said 'now my dear what do you think you're going to do for a career' and I said I'd just started nursing, and I said 'I'd like to do an MSc and a PhD' and his retort was 'ohaw my dear!' and to me it just made me turn round and think 'damn you, right I'm going to do it' so the MSc was for no other reason twenty years later than to prove this blooming man wrong, (T.5.P.500) *He probably has* ***never*** *remembered that himself but gosh it was a big moment,* (T.5.P.536) *It feeds into feminism, you know, women aren't as key as men, and my career was never sort of important in terms of where I was going […] compared to my brothers and so I'm living up to that or trying to disprove that expectation"* (T.5.P.492-494)

I would like [it] to be

Participants spoke about how they would like their critical voice to be a little different. They recognised that it was a part of themselves and that there was nothing wrong with being critical in itself, as without the ability to judge something, to critique, it would mean that they would end up being too trusting, to accepting of the world around them.

Living without a critical voice would mean losing something important and necessary, however dampening the critical voice down was a work in progress and not something that was easily achieved:

> *"There's nothing wrong with being critical. It's not a bad thing, I mean that's how people grow and change and develop isn't it? It's about analysing what you're doing, why you are doing it, and what you can do better next time, (T.3.P.308) most people would think of a critical voice as something that is negative but the word critical or to, to critique […] if you critique something, that's not necessarily negative, you're looking at the positives, you're looking at the what went well, the what didn't go so well and the what we're going to do about that" (T.3.P.312-314)*

> *"I should be living how I want to live, (T.5.P.212) and she [mother] has a really interesting life, and I suppose I'd like a part of that really […] I'd like to live the sort of life that she leads, she's much more gregarious and sociable and yeah, just she's a better person I suppose, and I don't feel that" (T.5.P.222-224)*

> *"Perhaps not just to get rid of it fully but to dampen it down, (T.5.P.573) because you want some critical voice, you want some critique of the world, otherwise you would be just the most gullible person in the world […] accepting everything" (T.5.P.581-583)*

> *"I would like mine to be a little bit quieter […] or to be, maybe to serve the same function but to be more compassionate in the way that it does that" (T.6.P.210-212)*

Perfectionism & Not Good Enough

Perfectionism was cited by three out of the seven participants as relating to their critical voice in a direct way. Perfectionism feeds into the critical voice but also the critical voice adds pressure to continue to be perfect, thereby feeding back into perfectionism. The critical voice can make you cautious, not wanting to make mistakes or to not wanting to continue making the same mistake again leading to anxiety and guilt. Wanting everything to be perfect can be an asset, particularly in the workplace, but it comes at a cost.

Not feeling good enough, clever enough, feeling inadequate, that you are a fraud or that you could do better are refrains of the perfectionist narrative. The critical voice that tells you that you are not good enough and so you strive to be better, but often this can lead to a circular feedback loop where one feeds into the other in a perpetual vicious circle:

> *"I'm a perfectionist in everything I do, in the quality of my work, in my expectations from other people and from myself, and I don't know if it's the perfectionism that came first or if it's that critical voice that came first […] it's definitely linked […] it's a bit the chicken and the egg"* *(T.2.P.82-86)*

> *"I think it comes from, from, from, from being cautious and not wanting to make mistakes,* *(T.5.P.204)* *I'm quite a perfectionist, so if I feel that something hasn't gone as well as I think I* ***could*** *do then that's when the, the voice starts,* *(T.5.P.282)* *it feeds into my perfectionism […] maybe my perfectionism has come as a result of the inner critical voice, I don't know which came first actually"* *(T.5.P.478-480)*

In describing the critical voice's perfectionist quality one participant described the ideal of having things run smoothly like a *"well-oiled machine"* *(T.2.P.136)*, not too fast and not too slow. The critical voice says that anything other than perfection is mediocrity, it insidiously whispers that if you achieve perfection then everyone will be happy. However, this perfectionist ideal can be boring, there are no challenges, now new inspirations, spontaneity or great discoveries:

"It's reliability, it's constance, it's quality that doesn't let down, (T.2.P.126) comfortably, (T.2.P.140) mistakes create delays, (T.2.P.136) haste can create problems […] if you do your job properly I'll be able to do my job properly, everyone is happy with the situation, with how things are working […] there'd be no grief, there'd be no tensions, there'd be no difficulties" (T.2.P.142-146) I suppose it would get pretty boring, because there'd be no challenges. Out of chaos there's a, a lot of things can be born, a lot of new discoveries, new interests, (T.2.P.146) great discoveries in science have been found through mistakes" (T.2.P.162)

Being a perfectionist in the workplace can be an asset. You become very good at your job, you strive to do well and bosses like this attention to detail. However this perfectionism comes at a cost to you, if you don't maintain the perfection you feel you are letting yourself down, not living up to the expectations you have set yourself and that others have come to expect. Unchecked, this can begin to affect your physical and mental health:

*"The perfectionism in a way for me has been very good because it's made me very good at my job, I very often became the go-to person because of my level of quality work, my level of adherence to procedures, to expectations, my striving for the best output, fastest, best quality, it's really a value and so, that perfectionism has helped me to give the best that I **can**, and to often be better than other people" (T.2.P.92)*

"It's also very difficult to live with, (T.2.P.86) that does come at a price, (T.2.P.92) that comes at a moral and nervous cost as well physically, (T.2.P.102) I will find myself checking something three times, although I know perfectly well I have done it well the first time, (T.2.P.166) I will sometimes make a mistake, or forget something […] and that will set me back […] it's in a way being caught up in the system of if I don't continue to be a perfectionist I'm letting myself down, it's reflecting badly on who I am" (T.2.P.172-176)

Letting go of one's perfectionist tendencies is hard, it is not easy to accept less than perfection and it may even be an example of perfectionism in action; telling yourself

that you don't need to be perfect is a way of trying to improve yourself, to be better, to be more perfect:

> *"Well the voice saying 'you don't need to be perfect' is me trying to get better (laughs) trying to let got a bit of that perfectionism, trying to heal myself, (T.2.P.110) it's very much theory as opposed to being able to put it into practice […] I* ***know*** *it would be better to be just ok with 80% […] doesn't mean I manage to (T.2.P.114-118) I'm an overthinker as you can imagine as a perfectionist" (T.2.P.423)*

Not Good Enough

When the critical voice tells you that you are not good enough, not clever enough or inadequate in some way you feel like a failure, you have been judged and found wanting. You have let yourself down, you have let others down. The critical voice is replete with 'ifs'; if only I had tried harder, if only I had done things differently, etcetera. The result of this narrative can be to feel small:

> *"It's never good enough, what you've done […] you can always do more, (T.2.P.96-98) I'm not as good as I thought I was, it's very much slapping myself back down really like 'oh you've* ***failed****'" (T.2.P.204)*

> *"My biggest critic, that I'm not good enough, that I never went to university, or I never studied anything, (T.4.P.70) that's the way* ***my head thinks,*** *it makes me feel small" (T.4.P.164)*

Not feeling good enough can be embarrassing, for example when you don't know what someone is talking about and feel you ought to know and feel inadequate. One participant spoke about how she puts on a persona, pretends that she knows rather than show her ignorance to the other person:

> *"Socially it's not easy, I think I do a big act actually but somebody's only got to mention something, like I might say 'what do you do' and then, if they give an answer of a job and I have no idea what that is suddenly I'm completely flawed*

and I feel (sharp intake of breath) 'I don't know what that is at all, I'm going to have to crawl under a stone now' […] it makes me feel really inadequate that I've failed, (T.5.P.296-298) *so you put on this face, you put on that persona"* (T.5.P.172)

Shame is a feature of not feeling good enough and the critical voice tells you things like 'you should be …' or 'you'll get found out', or 'you're going to screw this up'. It makes you lose confidence in yourself by putting you down and making you doubt your abilities:

"I remember being deeply ashamed, and I do feel very ***ashamed*** *of myself, this critical voice makes me very ashamed of myself, ashamed of my figure,* (T.5.P.270) *ashamed of my thought processes, ashamed of not being the person that I think I should be […] or could be"* (T.5.P.270-272)

*"I've done my job for 33 years but I would say in the first 15, 20 years I used to think 'it's only a matter of time before I'll be found out' that's probably quite a common thought that's 'it's only a matter of time before they'll realise I don't know something, I don't know this job, I don't know how to […] how to be' and that, that critical voice comes in, no I haven't done that right or I could do that better, the voice would say 'you see, it's only a matter of time', after about 15, 20 years I thought 'come on *****, really you do know your job'"* (T.5.P.316-318)

"In my head I'm going 'what are you gonna ask next', your mind's gone blank, 'you're about to screw this up and everybody's about to realise that you're a fraud and you're not supposed to be here'" (T.6.P.154)

Redressing A Balance; Reconnecting, Releasing Pressure & Externalising the Voice

Redressing a balance in oneself was identified by five participants in relation to the critical voice. Redressing a balance can help you see different parts of yourself, see how wrong the critical voice can be, be able to reconnect with who you feel you are, and find a juxtaposition to the critical voice. The critical voice can be a way of releasing pressure, letting off steam. By externalising the critical voice it can stop it festering inside which gives you a break from its relentlessness.

Redressing A Balance

One participant spoke about how confronting her critical voice had the effect of redressing the balance within herself, back to a non-critical, more pleasant way of being. Glimpsing that different side to herself felt refreshing and once felt, she wanted to experience that more often. By continuing on this path of redressing the balance she began to see her capabilities and strengths rather than just the deficits:

> *"Reinventing yourself is not quite the right thing but it's redressing a balance […] another opportunity, (T.1.P.161-163) being able to see the other side […] and go "Oh! It's rather pleasant over there! […] and then of course wanting it […] and that spurs you on!* (T.1.P.166-174) *over time it gets stronger and, you can concentrate more on that […] I started feeling better about myself and learning more about my own strengths and just how capable I am" (T.1.P. 118-120)*

Confronting your critical voice is not easy, it can be a terrifying experience. It takes courage to really listen to what it is saying to you but doing so can bring about gradual relief:

> *"The hardest thing to do in the world is confront ourselves […] because it's terrifying to have to see what's really, really truly going on, it can be very frightening, but the next day or the day after you're going 'Wow! Ha! I'm smiling, I feel* ***good****, I feel lighter, I feel' […] I mean initially it was a more sporadic relief, and then it just becomes more constant […] and of course the more you do this then the more your thoughts and emotions have an opportunity to not*

necessarily reinvent themselves but to go back to source, going back to, that possibility that you had when you were first born, or when you were first conceived, (T.1.P.152-160) it's constant work, it's daily attention to your thoughts, and your feelings" (T.1.P.252)

Another participant spoke about how hard it is to control the critical voice, and likened it to controlling an Arab racehorse. She reflected on the benefits of doubting what the critical voice tells you, of seeing through the erroneous voice and how the voice can drown out your achievements:

"It's just one point of view, it's just skewed, it's not reality it's a voice that makes you forget your achievements […] you realise that you were wrong to listen to that voice, like thoroughbreds, a proper Arab horse they're very hard to control, but if you can you'll get the best racehorse you can dream of" (T.2.P. 371-373)

Having a faith can provide a juxtaposition to the critical voice. For one participant faith is everything contrary to the critical voice, it helps her to feel strengthened and peaceful:

"My faith is very important to me and that's full of goodness, full of love and patience, kindness, mercy, forgiveness, acceptance, that sort of experience, and so you feel emboldened and you feel relaxed and you feel at peace with yourself, (T.5.P.226) this inner voice is everything again contrary to that" (T.5.P.228)

Reconnecting with me

One participant described becoming aware of the need to reconnect with herself. She began to feel that watching social media was not doing her any good and that it would be beneficial for her to pull away in order to find herself again, to connect back into what makes her feel happy. Once she had done this she remembered aspects of herself that she had forgotten such as creativity and spontaneity:

"I had this very strong feeling that this is not doing me any good, Facebook and all that, whereas before it was, it was fun, it was good to stay in contact. (T.2.P.347)

and very quickly I thought to myself 'this is not right, this is not ok, I don't want this, this is completely sterile' (T.2.P.353), *I pulled away, I got rid of the app on my phone and all that and I felt practically immediately much better,* (T.2.P.357) *I was looking to find myself again, I had lost myself in work, I'd lost myself, it was a point where I needed to connect back to, to, to* ***me****, what is it I need? […] What makes* ***me*** *happy, what makes me feel good about myself?* (T.2.P.359-361) *I'd forgotten how much of a creative person I am,* (T.2.P.363), *reconnect with that spontaneity"* (T.2.P.367)

Releasing The Pressure

The critical voice serves a purpose of releasing one's internal pressure. One participant described it as letting off steam, it was a way of managing her feelings so that she doesn't hurt anyone, it stops her *"doing something that might not be socially or criminally acceptable"* (T.7.P.486). Dialoguing with the critical voice meant that she could conduct a cost benefit analysis or a risk assessment which releases the immediate pressure:

"It's my pressure cooker valve […] at times when I think I could lose the plot (T.7.P.458-460) *it allows me to debate the situation and come up with the pro's and con's or do a cost benefit analysis of what's the risk, I do a little risk assessment in my head"* (T.7.P.466)

Being able to be really nasty provides a way of releasing the pressure in a job where you have to be nice all the time. For one participant, being a good manager and being approachable means that you cannot afford to be nasty, so having an outlet where you can open that valve brings balance back into her life:

"The ability just to get it out because I think particularly in the, in the job that I do, I spend my whole time being nice to people, sometimes you just need to be mean (laughs) sometimes you just really need to be really nasty and horrible about something and just get it out because being lovely and nice and nurturing all day is hard work, (T.3.P.320) *open the valve, just open the valve"* (T.3.P.328)

A release of pressure can show you what is behind the pressure. For one participant it is a sadness, a sadness that is kept at bay by laugher or expressions of frustration, and once the pressure is released then the sadness comes through. The sadness itself can be released through crying and then after crying, she feels fine again:

> *"The laughing a lot of the time keeps it at bay, (crying) sorry, […] I feel very much like this is always very near to the surface […] and a lot of being jovial and a lot of the aggression I think is managing feeling sad, (T.7.P.608-612) when I've done that 'RRRRR' sort of feeling I can just sink onto the floor and cry, (T.7.P.600) it hijacks me […] like I couldn't stop it if I wanted to, I can't choke it back […] and can come from nowhere, (T.7.P.620-624) I get these little, little bursts of that and then it goes and then I'm fine […] and it's another pressure valve release" (T.7.P.662-664)*

Externalising the Critical Voice Helps

Another way of releasing one's feelings is to externalise the critical voice. Laughing at oneself helps to externalise the critical voice rather than internalise it, and this makes it feel less frightening and stop it from festering:

> *"I also think it serves a purpose particularly when I'm just laughing at myself to help not internalise this and, they don't then fester 'yeah that's happened, oh well, move on', (T.3.P.266) you're not overthinking things […] it's sometimes as if how you've got another person stood next to you and you're able to laugh and have a joke about it and it doesn't become a big issue (T.3.P.270-272) it's about talking and just getting it out there, (T.3.P.278) 'oh here we go again' it, it just makes it less frightening […] being able to laugh at things that are actually not very pleasant is a way of emotionally working through them so they don't become traumatic" (T.3.P.286-288)*

The listener doesn't need to be human either, she continues, talking to the dog works too:

> *"I notice it more at work, in the home you can talk to the dog, it doesn't matter what you say to the dog does it (laughs) the dog doesn't care" (T.3.P.280)*

Another way of externalising the critical voice is to direct it outwards and blame other people. One participant spoke about how criticising other people served the function of giving herself a break, by criticising others she was giving herself a break from criticising herself, however the consequence of this was that she then felt worse towards herself:

> *"While we're paying attention to other people and their, you know, shortcomings, then giving ourselves a break, (T.1.P.234) we project it outwards and blame other people,* (T.1.P.44) *'Oh look at the state of them! Least that is not me!' you know you're kind of being a bit self-righteous almost in that,* (T.1.P.250) *'Blame them!'(T.1.P.246) it's easier to hear ourselves judging others and criticising others than doing that for ourselves, then it's possibly more work to be able to stop that in its tracks immediately whenever it happens,* (T.1.P.232) *you feel far worse about yourself, for sure, for sure"* (T.1.P.252)

Resilience

One participant spoke about how the critical voice can make you forget what you have survived, and how resilient you are. The harshness of the critical voice drowns out all other voices such as the self-care voice, which can help you to remain balanced:

> *"There is that harshness inside me that tends to forget what I've survived, (T.2.P.319) that could self-care in telling myself 'well actually you've done a pretty good job seeing what you set out with', (T.2.P.323) I know I am someone who's extremely resilient, I have survived a few things, emotionally I have been through a lot of trauma, I've struggled through […] I'm resilient in the sense that I've always picked myself up, only it's like burning the candle at two ends" (T.2.P.421)*

When it Occurs

The critical voice is a fundamental part of oneself, it may not be noticeable all of the time and can come to light in certain situations or at certain times. Most of the participants spoke about their critical voice being ever present, they were aware of it but were able to carry on with their day. One participant, however said *"it's not there every day" (T.4.P.384)*. The critical voice had become something the participants had come to accept.

The context played an important part of when participants noticed their critical voice, for example it could come out during periods of distress, when doing something wrong, having nothing to do, or depending on how one is feeling *"I manage to calm it down at times when I'm feeling stronger (T.2.P.24)*.

Ever Present

For most participants, the critical voice is an ever present part one's life. There is an internal dialogue or a narrative that goes on where the critical voice plays a part but it is not the whole:

> *"I do have a narrative to my life, (T.7.P.246) I think there's a lot of internal chat going on all the time with myself […] particularly when I'm doing things like driving that require concentration, (T.7.P.248-250) I can go for months with no ill feelings towards myself or anyone else […] and then I could have a couple of little things" (T.7.P.332-334)*

> *"I've always ever known that judging voice inside me, (T.2.P.38) it's a fundamental part of me, (T.2.P.60) reviewing everything I've said after a conversation, answering differently to situations than I did on the moment, second judging, all that doubting, 'ooh I could have done that better, I could have negotiated that better', I've never known peace basically" (T.2.P.263)*

A Relentless Critic

The critical voice can be relentless, constantly reinforcing a feeling of worthlessness which in time you come to believe. Its presence is still felt even if you are able to set it aside:

> *"Constantly second guessing my decisions and constantly being criticising, and being convinced that nothing would work out as it should, (T.1.P.10) I just accepted it, I really, really did think I was completely worthless, for a very, very, very long time, (T.1.P.108-110) I believed every word it told me" (T.1.P.200)*

A Parasitic Worm

One participant described her critical voice as a parasitic worm that eats away at her. It is part of her but not who she feels she naturally is, and the voice always creeps back:

> *"It's something **inside me** that's like a parasitic worm, (T.2.P.64) it will eat away at my daily life, (T.2.P.48) like a burning feeling, (T.2.P.24) I'm someone who's naturally at the base someone who's very bubbly, happy, but that force is always there inside me, (T.2.P.68) it will come in all of a sudden, hit me even though something is going great. It will always creep back, although even all the signs are really positive that voice will always come back" (T.2.P.50)*

I Just Live With It

Participants spoke about accepting that the critical voice is there, accepting its presence and accepting what it says. Despite its existence, they continue with their day, finding a way to live with it:

> *"I just live with it, and I accept it kind of thing […] cause that's just the way it is, (T.4.P.372-374) it's still there the next day and the next day, (T.4.P.382) I just carry on, (T.4.P.388) there is an acceptance of it" (T.4.P.628)*

Context

The context in which you find yourself affects the nature and prevalence of the critical voice. During an experience of burnout from work, one participant noticed her critical

voice as being very loud. She felt too weak and exhausted to quieten it, had no resources to draw upon, which in turn affected her self-confidence and self-worth:

> *"I was in a fragile state, I was nervously exhausted so I didn't have the strength to laugh it off basically, or to change it into 'right, note to self for next time' kind of thing, no, I just started hitting myself, (T.2.P.391) rational mind was sitting in the corner saying 'I can't do anything here sorry'. So I know I need to build that strength, I need to get proper sleep because I had developed insomnia, all these things that build your self-worth, your self-confidence because then that impacts your way of thinking" (T.2.P.393)*

Being Occupied

Being occupied helps to not notice the critical voice or engage with it. Having something to do or having a purpose stops the spiralling thoughts and breaks the cycle. One participant said that her critical voice was more noticeable at the weekend when there was not so much to do:

> *"It'll change in different situations because I won't have it if I'm doing something, (T.4.P.554) Yeah **definitely** like weekends, (T.4.P.254) because I'm off on Friday I arrange to meet a friend, or I go to a Pilates class, or I go for a walk with someone, or I go for lunch with someone, so I do all that then and so then I have my weekend free, (T.4.P.260) if I did really have something to focus on it would be great, even if it was my mother over here who was ill, and I had to take her to the doctor, what purpose do I have now?" (T.4.P.226)*

Environment

Your environment, who and what you have around you can affect the critical voice. Participants spoke about how feeling in a safe and familiar setting can help with not listening to what the critical voice is saying or be affected by it. Environment was a distraction that could counteract it but could also cause it to flourish depending on your experience:

"It depends on what other networks and voices you've got around you to counteract anything that it is saying to you" *(T.3.P.372)*

"Generally when we have a big lecture I don't very often ask questions or volunteer information […] that used to stress me out, when I thought there was an expectation on that […] the smaller sessions that we have are less didactic teaching and, and much more interactive, *(T.6.P.12-16)* *it's a fairly safe environment, that group,* *(T.6.P.184)* *towards the start of training when it was all a bit newer I might have listened to the voice and stepped back,* *(T.6.P.22)* *that would have continued and really affected me for the rest of the day"* *(T.6.P.60)*

How I Feel

The critical voice can fluctuate depending on how you are feeling on any particular day. Participants explained what affects their ability to stand up against the critical voice, which included being in physical pain, believing you are worthless, or not feeling confident:

"If I wake up in the morning and I'm in a particular amount of ***pain,*** *or, there are times when I get frustrated with* ***healing,*** *then it can come out,* *(T.1.P.92)* *when you don't feel good about yourself […] if you feel worthless then, you know you've got no positive to fall back on and so of course, everything about you is just going to scream 'I'm worthless'"* (T.1.P.136)

"My courage to, to stand up against the critical voice fluctuates according to how my mood is on that day so […] sometimes I'm just overwhelmed by the negativity and I can't do anything but accept it and then other days I can rise up against it, *(T.5.P.402-406)* *some days I'm ready to take on the world and other days I want to crawl under a duvet"* *(T.5.P.410)*

Trapped

Feeling trapped was spoken about by one participant as a trigger for her critical voice. When she can't verbally express her feelings of anger or frustration because the situation does not allow it, her critical voice is heightened:

"At times where I feel either through anger or through that sort of scenario where I was feeling claustrophobic, times when I feel like I'm going to lose control […] or times where I feel out my depth, (T.7.P.170-172) you have this narrative going on when […] you can't actually express how you feel, (T.7.P.128-130) I want to get away from me […] I get that sometimes where I feel trapped or cornered in either physically but mostly mentally, if I feel trapped I feel like 'mmmm' I wanna escape, I want an ejector seat" (T.7.P.494)

Fear of Being Unloved

One participant reflected on her present circumstances and how different they are to her past experiences. She now feels loved and therefore not so plagued by her critical voice but is very aware that should this change she could well be back in that place of loneliness and despair where the critical voice reigned free:

"If I was in that situation now, I would hope that I would have the skills and the knowledge to not revert back into that type of thinking […] that is a, is a fear, […] if something was to happen to my husband, you know, would I then cycle back down, (T.3.P.240-244) I think it would probably be worse actually, I think that is my biggest fear, I don't believe that it is better to have loved and lost than not loved at all, I think having had my husband who meets all my emotional needs and cares for me and loves me, to not have that, to lose that I think will drive me into despair […] and I will not be able to see the light at the end, there is no end of the tunnel, I'm just alone" (T.3.P.252-254)

Summary of Findings and Creative Synthesis

The Gathered Themes bring together the essential components of the critical voice, they show the colour and threads that are interwoven into its fabric. The researcher's personal and professional engagement with the research has opened up an emotional outpouring of deep respect for the participants. The vulnerabilities of participants are elucidated, such as uncertainty, self-doubt, internal dialogue showing justifications and fights for rights. There is a tension where battles are being fought with oneself, where aspects of oneself are separated out into different voices, lines are drawn and walls are torn down by humour. There is a fluid and ethereal quality to the critical voice, not only does it change according to one's environment but it changes throughout one's lifetime. Things impact it, as it in turn impacts other things; it is interconnected within oneself throughout the body, mind and emotions, and between oneself and the world around us.

How one engages with their critical voice depends on how it is viewed and what meanings are made of it; it can stop you doing something you want to do or it can stop you doing something you might later regret. You can beat yourself up for not being good enough, you can enjoy the comforts of a long-term friendship, or find ways of criticising others without fear of reprimand. Naming one's critical voice and bringing it into one's awareness seems to have a beneficial outcome; from a profound revelation of giving it a name, to enjoying a wander in the woods where you are free to move in any direction to be able to release the pressure. Remaining silent and not exploring one's critical voice seems to inhibit one's awareness of it whereas allowing it to manifest in a safe way so that others are unharmed by it shows a level of care.

In each of the findings it is possible to see both good and bad elements, things that can harm or heal depending on one's perspective. This perspective will inevitably depend on one's interpretations of life experiences and beliefs. The extracts in the findings allow us to see the participant's journey through their explorations and to understand their personal lived experience. The following section discusses various elements of the research and relates the findings to relevant literature and theory.

Discussion

Pertinent questions for this discussion section from an academic perspective include; are the findings plausible and convincing, and are the findings supported by evidence (Kohler Riessman, 2008). In answering these two questions, the researcher points to Moustakas's (1994) method of analysis and reflexivity used in this research which shows an audit trail, explicates decisions and processes and presents participant's verbatim extracts. This approach should lead the reader to understand the findings (finding them plausible and convincing) and appreciate the conclusions made (as they are supported by evidence).

Participant's verbatim transcripts have been included at the end of this paper so that the reader may go back to the source if further clarification is sought, however as much as possible of the relevant sections are included in the findings to present the texture and structure of the themes. It is possible that alternative perspectives could have been concluded if another researcher had conducted the study assuming the research question was the same and the processes remained as per this research due to individual differences and life experiences, however because of the explication of each part of the research process and the researcher's reflexivity it is hoped that the reader can follow the progression and handling of the data.

Participants & Recruitment

The initial sample size was proposed to be between eight and ten participants, however during the recruitment process it became apparent that this sample size may not be possible, and therefore Chair's Action was sought and granted to reduce the sample size down to seven. Similarly, face to face research interviews were conducted in Jersey, but due to the low number of people coming forward for interview Chair's Action was again sought and granted to conduct interviews over Skype.

With regard to why only seven participants out of the seventeen interested parties were interviewed is a difficult question to answer. One reason may have been due to the deeply personal and potentially difficult nature of the subject matter, however this cannot have been the only reason. Any number of reasons for people not either agreeing to be

interviewed or identifying themselves as interested could have been possible as it takes dedication and commitment to be part of the research process.

Participation is not simply a 'spur of the moment' decision, thought and action are involved, often over a period of time. It takes the person to become aware of the research, read the advert, contact the researcher, wish to be identified as interested, the researcher to respond to the interested party with detailed information, the person to read this information (a three page document) and contact the researcher again to state commitment to be interviewed, then further contact to agree a suitable time and date for interview, and then to attend the interview! Of the ten who were not interviewed, two were located outside of Jersey and did not wish to use Skype, and the remaining eight did not respond to the researcher's reply.

Demographics

The age and gender of the participants was interesting because it was unexpected. The advertising material and recruitment criteria did not stipulate specific age ranges or was gender specific. The researcher's name was not on the advert so potential participants could not ascertain whether the researcher was female or male, or indeed the researcher's age. For adverts that were distributed via LinkedIn or Facebook it may be possible that the researcher's social media connections may have discussed the personal qualities of the researcher with their connections who were interested in participating.

It is possible that the tone of the advert may have been construed by a potential participant in a certain manner. The advert was written in the first person, using "I" and "We", and reference was made to the researcher being a student of Middlesex University so assumptions could have made about the researcher from this information. However, the researcher has no awareness of any assumptions being made.

Had the age and gender of the participants been different then certain themes would definitely not have arisen, for example if all the participants were male then the theme of Menopause would not have been in the findings, and participants who were in their twenties may not have talked about their critical voice changing over time.

One of the individuals who expressed an interest in the research but did not commit to being interviewed had a name typically used by males. Similarly another individual had a name that could be used by either a male or a female. If both of these individuals were male it would have been interesting to interview these individuals to see how this would have changed or added to the data.

The researcher also collected demographics on participant's professions as it was wondered whether this would be relevant. Three participants spoke about their how their job affected their critical voice yet they each worked in different professions. Upon reflection the collection of professional status was purposeless in this study but may be a point of interest for future research, particularly with respect to organisations where a blame culture has developed.

Limitations of This Research

This research is intended to provide a deeper dive into the phenomenon of experiencing a critical inner voice, and as such does not intent to be seen as the same experience for all adults. The sample of participants was unexpectedly women, again this should not be taken to be the lived experience of all adult women.

The research is limited to the women who bravely came forward to talk about their lived experience of a critical inner voice. Their contribution should not be extrapolated to the wider community but it is hoped that their contribution can add gravitas and depth to our understanding of it. Similarly, this research does not include the experiences of younger people, indeed students have been representative in samples used in other research.

One of the unanswered questions that this research does not address is how men experience their own critical voice. It would be useful to find out why men did not come forward for interview and share their experiences. Perhaps this is something for further research.

Gathered Themes

The Gathered Themes are listed in alphabetical order, so that the reader does not infer any form or hierarchy to them. Had the themes not been listed alphabetically then one theme might have been viewed by the reader as more important than another because of the number of participants who spoke about that theme. The premise of this study is not to organise the findings according to numerical prevalence, rather it is to take a deeper and more considered exploration into critical inner speech at the individual level, for it is at the individual level that a depth of meaning and personal understanding can be gleaned.

Gathered Themes are entitled using a larger blue font size and any sub-headings will be in a smaller blue font size. Where a gathered theme has a link to another it is shown with an initial capital letter and placed in a single quote marks, e.g. 'Interconnection'. The Gathered Themes will be discussed according to the findings in this study and any relevant literature or theory.

Caring for Oneself, Being Positive Is Not Enough

The findings in this study show that caring for oneself is not easy when you are self-critical. Simply being positive in order to banish the inner critic is just not enough. Negative self-talk has a significantly more debilitating impact than positive ones (Morin, 2009). Gilbert & Proctor (2006) state that "*self-reassurance, warmth and self-soothing can act as an antidote to the sense of threat*" (Gilbert & Proctor, 2006, p.355), furthermore they state that their research did not produce a significant change in self-correcting self-attacking.

Indeed participants within this study struggled with finding ways of caring for themselves or combatting their critical voices, therefore disproving the theory that compassion is an antidote to threat. What these findings indicate is that your heart and your head are connected, you need to feel that you are a good person rather than be told it, or tell it to yourself. Gilbert & Proctor (2006) state that people with high shame and self-criticism do not know how to be gentle with themselves, however one participant cited a growing awareness that she needed to leave her job as it was not doing her any good.

How one cares for oneself can take different forms, is overeating a form of self-soothing as one participant cited? According to Firestone (2018b) this would be where a seemingly friendly voice compensates for painful feelings of low self-esteem.

One participant stated that she was through with caring for everyone else and was turning her care upon herself. Gilbert et al (2004; 2006) and Gilbert & Proctor's (2006) assertions may or may not be confirmed in this case as the context is missing from their studies, due to the lack the depth of self-report questionnaires.

Learning About Oneself

Learning about oneself was not an expected finding because the focus of this study was not to find ways of changing the critical voice, however this theme could relate to Firestone's (1988; 2009) Voice Therapy where patients were encouraged to voice their self-criticism in a therapeutic group. Facing the critical voice head on can lead to new knowledge about oneself, self-reflection and the potentiality of liking oneself more. "*Preparedness to turn towards difficulty and the commitment to try to work it out by taking action*" (Gilbert, 2018, p.38) links to the participant who spoke about going deeply into her shadow side, however there is little else in the way of self-learning in relation to the critical voice in the literature.

This may be due to fear, both on the part of the researchers to tackle a potentially emotive and ethically challenging subject but it may also be due to reluctance on the part of the participant who may be fearful about facing their own self-criticism. Facing one's demons in order to learn more about oneself takes courage, "*one could say that the courage to be is the courage to accept oneself as accepted in spite of being unacceptable*" (Tillich, 1952, p.160). Tillich, in this statement is referring to taking a leap of faith to truly become oneself, to live a more authentic life by accepting the whole of oneself. Furthermore, "*courage, in this view, is the readiness to take upon oneself negatives, anticipated by fear, for the sake of a fuller positivity*" (Tillich, 1952, p.82) and this seems to be borne out in these findings.

It's Hard to Hear Positive Things

The finding of 'it's hard to hear positive things' about oneself was to be expected in the data; Gilbert and Proctor (2006) purport that for high self-critics "*feelings of warmth or*

gentle reassurance were often frightening for them" (ibid, p.355). However as none of the other participants talked about this aspect it highlights the individuality of one's experience of a critical voice. There are other factors to consider in this participant's statements, such as her wish to correct others, her wish to ensure that they do not misunderstand her but see the whole of her rather than just their perception. This may have links to 'Perfection', i.e. wishing to ensure nothing is hidden, and also through a 'Care for Others', a sub-heading of 'Interconnection' when she states *"wanting to be normalising and [...] supportive" (T.6.P.184-186)*.

Changes Throughout Life

The research findings from this study indicate that for most of the participants their critical voice changed over time. For one, this meant changing according to the life situation they were in and the circumstances they were living in, and another spoke about a catalyst in her life that changed her criticism. 'Changes Throughout Life' was an unforeseen, and therefore unexpected theme that emerged from the data. None of the literature on the critical voice or self-criticism contained any link to it changing over time. Reflecting on why this may be would necessitate consideration of what has been written, by whom, and who the study sample were.

With regard to the critical voice, the author of the theoretical perspective was Robert Firestone, a male psychiatrist working in America. Firestone, by his own admission did not carry out research into the critical voice other than to observe his patients and the therapy group, and these observations became the basis for his theory, largely drawn from Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic tenets. His daughter continues his work to this day, however there has been little deviation from the theoretical basis.

Paul Gilbert, a male psychologist working in England, has carried out research on self-criticism using self-report questionnaires which were developed from his observations during his work with clients. The demographics of Gilbert's research subjects included female psychology students (Gilbert et al, 2004) and two male and four female patients with psychological difficulties (Gilbert & Proctor, 2006).

The demographics of the participants in the present research study, were all female and aged between 30 to 54 years of age, with six being between 41 & 56 old. Therefore it does not seem so surprising that Gilbert et al's (2004) research did not highlight any changes over time or indeed menopause being a factor as their research sample constituted undergraduate students (assuming that the majority of undergraduate students were aged 20 and under as per the HESA Student record in 2004 (Universities UK, 2015)).

Menopause

Menopause was cited by four participants as having a significant impact on their critical voice, which was a completely unexpected finding and provides a brand new aspect that warrants further investigation. A subsequent review of the literature via the Middlesex University library search, adding results beyond the library's collection, found no results using the search terms "menopause and self-criticism" or "menopause and criticism". Therefore a wider search was conducted using search terms "menopause and critical voice", "menopause and critic", "menopause and critical", "menopause and worry", "menopause and anxiety", "menopause and self-doubt", "menopause and inner speech" and "menopause and critical inner speech", which produced variable results but nothing connecting the two factors (for example, results that were discounted included "Self-Care and Menopause: Critical Review of Research" (McElmurry & Huddleston, 1991), and a study which used a similar research methodology looking at the lived experience of perimenopause and menopause (Marnocha et al, 2011)).

Considering that menopause appears to be widely studied around the world, which was evident from the search results, it is surprising that self-criticism did not appear to be a topic for research bearing in mind over half of the participants in this research cited menopause as a factor in their critical voice. Perhaps these findings may encourage others to look deeper into this phenomenon (for example expanding on Mauas et al's (2012) study of the role of irritability, personal vulnerability and self-regulation in menopause).

It is interesting to note that bearing in mind that the two main protagonists of critical inner speech literature are male, one may assume that menopause was not 'on their radar',

particularly in view of Gilbert et al's (2004) methodology and demographics of research participants.

Childhood & Parenting

According to the literature, children have a more enduring memory for negative events than for positive ones (Firestone et al, 2002). Indeed the traditional theories of Psychodynamic, Cognitive and Transactional Analysis state that the critical voice comes from childhood and therefore it was unsurprising that participants in this study spoke about their early childhood memories.

The aetiology of the critical voice was not part of the research question and participants were not asked where it came from, yet with the exception of one, all of the participants spoke about childhood being a factor in the development of their critical voice.

As the aetiology of the critical voice was not part of the research question it is not possible to confirm the theory that participant's critical voices developed exactly as Firestone purported, i.e. "*children repress their anger toward their parents for their (the parent's) rejection and turn it on themselves. […] It is this process of introjection that is responsible for the evolution of the pattern of negative, self-critical thoughts known as the "voice""* (Firestone, 1987, p.219).

What can be demonstrated in these findings is that participant's critical voices varied according to their perception of their unique childhood experiences, from blaming themselves for their parents arguing, to the onset of fear and anxiety, or the development of sets of rules to live by. These individual and unique experiences show that it is not possible to definitively construct a theory for the development of a critical voice.

Looking at the critical voice through the wider lens of inner speech and its function, it is possible to understand that the purpose of a critical voice is partly as a guide to life, and provides a way of regulating oneself (Morin & Uttl, 2011).

Similarly, "*the inner voice is often the voice of our integrity that reminds us of our principles*" (Ridgway, 2009, p.46) which is in stark contrast to Firestone et al's (2002) belief that the critical voice is "*NOT a conscience or a moral guide […] it is irrational, illogical, and contradictory […] If the voice were a true conscience, it would not have the tone of sarcasm or ridicule, nor would it possess a harsh, punishing quality*" (Firestone et al, 2002, p.42).

The aetiology of the critical voice as theorised by Berne (1964), Harris (1967), Firestone (1984; 1987) and Freud (1923) is for the purposes of this study, a moot point. What is more pertinent is what participants made of their critical voice, how they felt about it and the meaning it holds for them.

It Halts Me

The critical voice stopping or halting oneself from doing or saying, or even thinking something can be found in the literature. It is therefore unsurprising that participants in this study spoke about how their critical voice stopped them from doing things, stopped them thinking in certain ways, and by engaging in protracted internal dialogue had the effect of halting or talking themselves away from something.

Butler (2008) identifies 'stoppers' which curtail spontaneous self-expression, exaggerate risk, set rigid requirements (i.e. 'If … then'), narrow one's choices and block feelings and actions. Firestone et al (2002) states that the critical voice limits us, it sabotages our success and that the purpose of the critical voice is to stop movement towards the unknown out of fear in order to stay safe. Butler's (2008) conclusions are reflected in the findings of the two participants who said *"don't even think you can do that"* *(T.5.P.134)* and *"it's something that has become incapacitating"* *(T.2.P.44)*.

Gilbert (2000) purports self-attacking to have evolved as a result of compliance; dominant animals attack and threaten subordinates so they behave in certain ways. Gilbert's (2000) animalistic assumptions were not borne out in the findings of this study and therefore remain a theoretical supposition.

Restraint

Restraint is new concept in relation to the critical voice. Being able to hold oneself back from being critical does not appear in the literature at all. It raises the question of how does one hold oneself back, and what factors are at play in order for this to happen. The participant spoke about recognising that restraint served the purpose of finding the right time to criticise so that the criticism was taken on board.

Another participant recognised that listening to her critical voice enabled her to stop doing something stupid. Both of these aspects are novel findings in relation to the critical voice.

Futility

With regards to futility arising in the findings, Driscoll (1989) in his paper on self-condemnation alluded to low expectation and the possibility of failure, citing "*Blessed are they who expect nothing of themselves, for they shall not be disappointed*" (Driscoll, 1989, p.105). Therefore it was not so unexpected to find participants talking about a sense of futility. Similarly, Iancu & Ben-Zion (2015) claim that low self-esteem is linked to higher levels of self-criticism.

The findings in this study reveal noteworthy features about futility, such as protecting oneself from further embarrassment and feelings of stuckness.

Harsh Judgement & Self-Blame

Harsh judgement and self-blame were to be expected in the findings, which can be seen in Freud's (1921) narrative of one's personality, that of cruel self-depreciation and relentless self-criticism and bitter reproaches. Similarly, Firestone (1986) and Firestone et al (2002) refer to hostile thoughts and attitudes and a harsh punishing quality, and Gilbert & Miles (2000) refer to blame and shame with regard to the critical voice and criticism.

Psychodynamic theories talk about the critical voice in terms of the direction being towards the self, however Firestone (1987) also refers to criticism towards others, which he believes to be the basis for paranoid beliefs.

The findings in this study reveal participant's values, their moral judgements of themselves and others. The harsh judgements participant's cited related to people doing *"a half arsed job"* *(T.2.P.126)*, and occurred when comparing themselves to others. When directed internally, there was self-blame and telling oneself off.

Moral judgements are not explored in the theoretical underpinnings of the critical voice however if we look to Ridgway's (2009) assertion that the inner voice is the voice of our integrity and principles then this seems to be borne out in how participants described their harsh judgements.

According to Palumbo (2012), judgement is a necessary part of life. Furthermore, "*judgement worth having needs to be fraught with the possibility of painful failure if it is to matter*" (Marar, 2018, p.3). Judgement has a function which can help us and hinder us. The findings in this study indicate that this natural ability to judge, despite being harsh serves a useful function.

Meltdown

Having a meltdown was not specifically found in the literature and describes the explosive potential of the critical voice. For one participant, the experience is very harsh to the point of her feeling *"I wanna die, I don't want to be here"* *(T.7.P.68)*. Firestone (1986) and Firestone (2010) state that suicide is the ultimate conclusion of the critical voice, however the participant later concludes that this expression is a way of saying she has had enough rather than an actual desire to commit suicide. Therefore, the Firestone's theory is questionable as it is not supported by these findings.

Fuelling the Fire

Participants did express the idea that external criticism fuels the already smouldering fire of internal criticism, supporting Firestone's (2002) assertion that "*we often overreact to outside criticism, no matter how harsh or mild, realistic or unrealistic"* (Firestone et al, 2002, p.22). The rationale Firestone gives as to why this happens is because we think the external criticiser is as hostile towards us as we are towards ourselves however, this rationale cannot be supported from the participant's verbatim.

Impact of Being Interviewed

Etherington (2004) posits that by allowing ourselves to be known and seen by others in the endeavour to discover more about the research phenomenon there is the possibility of finding new meanings and perspectives in our lives. It is therefore unsurprising that participants were impacted by being interviewed and taking part in this research even though this was not the research intention. Research had previously been carried out tracking the process of change of the inner critic by Kugel (2010), and Stinckens, Lietaer & Leijssen (2002a; 2013a; 2013b), however this was through therapy rather than research.

Interconnection

Being interconnected within one's world is a central tenet in existential literature, for example 'being-in-the-world' (Heidegger, 1927), 'Hell is other people' (Sartre, 1989), embodiment (Merleau-Ponty, 1968), and 'I and Thou' (Buber, 1923). The findings in this study confirm that participants felt closely connected to their environment, to others around them and within their bodies, minds, and emotions.

This wider existential lens is not so visible within the psychodynamic literature of the critical voice, but is stated by Stinckens, Lietaer, & Leijssen (2002b) who note that a person is inextricably connected to their social environment. What has not been found in the literature and would be an interesting topic of further investigation is where participants spoke about how their critical voice affected their physical health, for example manifesting as hypertension and trauma.

With regard to where participants spoke about being sensitive to the feelings of others, and sensing atmospheres around them, this reflects Morin & Everett's (1990) assertions in their paper on inner speech and self-awareness; *"if a person's surroundings make it problematic for him or her to discriminate himself or herself from his or her immediate environment, it then becomes difficult for him or her to focus on himself or herself as an object"* (Morin & Everett, 1990, p.339).

Safe Criticism, Social Media / Television and Care for Others

This theme was completely unexpected from a review of the literature on the critical voice or self-criticism. Through the lens of existential literature can care and responsibility for others be found, such as in Heidegger's (1927) description of Dasein's being as care; care for others is linked with care for oneself, which is part of one's connectedness to the world. This was not specifically withing the research question, nor did it feature in the interview questions, however participants spoke about being able to be critical to someone or something where there was no risk of the other taking offence. This theme is not so different to being critical to others, but the distinguishing feature is that it is 'safe' to be critical in these circumstances, and this denotes a care for other people.

The findings may link to making (Harsh) Judgements about other people and measuring them up to one's own morality or integrity, which is what Ridgway (2009) stated in relation to one's inner speech. The findings also link to the theme of 'Restraint', where rather than holding oneself back from being critical towards someone, when the other person cannot hear then no restraint is needed. As stated in the theme 'Restraint', further research is needed into this area to discover what processes are involved and why.

The findings also highlighted how participants wanted to teach others or help others to not be so critical towards themselves, and this may be a topic for further research in terms of the processes involved in criticism and care for other people.

Internal Dialogue

Puchalska-Wasyl (2015) identify Interlocutors, which are internal dialogues where "*a person alternately adopts two different viewpoints and that utterances formulated from these perspectives refer to one another*" (Puchalska-Wasyl, 2015, p.444). This study confirms the existence of interlocutors which, in these findings, are depicted as 'normalising it', 'shutting it up', 'arguing with it', 'fighting back', 'I wish I could but I can't', 'spurring you on', 'little conversations with myself', 'stopping it in its tracks', 'talking myself out of it', and 'working out the next steps'.

The purpose of this study was not to identify emotional types of interlocutors as Puchalska-Wasyl (2015) does, but simply to describe the function of the dialogue. Interestingly, one of the participants described being aware of dialoguing whilst dreaming, which was not expected and was not found in a subsequent literature search.

Other researchers that have considered the interplay between the critical voice and another voice are Gilbert et al (2004; 2006) with regard to self-attacking and self-reassurance, and Kalsched & Sieff (2015) with regard to the inner protector and inner persecutor in relation to trauma. Related research can also be found in studies on inner speech and audio visual hallucinations, such as Fernyhough (2004), McCarthy-Jones & Fernyhough (2007; 2011) and Alderson-Day & Fernyhough (2014).

Isolated and Alone

Participants talked about feeling isolated and alone, which exacerbated their critical voice and this can be found in Firestone's writing; "*blocks of time alone, […] extended periods of isolation inevitably give rise to the critical inner voice*" (Firestone et al, 2002, p.68). The findings in this study show more specifically how at certain periods of time these feelings are more prevalent, such as during wintertime, when life circumstances change or having different interests to those of your friends and family.

Firestone also stated that "*attacks alienate the person from others and foster an isolated, inward life style […] these negative thoughts are at the core of paranoid suspicion, distrust, and self-fulfilling prophesies of rejection*" (Firestone, 1987, p.222), however this cannot be confirmed in the findings of this study.

Not All Bad; Valuing It

It is interesting to note that a review of the literature on the critical voice or self-criticism does not reveal any benefits to the critical voice, and indeed primarily focus on eradicating it. The findings in this study did however yield useful and helpful qualities that participants were aware of. Looking to literature on inner speech it is possible to see that a critical voice is 'Not All Bad'; architypes, such as the benevolent angel, the wise old man, the befriending fairy or great good mother exist alongside malevolent characters (Kalsched & Sieff, 2015).

My Little Friend

This theme was completely unexpected from reviewing the critical voice literature. What is noteworthy here is that the participants who spoke about seeing their critical voice as a little friend also spoke about it in terms of a long term relationship or marriage, which suggests that their relationship with it had developed over time. Longitudinal studies would thus chart the change of a way of relating to it. Puchalska-Wasyl (2015) identified a 'Faithful Friend' as one of the emotional types in her study on self-talk, and this can be likened to the finding of 'My Little Friend' in this study.

Coping Mechanism and Options

Contrary to Firestone's (1986) assertion that "*even in its milder forms, the voice creates stress and interferes with a person's ability to cope with stressful situations*" (Firestone, 1986, p.440), one participant felt that her internal dialogue helped her to develop coping mechanisms, which she valued. Furthermore, the dialogue gave her options in which she could step back and evaluate the situation. Therefore, the findings in this case did not confirm Firestone's (1986) assertion.

Rehearsal

One of the functions of inner speech is in preparation for external speech (Vygotsky, 1962), or in order to rehearse for anxious situations (Firestone et al, 2002). It was therefore unsurprising that one participant talked about rehearsing what she would say if a confrontational situation was to re-occur.

Strive to be Better and It Motivated Me

Three participants spoke about how their critical voice helped them to strive to be better and that it also motivated them. Gilbert (1997) and Gilbert et al (2004) propose that a function of self-criticism could be an effort to improve oneself and Gilbert & Proctor (2006) propose that it drives you on, however there is no explanation of how this occurs. The findings in this study show the individual reactions participants had to their critical voices, and the circumstances that spurred them on, such as a critical retort experienced some twenty years ago.

Struggle and frustration are a part of life; "*an indispensable prerequisite of mental health*" (Frankl, 1959, p.109). Meaning can be found through struggle, particularly if it hits a nerve of something important to you. Striving to be better was appreciated by participants as it tapped into their values. "*Once an individual's search for a meaning is successful, it not only renders him happy but also gives him the capability to cope with suffering*" (Frankl, 1959, p.141); suffering their critical voice was meaningful because they were moving towards their ideals.

I Would Like [it] To Be

Critical voice literature is rife with assumptions that it should be eradicated, changed or not be so harsh and it was therefore an unsurprising finding in this study. Interestingly, participants also said that they did not want to get rid of it completely, merely dampen it down as it had value to them. Counselling Psychologists and talking therapists alike should therefore heed the findings that the critical voice serves a useful purpose and is something to be valued.

Perfectionism

The link of perfectionism and the critical voice can be found in the literature, for example Horney (1939) with regards to maintaining a façade of perfection, Kainer (1979) in the impossibility of perfection and the critical voice, Driscoll (1989) regarding perfectionism as part of self-condemnation, and Claes et al (2012) with regard to perfectionism and parental criticism. It was therefore expected that participants would speak about perfectionism in relation to their critical voice. Ironically, efforts to silence the inner critic assume that there is a 'perfectable' you (Palumbo, 2012) by striving towards an idealistic way of being. Perhaps then "*the challenge is not to perfect ourselves, but to get better at living with our imperfections*" (Van Deurzen, 1997, p.289).

Not Good Enough

Not feeling good enough was unsurprisingly a theme in participant's critical voices as the literature on the critical voice claims. Gilbert & Miles (2000) link self-criticism with shame-proneness and included the item of 'not good enough' in their Sensitivity to Put-Down Scale. The concept of not being good enough can also be inferred in Freud's (1914; 1921;

1923) description of personality development with regards to the interplay between the Id, Ego and Super-Ego, Freud (1914) stated that it is because of the inability to achieve the perfection of our childhood that critical judgement develops. However, not feeling good enough can obscure the wider picture of how it helps you to strive to be better, thereby having both a negative and a positive role.

Redressing A Balance & Reconnecting

The theme of redressing a balance and reconnecting with oneself does not appear in the literature, yet it has an intuitive quality; how can we appreciate what 'good' is if there is no comparable 'bad'. Participants spoke about confronting their critical voice and having another side to them that counteracted the negative effects. One participant had a sense of what she needed to do to re-connect with herself. The literature on self-criticism offers tools and techniques, such as Voice Therapy (Firestone, 1987), Compassionate Mind Training (Gilbert & Proctor, 2006), or Cognitive Therapy (Beck, 1995) but the findings in this study show that participants through their own explorations have developed their own way of living with their critical voice.

Releasing Pressure & Externalising the Voice

Releasing pressure and externalising the voice could be seen through the context of Firestone's (1987) Voice Therapy, however participants were not in group therapy and only one participant stated that she had experienced therapy. Releasing the pressure for these participants related to managing their critical voice in a way that did not harm the other, which would be linked to 'Safe Criticism' and 'Restraint'. One participant felt that it was important to externalise the voice so that it did not fester internally, and had found that humour was effective in doing this. As inner speech contains one's experiences, being able to define and express them allows for freedom and release (Emerson, 1983).

Resilience

Resilience in relation to the critical voice does not appear in the literature, and this warrants further exploration. This is a new finding which raises interesting questions such as does the critical voice diminish one's sense of resilience or does having resilience enable one to

pick yourself back up from the slings and arrows of the harsh critical voice? Further research into this theme is recommended.

When it Occurs

According to the literature and research studies, the critical voice would seem to be ever present. Indeed, the findings in this study show that participants do think it is there all the time, however there were some interesting variations to this. Participants noted that it was more prevalent in certain situations or contexts, for example during periods of stress, at the computer, when there is nothing to do, the networks and people you have around you, and how you are feeling.

This contextual information is lost within quantitative research because data is usually sought at one point in a participant's life showing only their understanding of it at that point in time (typically research participants are undergraduates). Also, research questionnaires contain design flaws in that answers to questions are required in general terms, such as 'most likely / often / not often', and this does not allow for the variation of context, situation or environment.

My Critical Voice & Why I Didn't Use Myself as a Research Participant

> *"The heuristic research process is not one that can be hurried or timed by the clock or calendar. It demands the total presence, honesty, maturity, and integrity of a researcher who not only strongly desires to know and understand but is willing to commit endless hours of sustained immersion and focused concentration on one central question, to risk the opening of wounds and passionate concerns, and to undergo the personal transformation that exists as a possibility in every heuristic journey"*
>
> (Moustakas, 1990; p.14)

The following section is written in the first person because the researcher felt this was the most appropriate way of conveying the personal struggle that is inextricably linked to the research topic and the process of research.

My struggle with this thesis and research topic has been at times too much to bear. My critical voice has halted my work often, it has insidiously crept around my mind like a shadow, barely visible at times whispering its taunts and accusations; "*you can't do this, this is too much for you, you are not capable*". Because of its stealth and wispy like quality it has been hard to pin down and confront but it is always there. When it appears in concrete form and I can hear it loud and clearly, and it is at this point that my stubbornness kicks in and I want to prove to it that I **can** in fact do this, I **am** clever (well, clever enough anyway), I **don't** need to be an expert academic to be able to do this, and I am (good/clever/able [insert any adjective]) **enough** (bold used for emphasis).

For these reasons I did not include my own verbatim transcript as suggested by Moustakas (1994), my own understanding of the phenomena can be found throughout the theoretical framework and literature review. My experience of my own critical voice is explicated in the methodology and in this section. If I were to have arranged to have myself interviewed using my interview questions and then transcribed the interview I do not think I would have been able to stand back from the data in order to analyse it in the same way I have done for the other transcripts. It would have been too difficult to bracket my own critical voice

and refrain from selecting only certain data that I didn't mind being known to the readers, and especially to the people judging my work.

I appreciate that all of the research participants have to some degree only told me what they wanted me to hear, but I am sure that they have also divulged previously unspoken personal aspects of themselves. I believe this to be due to the promise of anonymity and, without wishing to be accused of hubris, I believe that it is also because of my skill as a counsellor who has honed good listening skills, is able to connect with people, and utilises tools to elicit further disclosure, for example using minimal prompts such as "*mhm*", non-verbal communication, and seeking further clarification.

With regard to the analysis of data had I used my own interview, I would always know which bit of data was mine, which words I used, and in the presentation of the whole would be unable to restrain my feelings or reactions to potential threats or attacks at the point of final judgement in the VIVA. Therefore, for me it was safer to entwine my experience of the phenomena throughout the work as a whole, and attempt to explicate my methodology, my thinking and my assumptions as clearly as possible.

The work has at times been overwhelming, due in part to life's trials and tribulations and at times I felt that I couldn't complete the project. Time and financial restrictions meant that it took longer than expected but each time I set it aside I felt a pull to return to it. The thesis has kept me going throughout my personal challenges by giving my life a meaning and purpose, what has sustained me is a sense that career wise, this is my 'magnum opus'.

Self-Reflection & Reflexivity of the Transcripts

This section briefly conveys the reflections of the researcher whilst transcribing and analysing the interviews. As above, the reflections are written in the first person to denote their personal nature. The researcher's speech is shown in *italics* and black font and the participant's speech is shown in *italics* and blue font.

Reflections on Transcript One

At the beginning of the transcript I wondered if I may have led the participant down the road of focussing on her critical voice as a past occurrence too soon, as in my question "*I don't know if this is going off topic but I'm intrigued also to find out if there is any reason that might have tailed off, or any awareness you have got around that?"*(T1.R.11). The participant may have talked more initially about her current feelings and experiences, but these came up later when she spoke about waking up in the morning and dialoguing with her critical voice.

What was surprising to me was when the participant said "*this is really interesting because I have never considered any of this"* (T.1.P.128) in relation to my question as to whether there might be a function or a purpose to the critical voice. I had presumed that by participating she had reflected, or at least considered the nature of the critical voice, particularly as I had sent the Participant Information Sheet out prior to the interview which set out the purpose of the research.

Reflections on Transcript Two

I remember feeling as if I needed to be perfect in the interview otherwise I would be judged by the participant. I noticed my comments were quite critical, often using "*so when you said…*" and I wonder if I came across as critical or challenging. In the transcription I was conscious of ensuring I had accurately captured what the participant was saying, making sure I had transcribed exactly what she had said and not made any typographical errors. Perhaps my perfectionism was mirroring hers and I wonder how open she was able to be with me.

Reflections on Transcript Three

I felt an instant liking to this participant, I found her funny, open and honest (she admitted that she had missed the previously booked interview because she had had a few drinks and had forgotten). In contrast to the previous participant, laughter can mask going deeply into pain so perhaps some of the difficult experiences she described lacked the emotional attachment.

Reflections on Transcript Four

I had a prior distant relationship to this participant and so I contacted my supervisor and talked through whether it would be ok to interview her. During the interview I tried to be careful not to assume that I knew what she meant and asked for clarification several times as the problem with interviewing someone you know is that you think you know what they mean. I wonder if I went overboard on this, as I was worried that I might be judged for interviewing someone I knew, albeit not very well.

Reflections on Transcript Five

I felt that this participant was particularly earnest to help with my research, and as a consequence I felt a slight pressure to make something of the end result for fear of letting her contribution down. Also her sudden revelation of *"That's it! That's it!"* *(T.5.P.28)* when she saw my flyer naming the critical voice added to my viewpoint that the critical voice was a much un-reflected subject, which in itself spurred me on.

Reflections on Transcript Six

This interview was the first of the Skype interviews, and whilst I was comfortable with Skype, I was somewhat nervous of being able to gather good data due to occasional connectivity problems over the internet. As it happened, when the Skype call began the participant couldn't see me but I could see her. We tried to fix the problem but couldn't and after a period of discussion the participant chose to continue none-the-less. I felt uncomfortable about this and kept checking in on her as to whether she was ok and each time she confirmed she was fine and happy to continue. My discomfort was because I felt foolish and unprofessional, the interview should have gone 'properly'.

Halfway through the interview I checked my Dictaphone and to my horror it wasn't switched on! I didn't want to appear completely inept so I switched it on to record and muttered something about it being turned off, which is why the transcript starts with *"Right I'm going to start it again, and we'll just start from there"* *(T.6.R.1)*. In my mind I regretted the loss of the data and wondered how I could re-capture what she had said without annoying her or have her think I was even more stupid. I didn't want to take up more of her time as she was kind enough to come forward for interview. I thought that the best thing to do would be to ask her for some examples of when her critical voice is present and then go deeper into them.

So the result of this debacle was that I ended up with some good data, however brief. I felt proud of myself for dealing with the situation, but I did feel really stupid and even though she couldn't see me, I know that a lot can be picked up by voice alone. I wonder what she thought but she said *"it's absolutely ok"* *(T.6.P.4)* in answer to my question of *"how are you doing, are you ok"* *(T.6.R.1)*, and at the end of the interview she added *"I'd be really interested to see it kind of when you've written it up, I'd like to see what you've found"* *(T.6.P.236)*.

Reflections on Transcript Seven

This was a Skype interview and unlike interview six, everything went well technologically. There was a lot of laughter during the interview, mostly by the participant and towards the end of the interview she explained that the laughter masked her sadness. She spoke about things that I could relate to, for example complaints about the housework and the feeling of being on a hamster wheel in life. Because of these assumed connections and her humour it is possible that I missed going deeper with her in terms of getting her to describe her critical voice, but overall I think there are a lot of examples there and her explanation at the end seems to explain her process.

Contributions for Counselling Psychology

The findings in this study raise a number of issues that are pertinent to Counselling Psychologists or indeed anyone who works in the field of therapy, be they psychotherapists, psychologists, counsellors, volunteer support workers, doctors, anyone who, in the course of their role offers a listening ear to another person. There is a depth and breadth to the critical voice that should be explored with a client as it connects to other beliefs and experiences that provide structure to a person's world.

The findings that therapists should take note of include caring for oneself, being positive is not enough, learning about oneself, the impact of being interviewed, interconnection, perfectionism, redressing a balance, when it occurs and that the critical voice is not all bad. These themes will be dealt with in turn.

Caring for Oneself

Caring for oneself appeared in the findings and as such requires consideration when working therapeutically with a client. How does a client care for themselves, how do they care for others, what halts them in their caring and what is behind this? Are there any ways in which care can be brought into a client's awareness in conjunction with criticism, the purpose of this is not to have one overshadow the other but to raise its presence as an equal.

Being Positive is Not Enough

An important finding in this study notes that positivity alone is not enough to combat criticism and this suggests that other factors are involved in self-criticism. The implication for therapy is to caution therapists who take a targeted approach to reducing self-criticism rather than a holistic enquiry into its function and contextual structuration.

Learning About Oneself and The Impact of Being Interviewed

It was interesting to note that simply being interviewed altered the way the participants thought about their critical voice, and this has an implication for therapy. By shining a light on a phenomenon without the purpose of changing it enables a person to explore without

boundaries, and this in itself can bring about new ways of self-understanding. Being able to face one's demons takes courage and can reduce the fear we have that paralyses us and so it is important that the therapist does not lead the client but simply walks quietly beside them in their exploration and asks questions to facilitate their self-awareness. This approach also requires courage on the part of the therapist so that the space is held for the client to be able to fully explore their critical voices without fear.

Interconnection

Recognising the context in which the critical voice operates has a key implication for therapy. Viewing the critical voice through the Existential lens of interconnection shows how a person has many interconnecting features to their world which affect the nature and functionality of one's critical voice. For example, how does someone restrain themselves from criticising others, why do they hold themselves back, and under what circumstances do they 'let rip'? This theme may also connect to how someone cares for others and themselves.

Perfectionism

Caution should be taken when aiming to eradicate the critical voice where elements of perfectionism exist as this may feed into the idea that there is a 'perfectable' way of being. The therapist should examine their own beliefs around what is the 'right' way of being as well as those of the client. Of course, there is no right or wrong way, but it is important to explore the purpose of therapy and what might be either party's motivation.

Redressing a Balance

Redressing a balance is something that requires the therapist's attention because it highlights the function that the critical voice can play. Therapists should explore the purpose that the critical voice serves to the client; does it provide a release of pressure, does it clear things for the client so that they can re-connect with themselves, or restore a sense of equilibrium?

When It Occurs

The findings highlight that the critical voice can come and go, it can be present at certain times, and change over the course of one's life. The critical voice is not static but will develop and change. The context of the client's present life situation is important because of the interconnection to their experiences and belief system.

Not All Bad

The critical voice, as well as being a foe can also be a friend. The findings highlight that it can serve a number of useful purposes such as being a coping mechanism, it motivates and helps people strive to be better. Of course, this can also be detrimental but if we only look at the critical voice from an either / or perspective then we miss the myriad of possibilities in between. If therapists can view the critical voice as a 'necessary evil', i.e. that judgement is an inescapable part of being human, then it is possible to value its presence.

Some of the functions and beliefs behind the criticism may also be critical but they will be purposeful. Caution should be taken by the therapist not to assign their own idea about what is positive, negative, useful or not useful onto the client's world. The critical voice contains idiosyncratic meanings that are personal to the individual and therapists need to take account of what other connections they are severing if their purpose is to remove or reduce the criticism. Perhaps it is better to investigate what function the critical voice performs and similarly the function that the structures behind the critical voice perform using the technique of horizontalization.

Implications for Further Research

The findings in this study reveal a number of new and previously unexplored features to the critical voice, which may warrant further investigation.

Changes Throughout Life

Studies into self-criticism, an aspect of the critical voice, do not take a longitudinal perspective whereas the findings in this study indicate that self-criticism does change over time. Researchers may also wish to look at the impact the menopause has on one's critical voice in greater depth as there does not appear to be much research into this area.

Job Type

How one's profession may exacerbate the critical voice was identified by a participant, this is a particularly topical issue within certain industry sectors with the trend towards the naming and shaming of individuals.

Restraint & Safe Criticism

Of particular interest is the interplay between restraint and criticism towards others, what stops someone from being openly critical? When is it 'safe' to criticise others, what does 'safe' mean, and what is the bigger picture of safe criticism in terms of personal meaning?

Interconnection & When it Occurs

The interconnection of one's physical body and the critical voice was cited by a participant and may be an interesting study for exploration. How does criticism affects one's body, is there an interplay between mental health, physical health or indeed dental health? The connection to one's environment was highlighted in this study, what environmental factors exacerbate the critical voice and what is the role of society in the critical voice?

Perfectionism

What aspects of having a perfectionist tendency aids or hinders one's critical voice? Up to what point does perfectionism motivate one to do a good job, is this a linear path or other factors present that mitigate the critical voice if perfectionism is not achieved? These

questions will help people who identify as perfectionists to gain a broader perspective of themselves and where their limits to effectiveness lie.

Not All Bad

The critical voice's more positive and helpful aspects have been identified in this research. This study shows that depending on one's perspective, the critical voice can be friendly, amusing and serve a useful purpose. Qualities such as it being a coping mechanism or pressure release may provide useful further analysis of the critical voice. Similarly, does creating architypes aid one's understanding and acceptance of it?

Talking About The Critical Voice

Participants spoke about the impact of being researched and talking about their critical voices, which begs the question does simply taking part in research enable someone to look at their critical voice in a different way? Further research into this area would provide an adjunct to studies that have tracked the movement of criticism through therapy.

Through the use of qualitative research methodologies can a depth of understanding be gained; data becomes more meaningful and this enhances the field of psychological therapy. Research aids therapeutic work and as such further exploration into the above listed areas is to be encouraged.

Conclusion

"When it comes to judgement, criticism weighs much more heavily than praise"

(Marar, 2018, p.1)

It is no wonder that there is a tendency of humans to want to get rid of the bad things in one's life. Criticism can feel justified when denigrating others, it can make us feel good about ourselves but it can also have repercussions. When criticism is directed towards us it can rain down like a tonne of bricks. When we criticise ourselves we accept it, often without noticing the harm we are doing to ourselves.

The findings in this innovative study show that there is so much more to criticism than previous studies have shown. Innovative findings show that one's critical voice can be a little friend, it is not 'all bad', it can redress a balance, it can spur you on, it can give you time to consider the best thing to say or do and that it changes over time, particularly in women going through Menopause. These aspects to criticism have not been revealed from previous studies or literature.

Additional nuances to criticism have come to light and require consideration, such as the impact of the 'name and shame' culture on individuals, how having a 'safe' outlet to criticise can be helpful and how one's ability to restrain oneself interplays with the critical voice.

This study highlights the importance of conducting qualitative research methodologies when studying human phenomena because of its ability to show depth and to go beyond the surface where individual meanings and context can be discovered.

By only looking at the critical element of self-criticism and attempting to eradicate or manage it we also affect the other aspects of oneself that are connected, the meanings they hold for us and the purposes they serve us.

For therapists working with psychological problems our practice can be informed by qualitative data, it is possible to gain a better understanding of a person's world when they explain it themselves rather than reading through statistical data gathered from multiple participants (usually undergraduate students). By working only on the critical element with clients we may miss the opportunity to reflect on the bigger picture and as participants in this study said, they had previously not considered or reflected on their critical voice despite its presence.

The critical voice is not something to define or measure in a static way as it lives in the context of one's ideas, beliefs, emotions and experiences. One's critical voice is a part of us, a necessary part that is bound up with a myriad of other voices and experiences which need consideration and attention in a holistic way. Humans do not live in isolation, just as one's beliefs and experiences do not operate in isolation within one's psyche.

References

Alderson-Day, Ben & Fernyhough, Charles, 2014, More than one voice: Investigating the phenomenological properties of inner speech requires a variety of methods, Consciousness and Cognition, 24(1) p.113-114

Beck, Aaron, 1964, Thinking and Depression: II, Theory and Therapy, Archives of General Psychiatry, 10, p.561-571

Beck, Aaron, 1976, Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorders, New York: New American Library

Beck, Judith, 1995, Cognitive Therapy: Basics and Beyond, USA: The Guildford Press

Bennett-Levy, James, Butler, Gillian, Fennell, Melanie, Hackman, Ann, Mueller, Martina & Westbrook, David, (Editors), 2004, Oxford Guide to Behavioural Experiments in Cognitive Therapy, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Berne, Eric, 1964, Games People Play, London: Penguin Books Limited

Buber, Martin, 1923/2010, I and Thou, USA: Martino Publishing

Butler, Dr Pamela 2008, Talking to Yourself; How Cognitive Behavior Therapy Can Change Your Life, Printed in Great Britain by Amazon

Camus, 1942/2005, The Myth of Sisyphus, London: Penguin Books

Cox, 2013, How To Silence Your Nasty Inner Critic, HuffPost Life, Website: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/inner-critic_b_4111182, [Downloaded on 05/10/2018]

Carter, Kelly A, 2018, Why self-critical patients present with more severe eating disorder pathology: The mediating role of shame, British Journal of Clinical Psychology, 52(2) p.148-161

Castilho P, Pinto-Gouveia J, Duarte J, 2015, Exploring Self-Criticism: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the FSCRS in Clinical and Nonclinical Samples, Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy, 22(2) p.153-164

Claes, Laurence, Soenens, Bart, Vansteenkiste, Maarten, Vandereycken, Walter, 2012, The Scars Of The Inner Critic: Perfectionism And Nonsuicidal Self-Injury In Eating Disorders, European Eating Disorders Review, Volume 20, Issue 3, p.196-202

Colaizzi, P. R., 1978, Reflection and research in psychology, Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt

Douglas, Bruce, & Moustakas, Clark, 1985, Heuristic Inquiry; The Internal Search to Know, Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Volume 25, Issue 3

Dreyfus, Hubert, L., 1991, Being-in-the-World; A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I, Massachusetts: The MIT Press

Driscoll, Richard, 1989, Self-Condemnation: A comprehensive framework for assessment and treatment, Psychotherapy, Volume 26/Spring, Number 1, p.104-111

Emerson, Caryl, 1983, The Outer Word and Inner Speech: Bakhtin, Vygotsky, and the Internalization of Language, Critical Inquiry, Volume 10, No. 2, p.245-264

Etherington, Kim, 2004, Becoming a Reflexive Researcher: Using Our Selves in Research, London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Ellis, Albert, 1962, Reason and emotion in psychotherapy, New York: Lyle, Stuart

Farrell Krell, David, 1977, Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

Fernyhough, C., 2004, Alien voices and inner dialogue: towards a developmental account of auditory verbal hallucinations, New Ideas in Psychology, Volume 22 (1) p: 49-68

Feltham, Colin & Dryden, Windy, 2004, Dictionary of Counselling, 2nd Edition, London: Whurr Publishers Limited

Firestone, Lisa 1991, The Firestone Voice Scale for Self-Destructive Behavior: Investigating the scale's validity and reliability, ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis, p.427-427

Firestone, Lisa, 2009, Voice Therapy: A Treatment for Suicide/Depression, Editor: James R. Rogers, paper presented at the 21st Annual Healing After Suicide Conference Paths that Lead to Healing, American Association of Suicidology, p.49-50

Firestone, Lisa, 2010, The Critical Inner Voice That Drives Suicide, In: Suicide in the Words of Suicidologists, Editor: Maurizio Pompili, Nova Science Publishers, Inc.

Firestone, Robert W., 1984, A Concept of the Primary Fantasy Bond, Psychotherapy, Volume 21(2), p.218-225

Firestone, Robert W., 1985, The Fantasy Bond: The Structure of Psychological Defences, New York: Human Sciences Press

Firestone, Robert W., 1986, The Inner Voice and Suicide, Psychotherapy, Volume 23(3), p.439-447

Firestone, Robert W., 1987, The "Voice": the dual nature of guilt reactions, Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis, Volume 47, No.3, p.210-229

Firestone, Robert W., 1988, Voice Therapy: A psychotherapeutic approach to self-destructive behavior, New York: Human Sciences Press

Firestone, Robert W., 1990, Prescription for psychotherapy, Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training, Volume 27(4),p. 627-635

Firestone, Robert W., 2018a, Personal Interview with Georgina Dyson-Horton by telephone, on 08/11/2018 at 15.30

Firestone, Robert W., 2018b, Website: https://www.glendon.org/post-topic/critical-inner-voice/,[Downloaded on 01/03/18 at 11:28]

Firestone, Robert, W., Firestone, Lisa, & Catlett, Joyce, 2002, Conquer Your Critical Inner Voice, New York: MJF Books

Firestone, Robert W., & Firestone, Lisa, 2011, Separation Theory and Voice Therapy Methodology, Website: http://portal.idc.ac.il/en/symposium/hspsp/2011/documents/cfirestone11.pdf, [Downloaded on 10/05/18]

Firestone, Robert W, & Seiden, Richard H, 1987, Microsuicide and suicidal threats of everyday life, Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training, Volume 24(1), p.81-39

Frankl, Victor, 1959/2004, Man's Search for Meaning, London: Random House Group

Freud, Sigmund, 1914/1952, On Narcissism: an Introduction, translated by Cecil M. Baines, in Freud 54, Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.

Freud, Sigmund, 1921/1952, Group Psychology and the Analysis of The Ego, translated by James Strachey, in Freud 54, Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.

Freud, Sigmund, 1923/1952, The Ego and the Id, translated by Joan Riviere, in Freud 54, Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.

Gilbert, Paul, 1992, Depression: The Evolution of Powerlessness. Hove: Erlbaum–New York: Guilford

Gilbert, Paul, 1997, Overcoming depression: a self-help guide using cognitive behavioural techniques, London: Robinsons and New York: Oxford University Press

Gilbert, Paul, 2000, Varieties of submissive behaviour: Evolution and role in depression, In L. Sloman & P Gilbert (Eds.), Subordination and defeat, An evolutionary approach to mood disorders, (p.3-46): Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum

Gilbert, Paul, 2002, Evolutionary approaches to psychopathology and cognitive therapy, in P. Gilbert (Eds.) Cognitive Psychotherapy: An international quarterly (Special Edition: Evolutionary Psychology and Cognitive Therapy), 16, p.263-294

Gilbert, Paul, 2018, Compassion is an antidote to cruelty, The Psychologist, February 2018

Gilbert, Paul, Clarke, M., Hempel, S., Miles, J.N.V., and Irons, C., 2004, Criticizing and reassuring oneself: An exploration of forms, styles and reasons in female students, British Journal of Clinical Psychology, 43, p.31– 50

Gilbert, Paul, Baldwin, Mark W., Irons, Chris, Baccus, Jodene R., Palmer, Michelle 2006, Self-Criticism and Self-Warmth: An Imagery Study Exploring Their Relation to Depression, Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy, Volume 20, Number 2, p.183-200(18)

Gilbert, Paul, & Irons, C., 2005, Focused Therapies and Compassionate Mind Training For Shame and Self-Attacking, In P. Gilbert (Ed.), Compassion: Conceptualisations, research and use in psychotherapy, p.263–325, London: Routledge

Gilbert, Paul, & Miles, J.N.V, 2000, Sensitivity to put-down: Its relationship to perceptions of shame, social anxiety, depression, anger and self-other blame. Personality and Individual Differences, 29, 757-774

Gilbert, Paul & Proctor, Sue, 2006, Compassionate mind training for people with high shame and self-criticism: Overview and pilot study of a group therapy approach, Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy, 13(6), p.353-379

Greenberger, Dennis & Padesky, Christine, 1995, Mind Over Mood; Change how you feel by changing the way you think, New York: Guilford Press

Harris, Thomas, 1967, I'm OK, You're OK, Great Britain: Pan Books Limited

Heidegger, Martin, 1927/1962, Being and Time, Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, USA: Blackwell Publishing

Hickes, Mike & Mirea, Dan, 2012, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Existential - Phenomenological Psychotherapy; Rival Paradigms or Fertile Ground For Therapeutic Synthesis? Existential Analysis 23.1, January 2012, pp. 15-31

Heavey, Christopher, Lawrence & Hurlburt, Russell, T., 2008, The phenomena of inner experience, Consciousness and Cognition, 17(3) p.798-810

Horney, Karen, 1939, New Ways in Psychoanalysis, New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Inc

Hurlburt, Russell, T. & Heavey, Christopher, Lawrence, 2001, Telling what we know: Describing Inner Experience, Trends in Cognitive Sciences 5(9) p.400-403

Hurlburt, Russel, T., Heavey, Christopher, Lawrence, Kelsey, Jason, M., 2013, Toward a phenomenology of inner speaking, Consciousness and Cognition, 22, p.1477-1494

Iancu, I., Bodner, E., & Ben-Zion, I.Z., 2015, Self-esteem, dependency, self-efficacy and self-criticism in social anxiety disorder, Comprehensive Psychiatry, 58, 165-171

Jackl, Philip, 2018, The Inner Voice; From a very early age, children learn to talk to themselves. That voice in your head is the thing that makes you, you, Website:

https://aeon.co/essays/our-inner-narrator-gives-us-continuity-and-a-sense-of-self, [Downloaded at: 13:27 on 19/09/18]

Kainer, R.G., 1979, The Critical Voice in the Treatment of the Obsessional, Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 15:276-287

Kalsched, Donald, E., & Sieff, Daniela, F., 2015, Uncovering the secrets of the traumatised psyche; the life-saving inner protector who is also a persecutor, in Understanding and Healing Emotional Trauma: Conversations with Pioneering Clinicians and Researchers, Daniela Sieff [Editor], East Sussex: Routledge

Kaufman, Walter, 1970, in Buber, Martin, 1970, I and Thou, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark

Keen, E., 1975, Doing research phenomenologically, Unpublished manuscript, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA

Kierkegaard, Søren, 1835/1958, The Journals of Kierkegaard, (Edited and translated by Alexander Dru), London and Glasgow: Fontana Books

Kierkegaard, Søren, 1843/1985, Fear and Trembling, London: Penguin Books

Kierkegaard, Søren, 1844/1980, The Concept of Anxiety: A simple psychologically orienting deliberation on the dogmatic issue of hereditary sin, USA: Princeton University Press

Kohler Reissman, Catherine, 2008, Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences, USA: Sage Publications Limited

Konefal, Janet, 2014 May 2014, A Non-Invasive Treatment for Critical Self-Talk and its Negative Emotional Effect, Journal of alternative and complementary medicine (medicine (New York, N.Y.) 20(5):A58

Kugel, Jennifer A., 2010, An inner relationship (IR) focussing approach to transforming the inner critic, Psy.D. Alliant International University, California School of Professional Psychology, San Diego, Thesis/dissertation

Langdon, R., Jones, S., Connaughton, E., & Fernyhough, C., 2009, The phenomenology of inner speech: Comparison of schizophrenia patients with auditory verbal hallucinations and healthy controls, Psychological Medicine, 39(4), 655-663.

Lee, D.A., 2005, The perfect nurturer: A model to develop a compassionate mind within the context of cognitive therapy. In P. Gilbert (Ed.), Compassion: Conceptualisations, research and use in psychotherapy, p. 326–351, London: Brunner-Routledge

Legg, L., & Gilbert, P., 2006, A pilot study of gender of voice and gender of voice hearer in psychotic voice hearers, Psychology and psychotherapy, Volume 79 p: 517-527

Longe et al, 2009, Having a word with yourself: Neural correlates of self-criticism and self-reassurance, Neuromage, 49(2) p.1849-56

Marar, Ziyad, 2018, Judged; The Value of Being Misunderstood, London: Bloomsbury Academic

Marnocha, Suzanne, K., Bergstrom, Marshelle, Dempsey, Leona, F., 2011, The lived experience of perimenopause and menopause, Contemporary Nurse, Volume 37(2), p.229-240

Mauas, Viviana, Kopala-Sibley, Daniel, & Zuroff, David, 2012, Depressive symptoms in the transition to menopause: the roles of irritability, personality vulnerability, and self-regulation, Archives of Women's Mental Health, 2014, Volume 17(4), p.279-289

May, Rollo, 1977, The Meaning of Anxiety, USA: The Ronald Press Company

McCarthy-Jones, Simon & Fernyhough, Charles, 2007, Neural correlates of inner speech and auditory verbal hallucinations: A critical review and Theoretical Integration, Clinical Psychology Review 27(2) p.140-54

McCarthy-Jones, Simon & Fernyhough, Charles, 2011, The varieties of inner speech: Links between quality of inner speech and psychopathological variables in a sample of young adults, Consciousness and Cognition, 20, p1586-1593

McElmurry, Beverly, J., & Huddleston, Donna, S., 1991, Self-Care and Menopause: Critical Review of Research, Health Care for Women International, 12:1, p.15-26

McGuire, P., David, A., Murray, R., Frackowiak, R., Frith, C., Wright, I., Silbersweig, D., 1996a, Abnormal Monitoring of Inner Speech: A Physiological Basis for Auditory Hallucinations, The Lancet, Volume 346 (8975), p.596-600

McGuire, P., Silbersweig, D., Murray, R., David, A., Frackowiak, R., Frith, C., 1996b, Functional Anatomy of Inner Speech and Auditory Verbal Imagery, Psychological medicine, Volume: 26, p.29-38

McGuire P., Silbersweig D., Wright I., Murray R., Frackowiak R., Frith C., 1996c, The neural correlates of inner speech and auditory verbal imagery in schizophrenia: relationship to auditory verbal hallucinations, The British journal of psychiatry : the journal of mental science, Volume 169, p.148-159

McLeod, John, 2003, Doing Counselling Research, 2nd Edition, London: Sage Publications Ltd

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 1968, The Visible and the Invisible, USA: Northwestern University Press

Milne, A.A., 1926, Winnie-the-Pooh, London: Methuen & Co. Limited

Morin, Alan, 2004, A Neurocognitive and Sociocological Model of Self-Awareness, Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs, Volume 130(3), p.197-224

Morin, A., 2005, Possible links between self-awareness and inner speech: Theoretical background, underlying mechanisms, and empirical evidence, Journal Of Consciousness Studies, 2005 Apr-May, Volume 12(4-5), p.115-134

Morin, A., 2009, Inner Speech and Consciousness, in Encyclopedia of Consciousness, [Editor: Banks, W.P.], USA: Elsevier Inc.

Morin, Alan, 2011a, Self-awareness part 1: Definition, measures, effects, functions, and antecedents, Social and Personality Psychology Compass, Volume 5(10), p.807-823

Morin, A., 2011b, Self-awareness part 2: Neuroanatomy and importance of inner speech, Social and Personality Psychology Compass, December 2011, Volume 5(12), p.1004-1017

Morin, Alan & Everett, James, 1990, Inner Speech as a Mediator of Self-Awareness, Self-Consciousness, and Self-Knowledge: An Hypothesis, New Ideas In Psychology, Volume 8, No. 3, p.337-356

Morin, Alan & Uttl, Bob, 2011, Inner speech: A window into consciousness, Website: http://www.neuropsychotherapist.com/inner-speech, [Downloaded: 20.11.2013]

Moseley, Peter, 2014, Talking to ourselves: the science of the little voice in your head, The Guardian, Thursday 21 August 2014, 07:00 BST

Moustakas, Clark, 1990, Heuristic Research; Design, Methodology, and Applications, USA: Sage Publications Inc

Moustakas's, Clark, 1994, Phenomenological Research Methods, USA: Sage Publications Inc

Palumbo, Dennis, 2012, Dealing with Your "Inner Critic"; Self-criticism is a two-edged sword, Psychology Today, Website: https:/www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/hollywood-the-couch/201205/dealing-your-inner-critic, [Downloaded on: 05/10/2018]

Perrone-Bertolotti et al, 2014, What is that little voice inside my head? Inner speech phenomenology, its role in cognitive performance, and its relation to self-monitoring, Behavioural Brain Research, 261, p.220-239

Potter, Jonathan, & Wetherell, Margaret, 1987, Discourse and Social Psychology; Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour, London: Sage Publications Limited

Puchalska-Wasyl, M., 2015, Self-talk: Conversation with oneself? On the Types of Internal Interlocutors, The Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied, 149:5, p.443-460

Ridgway, Anthony James, 2009, The Inner Voice, International Journal of English Studies, vol.9 (2), Spain: University of Murcia, p.45-58

Sartre, Jean-Paul, 1943, Being and Nothingness, London and New York: Routledge Classics

Sartre, Jean-Paul, 1948, Existentialism and Humanism, London: Methuen

Sartre, Jean-Paul, 1989, No Exit and three other plays, New York: Vintage International

Siegrist, Michael, 1995, Inner speech as a cognitive process mediating self-consciousness and inhibiting self-deception, Psychological Reports, 76(1), p.259-65

Smith, Jonathan, 2018, Birkbeck University of London, Website: http://www.ipa.bbk.ac.uk/about-ipa, [Downloaded on: 25/03/18 at 18:14]

Smith, Ronald, Gregor, 1937, in Buber, Martin, 2010, I and Thou, USA: Martino Publishing

Sokolov, A. N., 1972, Inner Speech and Thought, New York: Plenum Press

Spinelli, Ernesto, 1989, The Interpreted World; An Introduction to Phenomenological Psychology, London: Sage Publications Limited

Speedy, Jane, 2001, Singing over the Bones: A Narrative Enquiry into the Construction of Research and Practice Cultures and Professional Identities by Counsellor Educators at the University of Bristol and Within the UK, PhD dissertation, University of Bristol, UK

Stevick, E.L., 1971, An empirical investigation of the experience of anger, In A. Giorgi W. Fisher, & R. Von Eckartsberg (Editors), Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology, Volume 1, p.132-148, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press

Stinckens, Nele, Lietaer, Germain, & Leijssen, Mia, 2002a, The inner critic on the move: analysis of the change process in a case of short-term client-centred/experiential therapy, Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, Volume 2, Issue 1

Stinckens, Nele, Lietaer, Germain, & Leijssen, Mia, 2002b, The Valuing Process and the Inner Critic in the Classic and Current Client-Centered/Experiential Literature, Person-Centered & Experiential Psychotherapies, 1(1-2), pp.41–55

Stinckens, Nele, Lietaer, Germain, & Leijssen, 2013a, Working with the inner critic: Process features and pathways to change, Person-Centred and Experiential Psychotherapies, 12(1) p.59-78

Stinckens, Nele, Lietaer, Germain, & Leijssen, 2013b, Working with the inner critic: Therapeutic approach, Person-Centred and Experiential Psychotherapies, 12(2) p.141-156

Tillich, Paul, 1952, The Courage to Be, Great Britain: The Fontana Library

Tomlinson, Brian, 2001, The Inner Voice; A critical Factor in L2 Learning, The Journal of the Imagination in Language Learning and Teaching, V6, Jersey City State Coll.

Universities UK, 2015, Patterns and Trends in UK Higher Education 2015, London: Universities UK

Van Deurzen, Emmy, 1997, Everyday Mysteries; Existential Dimensions of Psychotherapy, London: Routledge

Van Manen, M., 1990, Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy, Ontario, Canada: State University of New York Press

Vygotsky, Lev, 1962, Thought and Language, Translated by: Hanfmann, E. and Vakar, G., USA: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Waddell, Vivian, 2007, A Phenomenological Description of the Inner Voice Experience of Ordinary People, Journal of Consciousness Studies, 14, No. 8, p. 35–57

Yalom, Irving, 1980, Existential Psychotherapy, USA: Basic Books

Appendices

i. Recruitment Flyer A4
ii. Recruitment Flyer A5
iii. Facebook page
iv. Participant Information Sheet
v. Consent Form
vi. Interview Checklist & Questions
vii. Risk Assessment of Interview Location
viii. Debriefing Sheet
ix. Verbatim Transcripts
   Interview # One
   Interview # Two
   Interview # Three
   Interview # Four
   Interview # Five
   Interview # Six
   Interview # Seven
x. Matrix

Do you have experience of a CRITICAL inner VOICE?

That little voice in your head that critically comments on things? You may have a range of expressions, thoughts or feelings, you may make a variety of sounds such as "grr" or a "tut", use a variety of words, or some kind of image. You may have an internal dialogue going on. How do you respond to this criticism? Whatever your critical process or response I wish to discover more about this topic through my research.

How you can take part:

- You an adult (over 18 years of age)
- You recognise that the voice is yours (i.e. not someone else inside your head)
- You are not a psychotherapy student (as much of psychological research has been conducted using psychotherapy students)

The sample group is intentionally wide so that I can conduct my research using people from the general population rather than specific demographics. We will have a brief conversation on the telephone to arrange a convenient time to conduct the research interview and to answer any questions you may have. I will send further information to you prior to meeting. The interview will take approximately one hour and will be recorded, and your data will be anonymised to ensure your confidentiality. The research is being carried out as part of a Doctorate in Counselling Psychology from NSPC Ltd & Middlesex University and has been approved by the University Ethics Board.

My Contact Details

Telephone: 07960043299

Email: GD321@live.mdx.ac.uk

Do you experience a CRITICAL inner VOICE?

Would you like to take part in research?

How you can take part

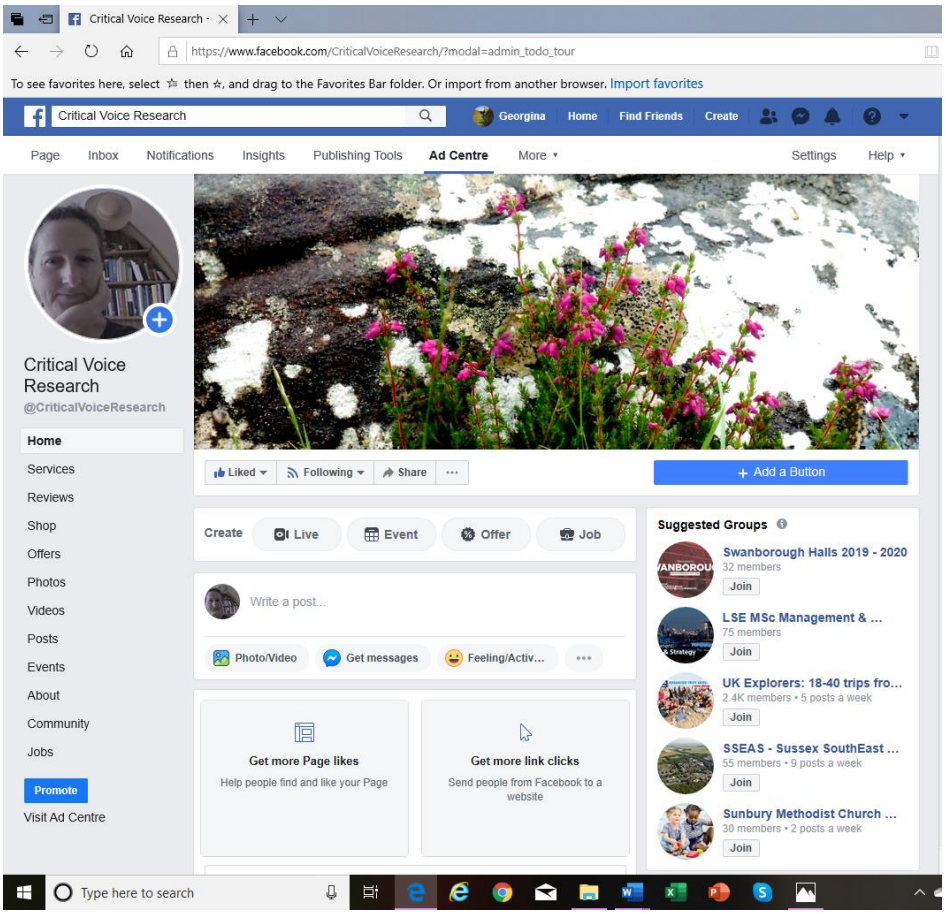
- You are an adult (over 18 years of age)
- You recognise that the voice is yours
- You are not a psychotherapy student

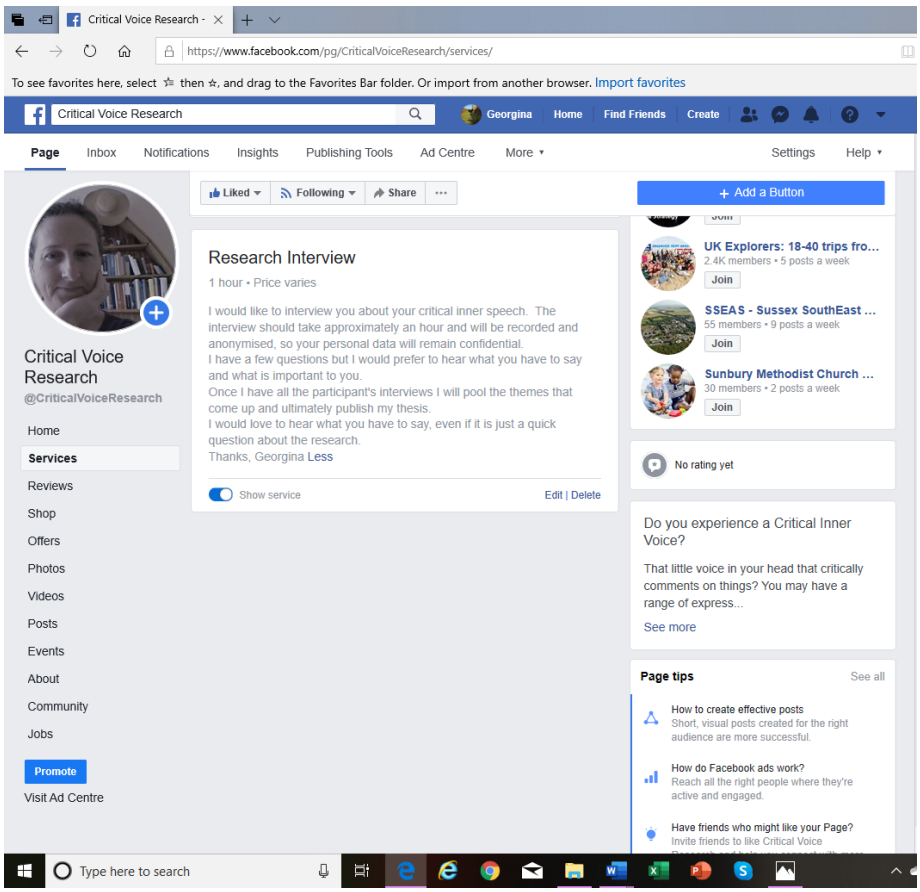
We will have a brief conversation on the telephone to arrange a convenient time to conduct the research interview and to answer any questions you may have. The interview will take approximately one hour and will be recorded, and your data will be anonymised to ensure your confidentiality. The research is being carried out as part of a Doctorate in Counselling Psychology from NSPC Ltd & Middlesex University and has been approved by the University Ethics Board.

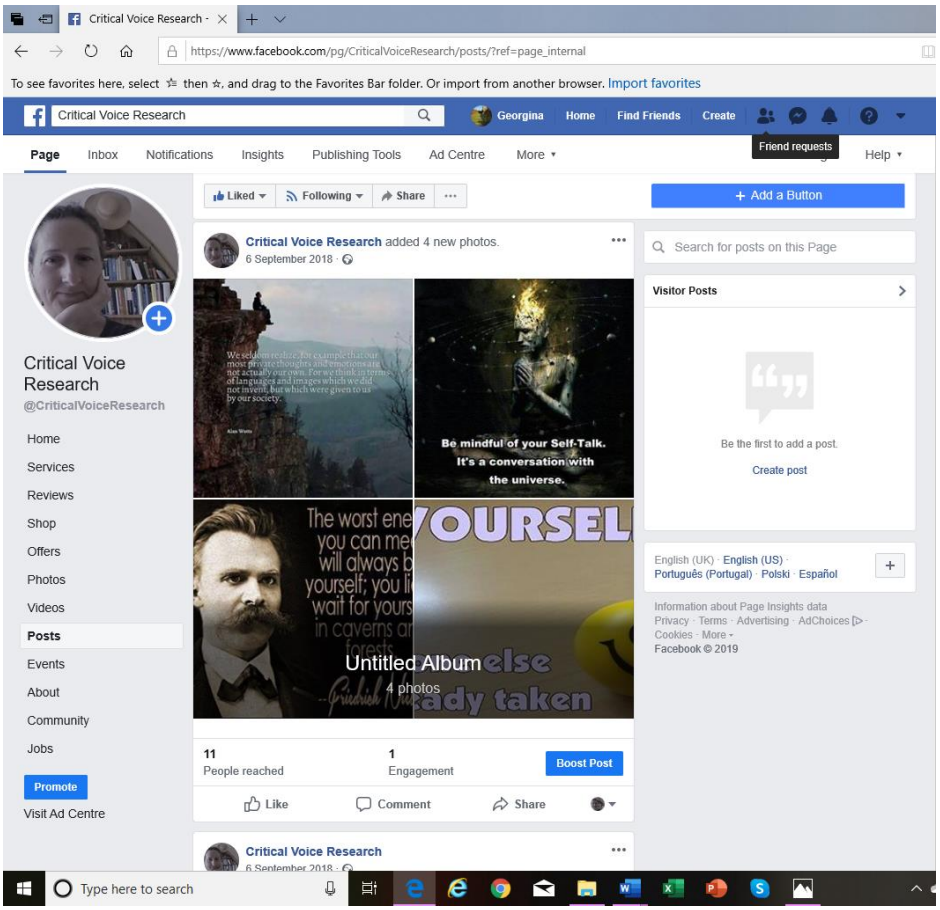
My Contact Details

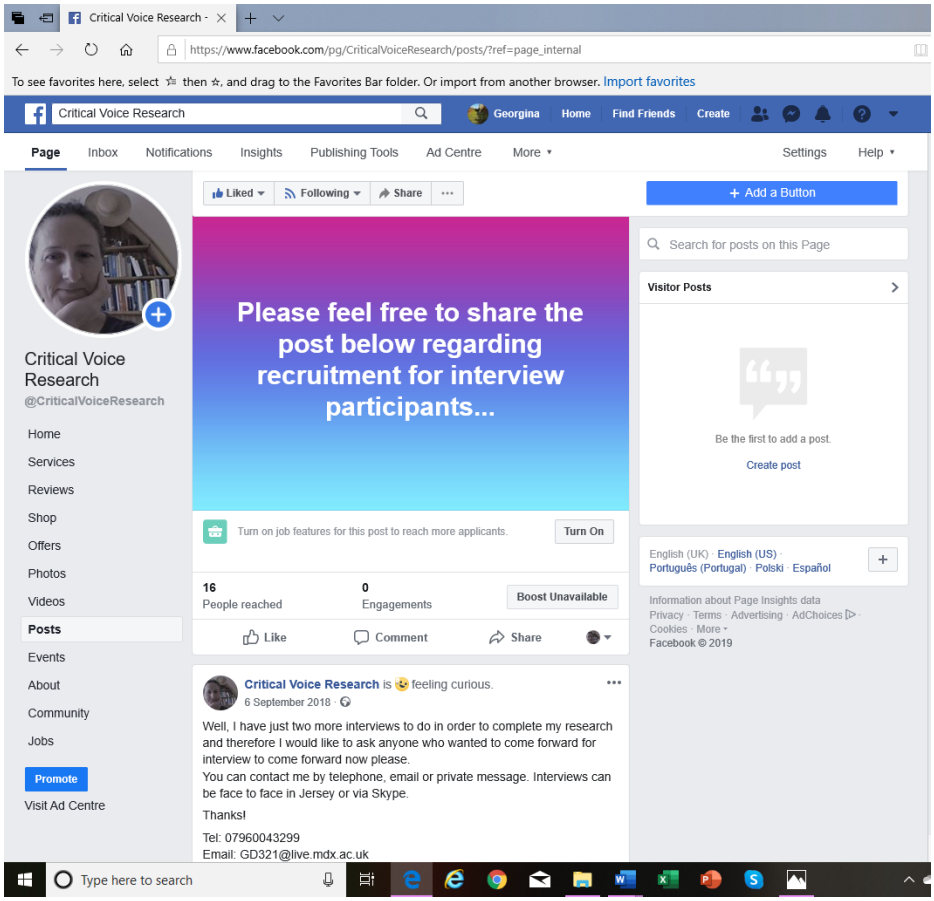
Telephone: 07960043299

Email: GD321@live.mdx.ac.uk


Critical Voice Research
https://www.facebook.com/CriticalVoiceResearch/?modal=admin_todo_tour
To see favorites here, select then , and drag to the Favorites Bar folder. Or import from another browser. Import favorites
Critical Voice Research
Georgina
Home
Find Friends
Create
Page
Inbox
Notifications
Insights
Publishing Tools
Ad Centre
More
Settings
Help
Critical Voice Research
@CriticalVoiceResearch
Home
Services
Reviews
Shop
Offers
Photos
Videos
Posts
Events
About
Community
Jobs
Promote
Visit Ad Centre
Liked
Following
Share
Add a Button
Create
Live
Event
Offer
Job
Write a post...
Photo/Video
Get messages
Feeling/Activ...
Get more Page likes
Help people find and like your Page
Get more link clicks
Send people from Facebook to a website
Suggested Groups
Swanborough Halls 2019 - 2020
32 members
Join
LSE MSc Management & ...
75 members
Join
UK Explorers: 18-40 trips fro...
2.4K members • 5 posts a week
Join
SSEAS - Sussex SouthEast ...
55 members • 9 posts a week
Join
Sunbury Methodist Church ...
30 members • 2 posts a week
Join
Type here to search


Critical Voice Research
https://www.facebook.com/pg/CriticalVoiceResearch/services/
To see favorites here, select then , and drag to the Favorites Bar folder. Or import from another browser. Import favorites
Critical Voice Research
Georgina
Home
Find Friends
Create
Page
Inbox
Notifications
Insights
Publishing Tools
Ad Centre
More
Settings
Help
Liked
Following
Share
Add a Button
Critical Voice Research
@CriticalVoiceResearch
Home
Services
Reviews
Shop
Offers
Photos
Videos
Posts
Events
About
Community
Jobs
Promote
Visit Ad Centre
Research Interview
1 hour • Price varies
I would like to interview you about your critical inner speech. The interview should take approximately an hour and will be recorded and anonymised, so your personal data will remain confidential.
I have a few questions but I would prefer to hear what you have to say and what is important to you.
Once I have all the participant's interviews I will pool the themes that come up and ultimately publish my thesis.
I would love to hear what you have to say, even if it is just a quick question about the research.
Thanks, Georgina Less
Show service
Edit | Delete
UK Explorers: 18-40 trips fro...
2.4K members • 5 posts a week
Join
SSEAS - Sussex SouthEast ...
55 members • 9 posts a week
Join
Sunbury Methodist Church ...
30 members • 2 posts a week
Join
No rating yet
Do you experience a Critical Inner Voice?
That little voice in your head that critically comments on things? You may have a range of express...
See more
Page tips
See all
How to create effective posts
Short, visual posts created for the right audience are more successful.
How do Facebook ads work?
Reach all the right people where they're active and engaged.
Have friends who might like your Page?
Invite friends to like Critical Voice
Type here to search


Critical Voice Research
https://www.facebook.com/pg/CriticalVoiceResearch/posts/?ref=page_internal
To see favorites here, select then , and drag to the Favorites Bar folder. Or import from another browser. Import favorites
Critical Voice Research
Georgina
Home
Find Friends
Create
Friend requests
Page
Inbox
Notifications
Insights
Publishing Tools
Ad Centre
More
Help
Liked
Following
Share
+ Add a Button
Critical Voice Research added 4 new photos.
6 September 2018
Search for posts on this Page
Visitor Posts
Be the first to add a post.
Create post
Critical Voice Research
@CriticalVoiceResearch
Home
Services
Reviews
Shop
Offers
Photos
Videos
Posts
Events
About
Community
Jobs
Promote
Visit Ad Centre
Be mindful of your Self-Talk.
It's a conversation with
the universe.
Untitled Album
4 photos
11
People reached
1
Engagement
Boost Post
Like
Comment
Share
English (UK) · English (US) ·
Português (Portugal) · Polski · Español
Information about Page Insights data
Privacy · Terms · Advertising · AdChoices
Cookies · More
Facebook © 2019
Critical Voice Research
Type here to search


Critical Voice Research
https://www.facebook.com/pg/CriticalVoiceResearch/posts/?ref=page_internal
To see favorites here, select then , and drag to the Favorites Bar folder. Or import from another browser. Import favorites
Critical Voice Research
Georgina
Home
Find Friends
Create
Page
Inbox
Notifications
Insights
Publishing Tools
Ad Centre
More
Settings
Help
Liked
Following
Share
+ Add a Button
Please feel free to share the post below regarding recruitment for interview participants...
Turn on job features for this post to reach more applicants.
Turn On
16
People reached
0
Engagements
Boost Unavailable
Like
Comment
Share
Search for posts on this Page
Visitor Posts
Be the first to add a post.
Create post
Critical Voice Research
@CriticalVoiceResearch
Home
Services
Reviews
Shop
Offers
Photos
Videos
Posts
Events
About
Community
Jobs
Promote
Visit Ad Centre
English (UK) · English (US) ·
Português (Portugal) · Polski · Español
Information about Page Insights data
Privacy · Terms · Advertising · AdChoices
Cookies · More
Facebook © 2019
Critical Voice Research is feeling curious.
6 September 2018
Well, I have just two more interviews to do in order to complete my research and therefore I would like to ask anyone who wanted to come forward for interview to come forward now please.
You can contact me by telephone, email or private message. Interviews can be face to face in Jersey or via Skype.
Thanks!
Tel: 07960043299
Email: GD321@live.mdx.ac.uk
Type here to search

Participant Information Sheet

NSPC Ltd
61-63 Fortune Green Road
London
NW6 1DR

Middlesex University
The Burroughs
London
NW4 4BT

Dated:

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take your time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

The research project:

"The Critical Voice; A Heuristic Enquiry into the experience of hearing a critical inner voice, to deepen our understanding of its meaning and purpose" being carried out by Georgina Dyson-Horton as a requirement for a Doctorate in Counselling Psychology from NSPC Ltd & Middlesex University.

What is the purpose of the research?

My research focuses on what I call the critical voice. I take this to mean "your own voice in your head that critically comments on things". To you this may be recognised as your thoughts or feelings about something to which there could be a range of expressions. For you there may be a number of voices that provide a running commentary, there may be derisory sounds such as an audible sigh, or "grrrr", or a "tut", or an image. This may be one of many interacting sounds, thoughts or voices, amongst a range of internal dialogue.

The 'critical voice' may sound like someone familiar, or it may not, it may elicit a range of emotions, or may change your behaviour, affect your thinking, limit your way of living or take you away from something you were doing whilst you are hearing it.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you are happy to take part, the recorded interview will last for approximately one hour. I will ask for your verbal and written consent prior to starting, and at the end of the interview provide you with a debriefing sheet. The information sheet and debriefing sheet is for you to keep in case you have any questions afterwards.

I shall be interviewing face-to-face in Jersey (St Martin). In the most exceptional of circumstances I can interview by Skype but this is not the preferred option. Please let me know if transport to either of these locations is difficult.

The interview is semi-structured, i.e. I have a few questions related to the research question, but by all means please talk about what is important to you as that is the aim of the project.

What will you do with the information that I provide?

The interview will be recorded on a digital Dictaphone, transferred onto my computer and then deleted from the Dictaphone. Your personal information and data will be stored on my computer, a separate hard drive and in a locked filing cabinet. All computer based data will be encrypted and password protected. I will transcribe the interview transcripts myself. Once transcribed, your interview transcript will be anonymised and the data will be analysed along with all of the other research participants' data in order to identify themes.

The information will be kept for at least 6 months after I graduate and will be treated as confidential. If my research is published, I will make sure that neither your name or other identifying details are used. Data will be stored according to the Data Protection (Jersey) Law 2018, GDPR and the Freedom of Information Act.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

By its very nature the 'critical voice' is critical. As such it may difficult to talk about and cause you distress. If you feel distressed during the interview do not feel that you have to continue. You are not obliged to finish the interview, or even start it. It may be that following the interview you reflect back and wish me not to use your transcript. This is ok, please just let me know. The Debriefing sheet I will give you at the end of the interview identifies a selection of agencies you can gain support from, and of course I will be available to answer any questions about the research. Although it is very unlikely, should you tell me something that I am required by law to pass on to a third person, I will have to do so. If this is the case we will discuss this, otherwise whatever you tell me will be confidential.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no direct benefits for you in taking part, I hope this research will greatly aid the field of Psychotherapy and Psychology to understand the phenomena of the 'critical voice'. There are numerous books on how to manage or eradicate self-criticism, and the field of Psychotherapy and Psychology have long since developed theories about it. What appears to be missing is research into the meaning and function of the 'critical voice'. This research intends to find out more about this phenomenon, to shine a light on it so that we can gain a deeper understanding of it as experienced by the individual, and in doing so broaden how we approach it. It may be that simply by taking part in the interview is of benefit in itself.

6. Consent

You will be given a copy of this information sheet and the consent form for your personal records, and if you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign the consent form before the study begins. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary; you do not have to take part if you do not want to and you may withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

7. Who is organising and funding the research?

The research has been part funded by the Hans Cohn Scholarship and I will be required to publish my research. Any data will be anonymised in order to maintain the research participant's confidentiality.

8. Who has reviewed the study?

All proposals for research using human participants are reviewed by an Ethics Committee before they can proceed. The NSPC research ethics sub-committee have approved this study.

9. Expenses

Expenses such as travel expenses are not available. Should access to the interview location be difficult please let me know so that an alternative solution can be identified.

10. The next steps

Please telephone me on 07960043299 or email me at GD321@live.mdx.ac.uk to arrange a convenient time for interview, and for directions to the interview site which will be emailed to you.

Thank you for your time. If you have any further questions, please contact me at:

NSPC Ltd
Existential Academy
61-63 Fortune Green Road
London NW6 1DR
Email: GD321@live.mdx.ac.uk

If you any concerns about the conduct of the study, you can contact my supervisor:

Dr Charlotte Harkness
NSPC Ltd
Existential Academy
61-63 Fortune Green Road
London NW6 1DR
Tel: +44 (0) 207 435 8067
Email: charlottekharkness@gmail.com

Or

The Principal
NSPC Ltd
Existential Academy
61-63 Fortune Green Road
London NW6 1DR
Tel: +44 (0) 207 435 8067
Email: admin@nspc.org.uk

Encs
1. Consent Form

Written Informed Consent

NSPC Ltd
61-63 Fortune Green Road
London
NW6 1DR

Middlesex University
The Burroughs
London
NW4 4BT

Title of study and academic year: The Critical Voice; A Heuristic Enquiry into the experience of hearing a critical inner voice, to deepen our understanding of its meaning and purpose. (2017)

Researcher's name and email: Georgina Dyson-Horton; GD321@live.mdx.ac.uk

Supervisor's name and email: Dr Charlotte Harkness; charlottekharkness@gmail.com

- I have understood the details of the research as explained to me by the researcher, and confirm that I have consented to act as a participant.
- I have been given contact details for the researcher in the information sheet.
- I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, the data collected during the research will not be identifiable, and I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time without any obligation to explain my reasons for doing so.
- I further understand that the data I provide may be used for analysis and subsequent publication, and I provide my consent that this may occur.

_____

_____
Print name

_____
Sign Name

Date: _____

To the participant: Data may be inspected by the Chair of the Psychology Ethics panel and the Chair of the School of Health and Education Ethics committee of Middlesex University, if required by institutional audits about the correctness of procedures. Although this would happen in strict confidentiality, ☐ please tick here if you do not wish your data to be included in audits:

Telephone Checklist

- Adult over 18
- Participant identifies CV as their own
- No current or previous AVH or psychosis
- Not a psychotherapy student
- No prior relationship to me

Interview Checklist

- Participant Information Sheet given
- Signed Informed Consent
- Collect demographics

  Age Gender Ethnicity Profession Geographical location

Interview Questions

1. Are you aware of a critical element to your thoughts and inner speech?
   b) Can you describe what it is like? e.g. is the critical voice directed towards yourself, others, or a combination?
2. Do you have an example of a situation or situations when you experience your critical voice?
3. How do you feel when you experience your critical voice?
   b) Are there any feelings associated with it?
4. Are there particular times that the critical element of your inner speech is more dominant or noticeable?
   b) Can you tell me about that?
5. What happens in those moments that you are describing?
   b) Is there some kind of dialogue that goes on for you?
6. Do you think the critical voice serves a function or a purpose?
   b) i.e. does it help, hinder, are you indifferent or something else?
7. What do you make of your critical voice?
   b) Do your feelings towards it change over time, or in different situations?

Debrief Sheet

Independent Field / Location Work Risk Assessment FRA1

NSPC Ltd
51-63 Fortune Green Road
London
NW6 1DR

Middlesex University
The Burroughs
London
NW4 4BT

This proforma is applicable to, and must be completed in advance for, the following field/location work situations:

1. *All field/location work undertaken independently by individual students, either in the UK or overseas, including in connection with proposition module or dissertations. Supervisor to complete with student(s).*
2. *All field/location work undertaken by postgraduate students. Supervisors to complete with student(s).*
3. *Field/location work undertaken by research students. Student to complete with supervisor.*
4. *Field/location work/visits by research staff. Researcher to complete with Research Centre Head.*
5. *Essential information for students travelling abroad can be found on www.fco.gov.uk*

FIELD/LOCATION WORK DETAILS

Name:	Georgina Dyson-Horton	**Student No** **Research Centre:(staff only)**	
Supervisor:	Dr Charlotte Harkness	**Degree course**	DCPsych

NEXT OF KIN Telephone numbers and name of next of kin who may be contacted in the event of an accident	**Name:** Mr & Mrs T Horton **Phone**: 01534 853511
Physical or psychological limitations to carrying out the proposed field/location work	None
Any health problems (full details) Which may be relevant to proposed field/location work activity in case of emergencies.	None
Locality (Country and Region)	Jersey
Travel Arrangements NB: Comprehensive travel and health insurance must always be obtained for independent overseas field/location work.	By car
Dates of Travel and Field/location work	January 2017 to December 2017

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION VERY CAREFULLY

Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

List the localities to be visited or specify routes to be followed **(Col. 1).** For each locality, enter the potential hazards that may be identified beyond those accepted in everyday life. Add details giving cause for concern **(Col. 2).**

Examples of Potential Hazards :
Adverse weather: exposure (heat, sunburn, lightening, wind, hypothermia)
Terrain: rugged, unstable, fall, slip, trip, debris, and remoteness. Traffic: pollution.
Demolition/building sites, assault, getting lost, animals, disease.
Working on/near water: drowning, swept away, disease (weils disease, hepatitis, malaria, etc), parasites', flooding, tides and range.
Lone working: difficult to summon help, alone or in isolation, lone interviews.
Dealing with the public: personal attack, causing offence/intrusion, misinterpreted, political, ethnic, cultural, socio-economic differences/problems. Known or suspected criminal offenders.
Safety Standards (other work organisations, transport, hotels, etc), working at night, areas of high crime.
Ill health: personal considerations or vulnerabilities, pre-determined medical conditions (asthma, allergies, fitting) general fitness, disabilities, persons suited to task.
Articles and equipment: inappropriate type and/or use, failure of equipment, insufficient training for use and repair, injury.
Substances (chemicals, plants, bio- hazards, waste): ill health - poisoning, infection, irritation, burns, cuts, eye-damage.
Manual handling: lifting, carrying, moving large or heavy items, physical unsuitability for task

If no hazard can be identified beyond those of everyday life, enter 'NONE'.

1. LOCALITY/ROUTE (specify here the exact name and address of each locality/organization)	**2. POTENTIAL HAZARDS**
Therapy Room, Valley Farm, La Vallee de Rozel, St Martin, Jersey JE3 6AJ	1. Stone steps up to the Therapy Room (tripping hazard) 2. Low door into the Therapy Room (potential for banging head) 3. No toilet facilities in or next to the Therapy Room 4. Lone working, which will be managed by ensuring there is someone in the adjacent building and that I have informed them of the start and finish time (approximately) of the interview. I will check in with this person before and after the interview. I will sit on the chair closest to the door.

The University Field/location work code of Practice booklet provides practical advice that should be followed in planning and conducting field/location work.

Risk Minimisation/Control Measures PLEASE READ VERY CAREFULLY

For each hazard identified **(Col 2),** list the precautions/control measures in place or that will be taken **(Col 3)** to **"reduce the risk to acceptable levels",** and the safety equipment **(Col 5)** that will be employed.

Assuming the safety precautions/control methods that will be adopted **(Col. 3),** categorise the field/location work risk for each location/route as negligible, low, moderate or high **(Col. 4). Risk increases with both the increasing likelihood of an accident and the increasing severity of the consequences of an accident.**

An acceptable level of risk is: a risk which can be safely controlled by person taking part in the activity using the precautions and control measures noted including the necessary instructions, information and training relevant to that risk. The resultant risk should not be significantly higher than that encountered in everyday life.

Examples of control measures/precautions:

Providing adequate training, information & instructions on field/location work tasks and the safe and correct use of any equipment, substances and personal protective equipment. Inspection and safety check of any equipment prior to use. Assessing individuals fitness and suitability to environment and tasks involved. Appropriate clothing, environmental information consulted and advice followed (weather conditions, tide times etc.). Seek advice on harmful plants, animals & substances that may be encountered, including information and instruction on safe procedures for handling hazardous substances. First aid provisions, inoculations, individual medical requirements, logging of location, route and expected return times of lone workers. Establish emergency procedures (means of raising an alarm, back up arrangements). Working with colleagues (pairs). **Lone working is not permitted where the risk of physical or verbal violence is a realistic possibility.** Training in interview techniques and avoiding /defusing conflict, following advice from local organisations, wearing of clothing unlikely to cause offence or unwanted attention. Interviews in neutral locations. Checks on Health and Safety standards & welfare facilities of travel, accommodation and outside organisations. Seek information on social/cultural/political status of field/location work area.

Examples of Safety Equipment: Hardhats, goggles, gloves, harness, waders, whistles, boots, mobile phone, ear protectors, bright fluorescent clothing (for roadside work), dust mask, etc.

If a proposed locality has not been visited previously, give your authority for the risk assessment stated or indicate that your visit will be preceded by a thorough risk assessment.

3. PRECAUTIONS/CONTROL MEASURES	**4. RISK ASSESSMENT** (low, moderate, high)	**5. SAFETY/EQUIPMENT**
1. Stone steps up to the Therapy Room (tripping hazard)	moderate	None – will notify research participants

2. Low door into the Therapy Room (potential for banging head)	moderate	None – will notify research participants
3. No toilet facilities in or next to the Therapy Room	moderate	None – will notify research participants and provide drinking water and tissues
4. Lone working	Low	Ensure someone is onsite next door

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AND SIGN AS APPROPRIATE

DECLARATION: The undersigned have assessed the activity and the associated risks and declare that there is no significant risk or that the risk will be controlled by the method(s) listed above/over. Those participating in the work have read the assessment and will put in place precautions/control measures identified.

NB: Risk should be constantly reassessed during the field/location work period and additional precautions taken or field/location work discontinued if the risk is seen to be unacceptable.

Signature of Field/location worker (Student/Staff)		**Date:**	15/06/16
Signature of Student Supervisor	Click here to enter text.	**Date:**	Click here to enter a date.
APPROVAL: (ONE ONLY) **Signature of Director of Programmes** (undergraduate students only)	Click here to enter text.	**Date:**	Click here to enter a date.
Signature of Research Degree Co-ordinator or Director of Programmes (Postgraduate)	Click here to enter text.	**Date:**	Click here to enter a date.
Signature of Research Centre Head (for staff field/location workers**)**	Click here to enter text.	**Date:**	Click here to enter a date.

FIELD/LOCATION WORK CHECK LIST

1. Ensure that **all members** of the field party possess the following attributes (where relevant) at a level appropriate to the proposed activity and likely field conditions:

- [x] Safety Knowledge & Training?
- [x] Awareness of cultural, social & political differences?
- [ ] Personal clothing & safety equipment?
- [x] Suitability of field/location workers to proposed tasks?
- [x] Physical & psychological fitness & disease immunity, protection & awareness?

2. Have all the necessary arrangements been made and information/instruction gained, and have the relevant authorities been consulted or informed with regard to

- [ ] Visa, permits?
- [ ] Weather conditions, tide times and ranges?
- [x] Legal access to sites and/or persons?
- [ ] Suitability of field/location workers to proposed tasks?
- [ ] Vaccinations and other health precautions?
- [ ] Safety equipment and protective clothing?
- [x] Financial and insurance implications?
- [x] Travel and accommodation arrangements?
- [ ] Health insurance arrangements?
- [ ] Arrival times after journeys?
- [ ] Civil unrest and terrorism?
- [x] Emergency procedures?
- [ ] Crime risk?
- [x] Transport use?
- [ ] Political or military sensitivity of the proposed topic, its method or location?

Important information for retaining evidence of completed risk assessments:

Once the risk assessment is completed and approval gained the **supervisor** should retain this form and issue a copy of it to the field/location worker participating on the field course/work. In addition the **approver** must keep a copy of this risk assessment in an appropriate Health and Safety file.

1st Reviewer's decision

Click here to choose a decision

For Revise and Resubmit decisions, particular attention should be paid to the following:

☐ Section 1 details incomplete ☐ Clarity of Research Proposal ☐ Risk Assessment

☐ Professionalism and presentation of participant documentation (information sheet, informed consent, debriefing)

☐ Completeness of ethical approval form (individual questions requiring clarification may be identified here)

Additional comments from Reviewer 1:

Click here to enter text.

FOR DOUBLE REVIEW ONLY – Reviewer 2

Click here to choose a decision

For Revise and Resubmit decisions, particular attention should be paid to the following:

☐ Section 1 details incomplete ☐ Clarity of Research Proposal ☐ Risk Assessment

☐ Professionalism and presentation of participant documentation (information sheet, informed consent, debriefing)

☐ Completeness of ethical approval form (individual questions requiring clarification may be identified here)

Additional comments from Reviewer 2:

Click here to enter text.

NSPC Ltd
61-63 Fortune Green Road
London
NW6 1DR

Debriefing Sheet

Middlesex University
The Burroughs
London
NW4 4BT

Title of study and academic year:

The Critical Voice; A Heuristic Enquiry into the experience of hearing a critical inner voice, to deepen our understanding of its meaning and purpose (2017).

Researcher's name and email:

Georgina Dyson-Horton; GD321@live.mdx.ac.uk

Supervisor's name and email:

Dr Charlotte Harkness; charlottekharkness@gmail.com

Thank you for your participation in this research project, it is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions about the research or if you would like a copy of the final research project you can telephone me on 07960043299 or email me at GD321@live.mdx.ac.uk.

Should anything that we have spoken about today brought up issues that you would like to explore, you may in the first instance wish to talk to friends and family, your faith community, or online help forums etc. The following agencies may also be of help:

Samaritans Jersey *(free emotional support)*
30 Hue Street, St Helier, Jersey JE2 3RE
Tel: 0845 790 9090 / 01534 725555
Email: jo@samaritans.org

Jersey Talking Therapies *(free wellbeing and psychological support)*
Referral through your GP or via MIND
www.mindjersey.org/jersey-talking-therapies

MIND Jersey *(a mental health charity that provides information and support)*
Tel: 0800 735 9404
www.mindjersey.org

Samaritans (UK) *(free emotional support)*
Tel: 116 123
Email: jo@samaritans.org
www.samaritans.org

Dilemma Consultancy *(Low Cost Psychotherapy)*
61-63 Fortune Green Road, London, NW6 1DR
Tel: 0845 557 7753
Email: admin@dilemmas.org
www.dilemmaconsultancy.org

MIND (UK) *(a mental health charity that provides information and support)*
Tel: 0300 123 3393
www.mind.org.uk

Transcription of Interview One

		Transcript
1.	R	So you have read the information and you are happy to continue?
2.	P	Yes I am
3.	R	Ok, and at any point if you wish to stop that is not a problem, just say and if you don't want me to use your participation in the research at any point, even afterwards you have the right absolutely to say "you know what I don't want you to use that", that's absolutely fine, there's no problem.
4.	P	Ok, that's fine
5.	R	OK, if the questions aren't what you feel you want to say, if you want to say something in addition to the questions, or get rid of the questions that's fine, it's for you to say what is important to you. The questions are a guide.
6.	P	Ok
7.	R	Ok so the first question I have got is "are you aware of any critical element to your thoughts and inner speech?"
8.	P	Erm **yes** I am. Far, far less than previously.
9.	R	What do you mean previously?
10.	P	Erm, just a few years ago it was, it was pretty much constant, you know. That inner voice that was very definitely my brain, my ego constantly second guessing my decisions and constantly being criticising and being convinced that nothing would work out as it should. Erm, that's very definitely tailed off large amount in the last few years
11.	R	Mm, that's interesting. Do you, I don't know if this is going off topic but I'm intrigued also to find out if there is any reason that might have tailed off, or any awareness you have got around that?
12.	P	Erm, very much so, I have been working a great deal in the last 10 years possibly a little longer now with plant medicines
13.	R	Mhm
14.	P	and erm, the old traditions, not just the medicines but something called vision quest and something called the Sundance but very much included in that are these plant medicines that are taken in ceremonial circumstances that can teach us huge amounts about ourselves about what our motives are, why we do things, erm how, why it is that we react to things, what it is we really think of ourselves and give us the possibility to see that actually that's, erm, its, it's just wrong is probably the best way I can describe it, erm,
15.	R	What's just wrong?
16.	P	The, the way we carry our thoughts if we can change the way we carry our thoughts this is possibly the way the medicine works, helps us to recognise our thoughts and we have to go very deeply into our own shadow side, into our own darkness to do that, erm, but then the medicines will show us how we're thinking, what we're thinking and allow us to see that those thought processes are extremely disruptive for us, for our wellbeing and for our daily lives and eventually for people surrounding us. Erm,
17.	R	Mmm
18.	P	And we're shown also erm, how it feels to live and you know, call me a hippie, this isn't hippie talk, but how it **feels** to live in unconditional love and erm, acceptance.
19.	R	**Mmm** so that kind of love, and that feeling of unconditional acceptance, am I jumping in here but does that help you to deal with the shadow side and the negative inner speech?
20.	P	**Absolutely**. Erm, one of the things these medicines will do is show us erm, an if you like give us new tools to work with (sniffs) to be able to break those patterns
21.	R	Mmm
22.	P	It's what it's all about, it's about breaking those patterns.
23.	R	Ok

24. P Erm
25. R Oh that sounds fascinating … it sounds right up this … this street of
26. P Mmm
27. R Research as well, and I'm wondering if we've got enough time to really go into some of that, so let's see (looking down at my questions). Erm, ok, I wonder if you could describe to me, what it's like to have the critical thoughts and the critical inner speech, erm, you know is it directed, was it directed towards yourself
28. P (takes a sharp inhale as if ready to speak)
29. R or to other people?
30. P Towards myself **and** other people
31. R Ok
32. P Erm
33. R And what was it like?
34. P Oh (breaths out) … unpleasant (looks directly at me) erm, counterproductive, erm, I don't know if I've ever actually looked into **what it was like** (said distinctly and vision goes inward as if inward looking) because it's something that is around err, **certainly** for me it began when I was a child, in fact I have a very distinct memory of being, I don't know maybe 7 or 8 and my family life was incredibly dysfunctional, my parents were arguing and I was lying in bed (said with a croaky voice) and **very clearly** the thought came to me "this is my fault, if I wasn't here … they wouldn't be arguing". And so (said with a croaky voice) I figured that (voice rising in crescendo) you know that's my first very **clear** (said clearly and at the same pitch) memory of … self-criticism
35. R Mmm
36. P And self-**doubt**, I mean yeah, I know that that's what children **do** when then don't know how to erm, … don't understand what's happening around them with the adults that they trust the most you know, that they take it inwards (points to chest) erm, but erm, I'm very certain that that thought process was occurring previous to that, erm so it's something that was always **there** really ...
37. R Something that happens in childhood like a **natural** sort of … understanding of the childs mind.
38. P Erm, but that critical voice was always there from a very young age.
39. R Mmm
40. P And so it was just part and parcel of who I was
41. R Mmm (said emphatically)
42. P Erm, I remember someone telling me when I was **18** erm, "oh my god *****you're far too **young** to be so **cynical**". (inhales) erm, I was quite **shocked** by that, "oh **really** am I that cynical?" (laughs) **I had no idea!** It was, erm, … but it, it just, I was unhappy anyway and it **just** as these things do create the vicious circle of more and more and more unhappiness piling on because if you are unhappy erm, and you've got that critical inner voice then you're, you know, you're blaming yourself for your unhappiness and for the things that go wrong, or you're blaming other people i**n your** head.
43. R Mmm
44. P Because you know, a lot of the time we can't, erm, … we don't accept responsibility for what we're actually creating ourselves and so we project it outwards and blame other people.
45. R Mm
46. P Even though we're incapable of voicing that and discussing it and understanding more.
47. R Mmm
48. P Erm
49. R So that kind of links in with what you said earlier, it's you know, you kind of have no awareness that you **were** being cynical all the time and you said that also you, you haven't really looked into it much, so its more sort of like a, a thing that happens around you without sort of unpicking it.

50. P **Yeah** its, its, it's just not being aware enough of your own erm, of ,of what's going on in your own head
51. R Mm
52. P And of course **then** you know, in **my** case erm, I fell very deeply into drugs and alcohol erm, and you know, **many** times have woken up the next day **or** the day after and … felt what I can only say is really shitty and blaming **myself** because "oh no I did that again" and it's made me feel even worse and blah blah blah, you know that constant story we've got going on in our head.
53. R So that becomes a spiral?
54. P Well yeah, because you know once again you've given yourself a hard **time** and then you spend, you know, 2 or 3 days getting over the fact that you actually physically and mentally because these things affect us and feel really horrible erm, and then you know you wake up one day and go "oh I feel better now" erm, and then its "I can go and have some fun" and you do it all again.
55. R Mmm … so my next question I think you've already dealt with, you gave me an example of erm, when you kind of had that **awareness** erm, and also I'm intrigued cause you, you call it a voice as I call it a voice but I don't know if everyone else has that same thing, is it anything, is it just a voice or is it something else?
56. P (pause, inhales) it's a feeling that comes with it as well
57. R It's a feeling?
58. P Its connected to a feeling to an emotion
59. R Can you describe that feeling?
60. P Erm, very negative obviously, erm … its its like backed up, don't know what comes first the chicken or the egg, the feeling or the thought, you know, but one is backing up the other
61. R Mmm
62. P Basically so, whatever I was thinking that was negative about myself erm, was either followed or proceeded by the **feeling** (laughs) that, you know, I am worthless.
63. R Did you feel it, was it a, I don't want to put words into your mouth but, feelings … we kind of know what they are but I don't know if it's possible to **describe** it, is it a bodily feeling, is it a thoughty feeling, is it sort of a, what is it to you?
64. P Erm, I would say at the time it was definitely more of a **sensation**
65. R Ok
66. P Than a physical manifestation erm, and if I might **add** erm, you know I have an auto-immune condition right now which I **believe** which is directly linked to that, those thoughts, those feelings that I had for **many,** many years and so finally it does manifest physically because you know, your thoughts and your feelings are part of your whole
67. R Mm
68. P And so if one or two of them are out of whack for long enough then they are going to affect the other parts as well.
69. R Mmm
70. P Erm but definitely a sensation rather than physical **at** the time.
71. R Yeah
72. P Yep
73. R I am just taking in what you have said, that's, that's quite a big thing. That sort of sensation that you are aware of and it seems now to have manifest in your condition.
74. P Well erm, I have researched this … erm and I did read a study or the results of a study that erm, x amount of people with my condition were erm, interviewed and 80% of those people erm, said yes that they'd suffered some kind of emotional trauma as a child.
75. R Mmm
76. P And as children we don't know how to deal with you know, as an adult there are outlets, you can go and talk to someone you can go and report to the police or whoever what happened, you have back up but as a **child** you know, you, you very much take it all in

77. R Mm
78. P Because you know erm, who and how do you express
79. R Mm
80. P And who do you express that to
81. R Mm
82. P Erm, so **yeah** it's there, there is you (inhales) if you're physically challenged that can be very mentally challenging and very emotionally challenging erm, and so the same goes if that table's turned and you're mentally and or emotionally challenged that it's going to give you some kind of physical challenge
83. R Mhm
84. P At some point
85. R Mmm
86. P It just makes sense (laughs) and so yeah.
(long pause)
87. R Where there any particular times I mean I guess I'm phrasing it now as in like the past I mean or, ok so let's phrase it in the present and you can link it to the past if that's appropriate, so are there any particular times when the critical element of that inner speech or that voice is more dominant or more noticeable?
88. P **Yeah** erm, pretty much so, erm, you know in the past if I did something erm, that I really didn't want to do, be it because you know I was under the influence of drugs or alcohol or you know if I just, for whatever reason erm, then I would give myself a double hard time, and it would leave me feeling far worse er, for example erm, you know having sex with an extremely inappropriate man erm, would leave me feeling far worse and therefore criticising myself even more.
89. R Mhm
90. P Erm, **now** as I say it's, it's so much quieter, **so much** quieter erm, and I'm able now to just change it
91. R Mm
92. P You know but, if I wake up in the morning and I'm in a particular amount of **pain** or you know there are times when I get frustrated with my **healing**, my physical healing process erm, then it can come out.
93. R Ok
94. P "oh this isn't going to work, you're wasting your time blah blah blah" erm, it happened to me this morning actually
95. R Mhm?
96. P Erm, there was a brief moment of err, "you're never going to get better (said with a cynical, sarcastic tone)" you know, erm, but now as I said previously erm, I'm pretty much able to, to change that, just stop it in its tracks and go "actually, you know, I can look at the day through **your** eyes" (laughs) or I can actually look at the day and go "wow! Anything's possible today" or "today could be full of **love**" or "I've got another day to do this in" or whatever it is it take and change it around.
97. R So you're looking at different possibilities rather than going "I'm **not** going to think like that, I'm going to think you know", that sort of more fighting talk of "I'm going to be positive" so for you it's around
98. P **Yeah** (said emphatically but uncertainly) erm, just you know, switching that thought off before it can really do too much damage .
99. R Mmm
100. P Erm
101. R When you were describing you know, how you were listening to the, the that voice saying "oh this is not going to work, it's all rubbish" erm, when you described how you can change the thought if that's the right way of putting it, you described a way of looking at different opportunities or possibilities, "it **could** be like that, or it could be like this" so it seems a gentle approach.

102. P Yeah I mean I don't necessarily always give myself you know, those possibilities but I do erm, make a conscious decision to focus erm, to decide to focus on at least one of those possibilities.
103. R Ok
104. P I can't remember what it was this morning, you know I was stood at the window of my room and the voice came along and said "you know this is never going to stop hurting" and erm, literally just, well actually I can look at it like that **or** I can look out this window and see what a lovely day it is out there and I can move through the day feeling positive
105. R Yeah
106. P **Or** you know "not interested in you go away" (laughs)
107. R So did you, there wasn't a dialogue involved, or has there ever been dialogue involved?
108. P Errrm, I think the dialogue probably began, because you know I before I just accepted it, I really, really did think I was completely worthless
109. R Mmm
110. P For a very, very, very long time, erm, and I think the dialogue possibly began when I started changing that, erm
111. R When you started changing?
112. P That though pattern, that that thought stroke feeling self-criticism erm, because then of course you know you understand, I mean, in in part erm, what started happening was that I had just started feeling better, I just started feeling better about myself and feeling more positive
113. R Mmm
114. P Erm, and that was just like "oh! Oh wow!" I don't, and I don't know if it's you know, there are many things that I do that are conscious
115. R Mmm
116. P But there was some part of my being going "wow look at that, oh this actually feels way better"
117. R You glimpsed a different, you know
118. P **Yeah** you know over time it gets stronger and erm, … and, and you can concentrate more on that than you know, the, the, the feeling bad about yourself erm, and so erm, **then** maybe there's dialogue like there was this morning I mean it was very definite though dialogue going on
119. R Mhm
120. P You know "oh this is never going to get any better" well actually I could look at it like that all day or I could see the beauty in the day, you know those may not be those exact words but that was the dialogue that I had this morning and so maybe when I started feeling better about myself, and learning more about my own strengths and just how capable I am and you know what **we** at the time it was very much what **I** am capable **of** erm, … then yeah I think you know you have to bring in the other voice as if to shut that one up
121. R Right
122. P Or to at least start going "well actually you might be wrong" and I don't necessarily erm, cause you don't really you know, concentrate too much (laughs) on what you're saying to yourself all the time
123. R Mm
124. P Erm, but yeah, I'm sure there must have been, I mean as I say you know I did it this morning, so yeah
125. R It sort of just happened, and that was it, you were aware of this, this sort of, these different options and, and that feeling. So that's …
126. P Mmm (pause)
127. R Do you think the critical voice serves a function or a purpose?
128. P Yeeaahh (said hesitantly) depending on how It's used, I mean initially you know the purpose that it serves is, is that whole ego thing of, you know, wanting to make yourself feel worse. And so you know it serves a purpose because it's constantly reinforcing the

fact that you're worthless, the fact that you can't do anything, the fact that everything will fail, erm, then maybe at some point erm, this is really interesting because I have never considered any of this, may be at some point it does serve a purpose in as much as erm, if you can learn, so I don't think it every truly goes away

129. R Mmm

130. P But if you can learn to work with it (said hesitantly as if thinking it out whilst speaking) erm, it can actually stop you doing some really stupid things (laughs) but you just need to recognise erm, you know when there might be an element of truth to what it's saying, or whether it's just giving you the same old garbage as it's been giving you

131. R Mmm

132. P It's a very easy trap to fall into, very fine line, I think attentiveness (inhales) is very necessary with that

133. R Mmm, cause you said a few things there and I'm trying to think, the first thing that you said, erm was that it, the purpose was to make you feel worse and I was wondering what you meant by that and what purpose that would serve, why it would want to make you feel worse, and you also said that erm, … being attentive! I was being attentive! (laughs)

134. P Well maybe you will remember, how about I answer that first part? Errm, yeah I mean you know, when you don't feel good about yourself, and when everything that basically you've lived up to date says (pause) "I'm worthless"

135. R Mm

136. P Erm, then you know it's the mind is so, I mean the mind is the ego really at the end of the day and the ego feeds off of erm, negative thoughts I guess, and if you feel worthless then, you know you've got no positive to fall back on and so of course you know it's about just creating erm, I mean all, everything about you is just going to scream "I'm worthless"

137. R Mmm

138. P Including your brain and your emotions

139. R Mmm, so if you were to follow that path down to wherever it would go, where would that leave you?

140. P Personally?

141. R Mmm

142. P I would either erm, probably be an alcoholic or in a psychiatric unit or dead.

143. R Mm, and I am intrigued as to why not, because that goes back to what you were saying perhaps earlier on?

144. P I'm not because erm, and I, I reiterate the work that I have done and continue to do with plant medicines

145. R Mm

146. P And the teaching behind them.

147. R Mm, so at some point you developed that feeling of "Well actually I feel good today"

148. P Yeah

149. R And I wonder where that came from?

150. P Yeah you, you know you go to ceremony erm, and the certainly the first ceremonies that I went to erm, this is a **whole other** kettle of fish going on her (voice rises and falls) erm, there's really a lot more explanation needs to be done (inhales) erm, but erm, you go to ceremony and the first few ceremonies that I went to certainly I would spend the entire day talking myself out of going erm, and then I would **go** and it's really, you know, the **first** things you have to do is confront yourself.

151. R Mmm

152. P And the hardest thing to do in the world is confront ourselves

153. R Mm

154. P Because it's terrifying … to have to see what's really, really truly going on, erm, and you have a **really, really** uncomfortable night, it can be very frightening, erm, but the next

day or the day after you're going "wow!" ha (said in a surprised way) "I'm smiling, I feel **good**, I feel lighter, I feel …"

155. R So by confronting yourself, and seeing your shadow side …
156. P Absolutely, yeah
157. R … you came out the other side, or for a part of the time
158. P Yeah, I mean initially it was you know, I guess a more sporadic relief, erm, and then it just becomes more constant
159. R Mmm
160. P And of course you know, the more you do this then the more … the more your thoughts and emotions have an opportunity to … not necessarily reinvent themselves but to go back to source, and when I say go back to source it's going back to you know, that possibility that you had when you were first born, or when you were first conceived
161. R Right, so … reinventing yourself is not quite the right thing but it's … redressing a balance (said tentatively)
162. P Yes!
163. R Yeah … another opportunity
164. P Yuh
165. R Mmm
166. P It opens that door, very much to just being able to see the other side
167. R Mmm
168. P And go "oh! It's rather pleasant over there!" (laughs)
169. R So glimpsing a different kind reality
170. P Yeah
171. R than the one that you've been living
172. P And then of course wanting it
173. R Wanting it, and that
174. P And that spurs you on! (said with gusto)
175. R Right
176. P To go to more ceremonies, and
177. R Right
178. P And you know, erm, and also it's not constant, constant, constant suffering, those first times, erm, and the suffering that we're **feeling** during those moments is actually erm, nothing **more**, it's not new suffering, its suffering that we've been carrying around with us for years and years and years and years
179. R Mm
180. P Erm, and erm, that suffering you know it has to come out, we gotta just remove it because otherwise it's just going to sit there and fester
181. R Mm
182. P And er, I've lost track a little bit actually (laughs) on what I was saying
183. R And I think I was thinking, you know, I know we were talking about ceremonies, but I was also thinking of how it seems to be parallel with the critical voice, you know, the suffering in the head, and seeing when you spoke first of all about seeing, actually feeling a bit better about yourself and thinking "well actually this is quite nice, yeah, I'm alright" and er, and that gave you the motivation so there was a parallel of, of it seemed to me of what you were discussing with the two subjects
184. P Yeah, errm, … sorry I'm not sure I understand now
185. R Ok, so firstly we were talking about the critical voice and erm how it made you feel worthless but then you felt better and you felt "oh, that's quite nice" and then we were talking about being in ceremony and the suffering but also about feeling a lot better afterwards, so like as if there was a cleansing element to it, erm but they seem to be the same …
186. P Yeah! Well I think they come hand in hand
187. R … journey I think

188. P You know that critical voice **is** the suffering that we've been living for years and years and years and years and building up
189. R Mmm
190. P And so I guess in a way when we go to ceremony erm, and we start to feel that suffering that we've got inside, what we're feeling is that critical voice, it's the emotion connected to the thought
191. R Mmm, mmm
192. P And so yeah, you know on that level that's very parallel because once you've seen and recognised something then you can really start working on how to fix it, it's like a car that breaks down and you know, you know you kind of go "ooh, what's wrong with my car?" and then you have a look at it and go "oh it's the brakes or the piston or the axel" or whatever it is, once you can see what's wrong with it you know how to fix it
193. R Mmm
194. P You know you just need to gather the tools
195. R Mmm
196. P To do that and it's the same, and so, yeah going through that suffering in ceremony and then you know, getting glimpses or thoughts that are like "oh actually this is really nice" it is, it is a part of … the critical voice being turned around.
197. R Mmm (long pause while I look at my next question) so what do you, erm I guess the last question is what do you make of your the questions don't quite fit really with the way that our conversation's going
198. P Mhm
199. R Because we have been sort of like jumping, well not jumping about, but naturally progressing onto different things (inhales) so … I wonder if you could say just a little bit more about erm, in terms of the critical voice erm, did it help you, or hinder you, or remain, did you remain indifferent at any time towards it?
200. P Certainly not when it was at its strongest, certainly not before I erm, began my healing process, erm, I believed every word it told me
201. R Did you?
202. P Pretty much. And you know I might have just kind of gone "that is not true! I am worth, I have worth" but I didn't actually truly believe it.
203. R So, having a dialogue with it at that point just was basically just words, you couldn't actually fight back
204. P Yeah, I mean I had all the things up on the mirror that I could see "you are, I am a wonderful person blah blah blah" and that **can** work, and it **can** help erm, but it's not enough
205. R You didn't feel it?
206. P It's nowhere near enough
207. R Right
208. P Because you know by that time, that critical voice is so **powerful** erm, that you know, a few positive words, they kind of help, you kind of, plus you know I mean that's, we take it in intellectually, there's a great deal that we take in intellectually that doesn't actually hit home in our emotions, in our hearts
209. R Mmm, mmm
210. P Erm, and that's when you need to really, really work for the changes because while we know it, on an intellectual level, erm, we still don't really know it
211. R We don't feel it
212. P We don't **know** it until we feel it
213. R Yeah
214. P You know, so sitting and intellectually saying "yeah well I understand this and I know I'm a really good person and blah blah blah" while you're actually cut off from your heart to your head, that's not going to work. (gestures with her forearm positioned horizontally below her chest)

215. R Mmm. Interesting you put your hand below your heart when you said that
216. P Err, yeah
217. R And I wondered if there was any, was it because you were basically because of your guts, and your …
218. P Maybe, I always think of my heart being there (gestures to her chest) (we both laugh)
219. R That's more your stomach?
220. P Err no your hearts kind of underneath your breast isn't it?
221. R Yeah I suppose so, ok.
222. P Kind of
223. R No that's absolutely fine I just thought it was subconscious thing (she had told me outside of the session that she had a leaky gut)
224. P Maybe! Erm, yeah I always feel the heart just at the bottom of my breast
225. R Oh ok
226. P Which you know, erm, the heart's very connected to the gut so maybe I'm just feeling it closer
227. R Mmm, mmm
228. P Don't know
229. R And so you mentioned that your feelings towards your critical voice has changed over time, erm, I mean what do you make of it now?
230. P Oh ego's lost **so** much power (said quietly)
231. R Mmm
232. P Ermmm, what it can tend to do if I let it is still, I mean on an inner level, you know obviously we are human beings, we all get moments where we are just not necessarily looking at ourselves in the best possible way but possibly what, yeah no, there is no possibly about it, if I'm being very honest erm, it can project out and criticise other people erm, nowhere **near** … as much as it did but erm, I think because it's easier to hear ourselves judging others and criticising others than doing that for ourselves, erm, then it's possibly mmm, you know more work to be able to stop that in its tracks immediately whenever it happens, erm, once again that goes back to being attentive
233. R Mmm, do you mean erm, that you know, we, it's easier to be critical to others because that way we don't have to stop and attend to our own
234. P Well, while we're paying attention to other people and their, you know, shortcomings then giving ourselves a break
235. R Giving ourselves a break?
236. P Mmm
237. R Right
238. P Mmm
239. R So maybe there is a function in that, you know there is a purpose
240. P Yeah
241. R Its actually to give ourselves a break?
242. P Maybe
243. R To not be so harsh on ourselves
244. P Maybe
245. R Yeah, I hadn't thought
246. P Blame them! (laughs) trouble is of course that you know, when we do that then erm, … then we're projecting that to them and we're all capable of picking up on stuff like that
247. R Mmm
248. P Erm
249. R So it kind of maybe gives you, do you think it might give you a little bolster "hey I'm alright, it's them that's wrong!"
250. P Oh absolutely! Yes "oh look at the state of them! Least that is not me!" you know you're kind of being a bit self-righteous almost in that.

251. R (laughs) it's interesting because when it's projected out its like "hey I feel better about myself" but if you projected it, if it's inwards towards yourself there's a different sensation
252. P Oh yeah, you feel far worse about yourself, for sure, for sure. Erm, yeah it's work, it's constant work, it's daily attention to your thoughts, erm, and your feelings, how I'm feeling
253. R What's my feelings, yeah
254. P Yeah, yeah, which is particularly difficult when you're extremely empathic (laughs) half the time you're not sure whether it's your feeling or someone elses (laughs)
255. R That's a really interesting topic and I'd love to talk about that but I'm aware that the time is coming to a close. Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you feel, you know, is is there to be spoken about?
256. P (pause) not really. **One** thing springs to mind actually that erm, I found, it's a book erm, er it's a book by Eckhart Tolle "New Earth" and that was one of my life changers, you know in as much as books can completely change your perspective, um but what he says in that erm, initially he talks about it through the book, throughout the book you know, he talks about pain bodies, he calls them pain bodies, and he says you know, erm not only are we, do we have our own personal pain body which is another way of absolutely describing the critical voice, erm, but we also inherit pain bodies from or parents, from you know our grandparents, we've got racial pain bodies, we've got you know, women's pain bodies and men's pain bodies and then we've got national pain bodies etc, etc. erm, so yeah. I know here we're dealing with you know, personal … critical inner voice but it just occurred to me that that book came into my head because it's very much touching on this.
257. R And it also links in with what you said as well previously, is that there's this sense that there is a connectiveness so, it's, when you said erm, "I'm not sure if my feeling is my own or somebody else's, I'm picking it up" that suggests an interconnectedness
258. P Mmm
259. R Which also might be what Eckhart Tolle is talking about?
260. P Mhm
261. R That you know
262. P Yeah absolutely (inhales) erm, I believe that we actually start picking things up in the womb
263. R Mmm
264. P From our mother, errm, and then you know, obviously as we're growing up with our parents erm, we're just picking up, we're just sponging in information from them all the time, so if their life is running on a negative course then we're just going to be picking all that up. Erm,
265. R It (said hesitantly) begs the question of this "is it your own critical voice or is it a shared critical voice?"
266. P Mmm
267. R Which takes a different tangent
268. P That's yeah, that's completely different, erm, … **yeah** I erm, it is our own critical voice because it's us talking to ourselves, erm, but yes maybe it's our own critical voice erm, that is responding to … you know what we've picked up from others
269. R Mmm fascinating
270. P Mmm, I could do this for hours! (laughs)
271. R Ok, well it's almost half past twelve (participant was being picked up at half past twelve)
272. P Mmm
273. R And it would be great to talk a lot more but I know you've got another meeting
274. P Yes
275. R Thank you **so** much
276. P Oh it's a pleasure

Transcription of Interview Two

R 1. So you have signed the written informed consent?
P 2. Mhm
R 3. Are you happy to proceed?
P 4. Very happy
R 5. If at any point you wish to stop just say stop
P 6. Ok
R 7. If at any point you wish to say "do you know what, I have changed my mind and I don't want to carry on please don't use my data …
P 8. Mhm
R 9. … that's not a problem at all, you just let me know
P 10. Ok
R 11. And that goes for afterwards as well, erm, and I've got some information just for the end as well just to take away with you about the research, and afterwards if you have got any questions about the research just let me know
P 12. Mhm
R 13. Erm, ok
P 14. Alright
R 15. Erm, so, are you aware of a critical element to your thoughts and inner speech?
P 16. **Very** much so
R 17. Ok
P 18. Definitely I'd say it's one of my main personality traits
R 19. Ok, can you tell me some more about that?
P 20. Very self-critical, very erm, very negative, erm, very demeaning, erm very harsh voice, erm, and the, it's that voice that's, it's never good enough voice, yeah, yeah
R 21. Is that there all the time or, at certain points?
P 22. All the time
R 23. All the time?
P 24. I manage to keep it erm, kind of to, calm it down at times when I'm feeling stronger but otherwise it is always there like a burning feeling
R 25. Burning feeling
P 26. yup, yup, yup
R 27. Ok, erm, so there's no particular points where it comes out more, or less, or anything like that?
P 28. Well, erm professionally definitely, erm and in my relationships, erm it's a critical voice in the sense that its always second guessing everything
R 29. Ok
P 30. Erm, it feeds, or has been part of, or is a **symptom** of my anxiety, I have an anxiety erm, disorder, erm that was only diagnosed a year ago, erm, and I know that that is part of what fuels that anxiety
R 31. Ok
P 32. Definitely, yep
R 33. Would you be able to say some more about that?
P 34. About the anxiety disorder?
R 35. Mhm
P 36. Erm, well …
R 37. Or the fuelling of it?

P 38. Yeah, erm, I've always had that critical voice inside of me from my upbringing as a child, erm, it was always like, my father would always be with one of the paintings it was always never like 'ooh that's very nice' it was always like 'ooh well you should have made your sun a bit more yellow' kind of thing and so from that, that critical voice has always been there, I've always ever known that judging voice inside me, erm

R 39. So you say it came from, you heard it from your father

P 40. Yup

R 41. And you hear it inside you

P 42. Yes

R 43. What do you think, can you say some more, so how did that get inside?

P 44. Well I know it started very early erm, I know it's a personality trait, definitely but it's something that has become erm, incapacitating, that voice, that critical voice inside, erm, it will stop me from erm, from going forward from erm, completing tasks

R 45. Ok

P 46. From succeeding, from feeling satisfaction in what I've done

R 47. Hmm

P 48. It will eat away at my daily life erm, yeah

R 49. So does it stop you from undertaking any task or do you start undertaking a task and then it sort of stops you

P 50. Both, its **definitely** both, erm, the critical voice will be um, saying things like 'you'll never manage, you'll never make it, don't even start, it's too big a task' and it will also come in all of a sudden hit me even though something is going great, say I've got a project on the go, it will always creep back, although even all the signs are really positive that voice will always come back and, and be like, 'who do you think you're bluffing' and, and that kind of, of effect. Yeah.

R 51. And how to you deal with that?

P 52. Err, with difficulty to be honest, yes. Erm, its, it's, it's a **very harsh voice**, I through, through years of therapy and self-therapy as well from **reading** a lot erm, on the (pause) and how should I say erm, psychological states I've been through erm, I've, I've, I always come back to reading that you need to learn to self-care and be gentle with yourself, look after yourself. I have no idea how to do that. Apart from self-**soothing** as in overeating, you know things like that or, locking myself away just to be alone at home and quiet and not answering the phone, apart from that kind of self-soothing, I don't know what it is to be **gentle** with myself.

R 53. Ok

P 54. Because that voice is always, always there

R 55. Ok

P 56. Erm, it's the old exercise of 'well if you were (pause) to hear someone else say that to someone

R 57. Yeah

P 58. Not to yourself but to someone else, would you find that normal? and **no** definitely not, I mean it would be even very, quite violent at times, erm it would be totally unacceptable to see that happening to someone else, but to **myself** its (pause) not something that I even know how to change.

R 59. Mhm

P 60. Its, it's always been there, it's like a fundamental part of me

R 61. Mmm, so you've not known how to change it, er it's always been there and, (pause) it's something that you feel difficult to cope with

P 62. Yeah, yeah it does affect my mood, it does affect my mental state, my mental health, erm, its, its, it means that there's an **enormous** amount of self-doubt, of lack of confidence, um, of second guessing, of doubting my judgement and my beliefs and my values, erm, it all comes back to that voice

R 63. Mmm

P 64. To that, that, it, I know it's coming from **me** but in a way it's as though it **wasn't me**, it's something **inside me** that's, that's like, like a parasitic worm that's there

R 65. A what sorry? [I didn't hear what she said]

P 66. A parasitic worm (laughs)

R 67. Oh ok

P 68. You don't want it here, you didn't ask for it, but it's there and its, its part of you but it's not you, because I'm someone who's naturally at the base someone who's very bubbly, happy, erm, but that force is always there inside me, yeah.

R 69. So it's kind of a part of you but its, it's not who you feel you are

P 70. Yuh exactly, but it has become **me**

R 71. But it's become you? [said hesitantly]

P 72. Yuh

R 73. Ok

P 74. Definitely, erm, it's very much a trait personality as well in the sense that erm, now I'm going to touch on a few subjects that you might not be open to, or, or, you know, not everyone understands but I grew up with a mother who did astrology as a profession and so erm, it has been recognised different traits of personality and I'm very much so a Virgo. A Virgo is self-critical.

R 75. Ok

P 76. Erm, a Virgo can be erm, have a crazy side and have a very down to earth, and I'm definitely both

R 77. Mm

P 78. But that self-critical side of the personality is definitely **part** of me but it's not **me.** It's, it's difficult to really kind of express that, get that across, how, how, how that feeling is **strange**, it's, it is **part** of me but it's not **me**, you see, that, that, it's just really subtle.

R 79. Yep. (pause) Ok. So, I'm trying to think about how that might **be**, that sort of 'it's **part** of me but it's not **me**'. Is it two sides of the same thing, is it erm, part of whole?

P 80. I'm a perfectionist

R 81. Ok

P 82. And I think that's linked in with it in a way. I don't know which one came **first**, but I'm a perfectionist in everything I do, in the quality of my work, in my expectations from other people and from myself, erm and I don't know if it's the perfectionism that came first or if it's that critical voice that came first

R 83. Ok

P 84. It's erm, it's definitely linked, erm

R 85. Do they have to come first, is that something that you think is

P 86. It's a bit the chicken and the egg kind of situation I think, erm because (pause) perfectionism is (pause) can be a positive but it's always, it's also err, very difficult to live with

R 87. Mm
P 88. Erm, it leads you to always, erm, judge your output, whatever that output is.
R 89. Yuh, so shall we explore both of those sides? So you said it can be a good thing and it can be um, not a good thing.
P 90. Mhm
R 91. Would you like to explore the good thing first and then we can explore the not good thing
P 92. Yuh, well erm, the perfectionism in a way for me has been very good because it's made me very good at my job, erm, I very often became the go-to person because of my level of quality work, my level of adherence to procedures, erm to expectations, erm, my striving for the, the best output, fastest, best quality, the, the, the quality of, of my work and one's work is really important for me, it's kind of like a, a, it's really a value and so, that perfectionism has helped me to give the best that I **can**, and to often be better than other people erm, again we're not talking sport exploits and things like that, not at all but more kind of like on like, erm, presentations, anything that's public you know, like proper documents and things like that. Erm but that does come at a price.
R 93. Ok
P 94. Erm
R 95. So what is that price?
P 96. Because it's, it's never good enough, what you've done
R 97. So you're judging
P 98. You can always do more. Yeah.
R 99. Ok, do other people judge you, that it's not good enough?
P 100. Some have, yeah, and that creates even more pressure.
R 101. Ok
P 102. Erm, it's really a striving force to always give the best so that comes at a moral and nervous cost as well physically
R 103. A moral and nervous
P 104. Yeah, erm, I have put myself under a lot of pressure erm, and sometimes out of proportion because it, it's, erm, you don't need to be 100% perfect every time.
R 105. Mhm
P 106. On everything, sometimes 80% is enough.
R 107. So where is this other, it's almost like this other voice is coming in now saying 'you don't need to be perfect'
P 108. Mm
R 109. But that's at a juxtaposition to the 'you have to be perfect'
P 110. Well the voice saying 'you don't need to be perfect' is me trying to get better (laughs) trying to let got a bit of that perfectionism, trying to heal myself and, and let go.
R 111. There's an interesting number of layers to this isn't there
P 112. Yes, yuh
R 113. Because there's the 'I need to be the **best**', there's also 'I want to improve myself, and improving myself means you don't have to be 100% you can be 80% so that's an interesting dimension going on there.
P 114. It's very much theory as opposed to being able to put it into practice.
R 115. Theory
P 116. Yuh, I **know** it would be better to be just ok with 80%.

R 117. Right
P 118. Doesn't mean I manage to put it into practice on a daily basis
R 119. Ok, so there's always that tension
P 120. Yuh
R 121. Going on, that fight going on.
P 122. Yuh, and that's where the critical voice comes in, in the sense that it says 'anything else than perfection is mediocrity'
R 123. Yes, but what does perfection mean?
P 124. Nobody's perfect, I **know** it
R 125. But what does perfection mean to you?
P 126. Erm, it's probably, it's reliability, it's constance, it's quality that doesn't let down, erm, it's I can be very judgemental towards other people if they do a what's called a half arsed job, erm, I look down on that and I know it's not a good human value, you know it's, it's, we all have our strengths, we all have our, our different values, different degrees of, of, of, of, of quality work and that does eat away at me, every day it does eat away because I know that I, you know, I need to be more compassionate, more understanding of people who are maybe **different** from me.
R 127. Do you need to?
P 128. Through that
R 129. You see I'm intrigued now to go beyond these layers as well, so, where are these ideas of perfection coming from? I mean, we are not going down the counselling route, this is purely research into what
P 130. Yep, exploring
R 131. Values, you mentioned values and ideas and I wondered where this idea of perfection, what that means to you, where that comes from.
P 132. Mmm well it just seems that perfection makes things work so easily
R 133. Ok so like a well-oiled …
P 134. Mistakes …
R 135. … sort of machine
P 136. Yuh, well-oiled machine, exactly. Erm, mistakes create delays.
R 137. Ok so there's a temporality to this
P 138. Mmm
R 139. So it's about a well-oiled machine that runs quickly (said tentatively), or on time, or without delays? What's that?
P 140. Comfortably.
R 141. Comfortably. So not too fast, not too slow.
P 142. No, because haste can, can create problems.
R 143. What is comfortably?
P 144. Erm, I think what I mean by that would be that (pause) everyone is happy with the situation, with how things are working, how things are interacting, erm, how coming back to the work situation if you do your job properly I'll be able to do my job properly, that kind of oiled machine.
R 145. Yep. And how would you know it was all working properly and everyone was happy?
P 146. There'd be no grief, there'd be no tensions, there'd be no difficulties, erm, I suppose it would get pretty boring, er because there'd be no challenges er, out of chaos there's a, a lot of things can be born, a lot of new discoveries, new interests,

erm, so again my rational mind knows all that, erm and sometimes find it hard to actually match that with that perfectionism, that strive for perfectionism. Yeah.

R 147. So what's that difference then, so you have the knowledge the theory that this is, you know, erm, of these ideas

P 148. Mm

R 149. But what's the difference erm, is it that you don't feel it's right, or is that the difference between theory and feeling 'oh I'm not quite sure what that is'.

P 150. Do you mean vis-à-vis the perfectionism that I feel it's not right?

R 151. Yes, so you've got this idea of the theory of what's right

P 152. Yep

R 153. But you also know that …

P 154. Well …

R 155. … without a, if everything was in this wonderful world of perfection, a well-oiled machine that was running comfortably and everyone was happy, and then you mentioned that there'd be no challenges

P 156. Mhm

R 157. And there'd be no erm, I got the sense that it would be, a challenge would be something to grow from, to strive towards something else.

P 158. Mmm, I think a life without spontaneity …

R 159. Ok

P 160. … can become boring for example

R 161. Right, so

P 162. If everything was perfect we'd be like on a, a factory line just doing day in day out, the same things, erm, great discoveries in science have been found through mistakes

R 163. Yep

P 164. Erm, and I think what, what really brings me to that line of thought is, is, is the realisation how much perfectionism costs me

R 165. Ok, so there's a cost to it.

P 166. Yep. Yuh, it costs me stress wise erm, confidence wise, erm, time wise, because I will find myself checking something three times, although I know perfectly well I have done it well the first time, but there's always that human error.

R 167. Mmm, that self-doubt that comes in.

P 168. Mmm. And if someone picks up a mistake I have made I take it really badly between me and me, inside myself

R 169. Ok

P 170. It's a proper let down **to** myself

R 171. Ok

P 172. And I have also found in work that if I don't **stick** to my perfectionist **approach** as in 'boom, boom, boom' check everything, everything has to be done really square and fair and perfectly well, (pause) I will sometimes make a mistake, or forget something

R 173. Mhm

P 174. And that will set me back.

R 175. Mmm

P 176. Or create issues or undermine me at work for example. So, it's in a way, it's in a way being caught up in the system of if I don't continue to be a perfectionist erm,

I'm letting myself down. It's, it's, erm, it's reflecting badly on who I am. Which is totally ridiculous.

R 177. So it's reflecting badly on who you are, and is that, and you mentioned about it being an internal stress, it is an internal sort of, erm, erm, self-berating thing that's going on

P 178. Mm

R 179. But is, and you, is that coming from external sources as well?

P 180. Both, yeah definitely. Yuh. Erm, and also coming from within **me** as to what other people might be thinking.

R 181. Ok, so

P 182. Like colleagues or managers for example

R 183. What other people might be thinking

P 184. Mmm 'oh well she made a mistake, aw, she's not perfect (inhales through pursed lips)'

R 185. So are those assumptions or are they happening?

P 186. Definitely yeah.

R 187. That they are happening in real life as well as you making the assumption?

P 188. Yup,

R 189. Ok, ok

P 190. Yup, it's that voice always saying 'of course they're looking down on you now because you made a mistake, you made an omission, an error'

R 191. And do the other people actually say 'ooh you made an error'

P 192. Mmm sometimes yeah. Well sometimes of course it's been done or even if it's just noted that I've made an error say in a document

R 193. Mhm

P 194. Um, I take it as a massive blame, a massive telling off.

R 195. So it's really huge to you?

P 196. Yeah, yeah.

R 197. Ok, so do you have an example of when you were, of when this critical voice was particularly apparent?

P 198. Erm, now, which one shall I pick (laughs) that's the thing is that erm, errrrr, I must say I'm going a bit blank at the moment on that because it's, it's kind, it, it, it becomes such a constant **state** that things just blur into each other in a way.

R 199. Ok

P 200. Erm, maybe there was a case a few months back at work where, oh yes, there we go, where I had used erm, the appraisal form that my manager had sent me and erm, I was to put it into shape to send it out to everyone because I was the office manager, and so I did so, I sent it out to everyone for them to fill in their forms, and then at the team meeting the manager said 'ah, I note that ******* didn't think to go and check if that was the latest erm, logo from our company on the paper' which it wasn't of course (last bit said in a very stern cold voice). I used the form that she sent me, I didn't go and check the staff handbook because she had sent me that. However, I still took it as my mistake. I **should** have gone and checked (sentence said quite emphatically). Now that's really a detailed, tiny little thing, but I think that, that is the most recent one that comes to mind in the sense that I do **realise** that **I've** blown it out of proportion, **she** said it jokingly in the team meeting but **I** took it, I was so embarrassed, I took it like a **failure**.

R 201. Mmm

P 202. I **should** have gone to check.
R 203. So what was going on in your head at that time?
P 204. Erm, I'm not professional, erm, I've let them down, I've let myself down, I'm not as good as I thought I was, erm, it's very much slapping myself back into, down, really kind of like 'oh you've **failed**' you know that kind of, yuh.
R 205. And so how did you **feel**?
P 206. Err, shaky, embarrassed, erm I wanted to defend myself, which would have been silly, erm I felt smaller than the others.
R 207. You said you wanted to defend yourself but that would have been silly, can you say some more about that?
P 208. It would have been silly to waste that that energy and to pick up on that comment erm, again rational mind thinking it's nothing they won't even remember in 10 minutes, erm
R 209. I'm not really sure I understand what you mean, why it would have been silly?
P 210. Well, if on the moment I had said 'yes but I used the one you sent me!' and that kind of reaction defending myself as to 'well I only did what I was told' basically, erm I would have embarrassed myself all the more.
R 211. Ok, that's one perception
P 212. Mm. And it's, and again rational mind thinking like I said 'they won't even think about it in 10 minutes' whereas if I pipe up and try and defend myself and look good and explain why (said in a pleading tone)
R 213. Mmm
P 214. **That** they'll remember, that embarrassing moment.
R 215. Because the way you've just kind of explained it there in your gestures, seemed quite erm, animated in the way that a child would want to defend themselves
P 216. Mmm, yes totally
R 217. But I am intrigued, so there might be some sort of childish erm, association …
P 218. Mm
R 219. … with this self-berating
P 220. Mhm. Going back to my father saying 'I should have made that painting a bit different'. It is that that child reaction that I do realise I still really have erm
R 221. So there is like a feeling associated with it
P 222. Yuh, yuh
R 223. And yet you also said erm, rational mind which is kind of more of a
P 224. The adult
R 225. An adult perception, well they're going to forget it in a few minutes actually there's no point
P 226. Mm
R 227. Let it go basically, that's the
P 228. So there's a number of different things going on for you at that point in time, there's sort of a dialogue, is there, are you aware of a dialogue at all?
P 229. Erm, I think it's more with reflection.
R 230. With reflection, after the event.
P 231. Yuh. So I had the child in me, the, the, the, and I call it the emotional child in me was like 'huuuh (Said with expression (sharp intake of breath) I've done wrong, I need to defend myself, I'm looking bad. And then straight away the adult in me erm, the intellect came in and said 'whoa! Hey it's not all that bad, don't make it any worse' um, and so there's always, there is always that fighting inside

R 232. Ok
P 233. Erm, and it, whichever one wins depends on how strong I'm feeling at that point in time.
R 234. Ok. And at that point in time, how did it pan out?
P 235. Well, it was very difficult because it was erm, it was actually the day we were announcing that I was leaving my job.
R 236. Ok
P 237. I, I did a err, err full blown burn out in December, erm after six months of, of nightmare of my job, erm, and we'd just come to the decision with my MD that we were just going to part ways.
R 238. Ok
P 239. So, it was all the more difficult for me because there was already a negative kind of atmosphere for me in that team and it felt as though I was just confirming their, their beliefs. **I** felt that.
R 240. I see, I see
P 241. Yeah, yeah
R 242. So that was just another thing piled on top of the
P 243. Yeah exactly, 'oh you've failed again' kind of thing, yeah, yeah.
R 244. Mmm
P 245. But that is a recurring theme in, in my life, definitely, in everything I do.
R 246. Mm
P 247. Mm
R 248. And so, how were you feeling after that event? With the event of that example that you gave me but also a feeling, what is the continual feeling, if there is one, that happens after this berating?
P 249. Erm, well it's a, a constant struggle inside me between the child and the adult, between the emotion and the rational, um, I know that I can make my life much easier (said tentatively)
R 250. Mm
P 251. If I let go if I don't get stuck on these feelings of (pause) erm, not inability, of, of, of, of erm, oh what's the word, erm, when you're not capable, when you're not erm, not professional, when you're not, oh what's the word (pause) oh it will come back to me, but erm, but I know that I will remember that event erm, next time that I am in a job and that I will be looking at branded documents.
R 252. So this is, so you are learning from that situation to do better next time and not to let that mistake happen again, is that what you are saying?
P 253. Basically, but in a much harsher way.
R 254. In a much harsher way, ok.
P 255. Yeah
R 256. So the learning is quite a harsh experience for you?
P 257. Yuh, yuh, it's like, it's like getting a beating. You remember it.
R 258. Mhm
P 259. And, and that was, **I** lived it in such a, with such a feeling of embarrassment that, it's that that's going to stay with me, not the positive of learning from your mistakes but more the 'I don't ever want to feel that again'.
R 260. I see, so it's like an avoidance of it, in a way I wonder if what the purpose was of that, if there indeed was a purpose?
P 261. Of **feeling** that?

R 262. Yeah, of you going through that experience of you criticising yourself so much?

P 263. Erm, well like I said at the beginning, I have never known life without criticising myself. Without criticising everything I do, without reviewing everything I've said after a conversation, without (pause) answering differently to situations than I did on the moment. Erm, all that second you know, second judging, all that err, doubting, erm, 'ooh I could have done that better, I could have negotiated that better' erm, I've never known a life, maybe when I was six but from the age of, I'd say, the age of eight, that's when everything started, erm, I've never known peace basically.

R 264. You've never known peace

P 265. Mm, mmm, mm, inside.

R 266. Ok

P 267. Yeah, yeah. And I suppose it comes with the age of reason, I don't know if that's really it but I know for me it started when I was eight. Yeah.

R 268. That's quite a significant point in time, for you.

P 269. It's, it's very, I, I've done a lot of work and it's, it's, it's actually linked to when my parents split up

R 270. Ok

P 271. And that was the start of four years of a terrible divorce, erm, and so I, I, that's why I know when it started

R 272. Ok

P 273. That's when erm, the fear started, when the anxiety started, erm, when the, the perfectionism started, erm, when the need to **please** started, because you're torn between two parents, both of them trying to brainwash you, erm, so it, it **was** really a mind constricting time and so that's why it's so clear, that's why I know how and when it started, I know the situations erm, I was very carefree before that, erm, and from the age of eight I started living in a paradise lost environment, erm

R 274. Mm

P 275. And so, I was always being criticised for being (pause whilst she inhales slowly) too much like my mother, like we're talking difficult divorce, so too much like my mother, I was too much this, too much that, not enough this, erm, and but at the same time I **had** to be like my mother because she had no-one else in the, in her world, she was a foreigner in Jersey, she was ***** and Jersey, so it, it's all these, these effects that really compounded that, that, that feeling from, from that age. Yuh and, and I suppose, the voice got harsh, got worse and worse with age, but I'd say with the teenage years yeah definitely. Those difficult years. Yeah. Yeah.

R 276. It seems like it has had quite a bit impact on you.

P 277. Yeah. Yeah. Oh gosh yeah (laughs) yeah, but that's why I, I realised when I saw your, your subject come up I realised that, well if there's one person who can talk about critical voice definitely, you know, and I, I don't know if I'm doing a very good job in explaining but I know that definitely that is part of my makeup basically. Yuh. Yup.

R 278. Ok. (pause) um, so we talked a little bit earlier on about this erm, how the effect that it has on you, and how it affects your thinking and your behaviour, um, do you think it serves a function or a purpose? This sort of self-berating, this critical voice?

P 279. I'd like to think that it makes me better.

R 280. You'd like to think it makes you better?

P 281. That it (pause) makes me strive to give better, or more, but more in the good sense, to, that it pushes me to connect with what I, with my full abilities rather than maybe be a bit lenient or, or, or lazy with, you know, my, my, my daily way of being, erm

R 282. So what do you think your full abilities are?

P 283. Erm, I th.. hm. Apparently I was a child who was very bright, very advanced, errrrrooo, they got me doing IQ tests and things like that, at, at one point, I don't, I can't remember but apparently I was, I was pretty good. Erm, but I went through so much trauma in my younger years that I, I'm now kind of like held back by all these traumas and it's a question of potential, in the sense that I, I believe that I, again maybe it's, it's, it's my, my self-doubt, but I believe that I have a great potential, erm, and that through life's experiences I have been knocked down quite a lot, erm, and that with that critical voice it's maybe somewhere that little potential inside me saying 'you're worth better than this, you know you can do much more'

P 284. Mmm, so you have this sense that you could be so much better, you could be doing so much more

P 285. Yeah

P 286. But through your experiences you've not been able to develop that potential.

P 287. Mmm, yeah, yeah.

P 288. Mmm, gosh that sounds quite amazing!

P 289. In which sense amazing? (laughing)

R 290. In the sense that, that sounds hopeful

P 291. Yeah (said hesitantly)

R 292. That you have, because if, if, because you're not saying 'I can't do it, I'm no good' in a way, in that, you know if you're saying 'I think I can do better, I've got a sense that I can do, I can achieve so much more than I'm doing'

P 293. I've always actually, it's interesting to hear that because I, I am someone who at certain points in my life has lost all hope, actually lost all hope, erm, **really**, not just feeling down, actually lost hope, erm, and (pause) knowing I had that potential has always been more of a burden.

R 294. In what way?

P 295. I was the seventh wonder in my parent's eyes, erm, I was destined for great things in a way, erm, I was always given the **best gear**, straight away all the whole gear for oil painting when I barely did water colours, you know it was always I had that potential erm, and that kind of made it harder

R 296. Ok

P 297. For me. As in you've gotta, you've gotta perform straight away, you've gotta perform rather than building those blocks, those stages of, of, I was going to say mediocrity but I know that's harsh but, you know, of building your skills, of building your abilities, your knowledge and all that and getting to that point where your potential can actually express itself.

R 298. Ok

P 299. Erm, it was more of a trip up, more of a hindrance

R 300. So when you said 'I believe I can do better, or, or, I can't remember your exact words

P 301. Mm

R 302. Was that a reference to 'I'm expected to do better by my parents, or was that a reference to you genuinely feel 'actually I really think I can'?
P 303. I think deep down in me I have, I'd be tempted to say had (pause) the potential inside me, I was born with that potential.
R 304. Ok
P 305. Yuh, that intellectual potential or whatever it is or creative potential I don't know exactly, erm, I am someone who is very creative I am from a creative background family, erm, and so I do believe yeah, it's, it's more that my parents saw that in me
R 306. Ok
P 307. And that's why they put that pressure on me
R 308. Oh, ok so,
P 309. Yeah, I mean I was saying the alphabet when I was, I don't know what the ages are but something like 18 months or you know, really young apparently, and er you know from on TV they had this game show and I could say all the alphabet when I couldn't even talk
R 310. Ok
P 311. Things like that.
R 312. So somewhere you've missed that, the bit in the middle that slowly builds up
P 313. Yeah
R 314. That confidence
P 315. Yeah, yeah
R 316. Am I getting that right?
P 317. Yeah, yeah, well that's the thing is that cut a long story short I was projected from being a child into being an adult at the age of 18 when I, when my mother died and I was left all on my own in a foreign city with no money so from (she clicks her fingers) one day to another it was literally I had been maintained, kept in a childhood state erm, from being with a single mother, erm, never done the whole learning stages and mistakes you do when you're a teenager, when you're looking for yourself and all that and then all of a sudden I had to be an adult and pay my bills and look after myself.
R 318. Mhm
P 319. So it's, there is that harshness inside me
R 320. Mmm
P 321. That tends to forget what I've survived basically
R 322. Mm
P 323. And that could self-care in telling myself 'well actually you've done a pretty good job seeing what you set out with' erm, so it's, it's, it, yeah, it is a weight to carry.
R 324. Mmm, so there's this, I'm getting the sense that there's a jumping forward in your life
P 325. Yeah
R 326. And a kind of missing out the middle bits
P 327. Yeah
R 328. Not being aware of the middle bit so much as well as a sense of being pushed forward
P 329. Mm. It's like missing out completely on all those formative years
R 330. Yeah
P 331. And just waking up all of a sudden and saying 'right this is it, this is life'
R 332. Yeah

P 333. 'You're an adult' and you're expected to act like an adult and know what to do, and erm, have that maturity. I was always a very mature child erm, but not for these things not for like relationships and things like that. Yuh, so, it's, it's, I think there's a lot of that imbalance inside me that creates that self-doubt and that, that, you know, I think that where the critical voice really comes in is of course comparing myself to others, to society, to what would be expected

R 334. Mm

P 335. Erm, and at the same time knowing that potential so 'why am I not there?' kind of thing.

R 336. Cause it's interesting isn't it that what would be expected because again we're making assumptions about what's expected, we're seeing the veneer of other people's lives and thinking 'that should be me!'

P 337. Mm

R 338. And 'why aren't I like that?'

P 339. Mm, mm

R 340. And of course you're not seeing the middle bit.

P 341. Well that, yeah. And I think the whole social media thing definitely erm, um shows that up in the sense that erm, you know they're saying now that of course social media you see only the good stuff

R 342. Oh yes

P 343. You see people like '(inhales) look at these wonderful holidays' and 'oh my wonderful family' and 'my wonderful hou' and you're like 'I don't have that, you know, am I a failure, why, should I have that, I'm supposed to have that, everyone's got that, everyone wants that' (said in a high pitched tone) but of course we don't see them crying at night alone at home because they, they don't know what and when to pay their bills or whatever, or because their child is a right brat and they can't stand him, you know, it's, no but, erm, but it's difficult to distance yourself

R 344. Yeah

P 345. And I've been trying to distance myself from Facebook for example because I used to use it very much as a, a staying in contact with people abroad, things like that, and then I started realising that I was really falling into this whole feeling bad about myself comparing to others, and saying to myself 'you should, you should be this and you should be that' and, and it was affecting my, my, my morale definitely, and since I've cut off, erm, I've seen the difference, **very** quickly, in a matter of, of a couple days

R 346. Mm, so when did you notice that and what was going on at that time?

P 347. Erm, well it was actually after my burn out in December, erm, January was very much a convalescing time and I had this very strong feeling that this is not doing me any good, Facebook and all that, erm, whereas before it was, it was fun, it was erm, good to stay in contact, it was actually having a detrimental effect on my mood, erm and on my feelings towards myself

R 348. Mhm

P 349. Erm, erm,

R 350. I mean were you aware of it at the time, that you were feeling you were sort of juggling everything and watching all these wonderful people?

P 351. Yeah well it came to a point all of a sudden when I started realising watching all these wonderful things is actually taking you down, it was actually making me feel horrible about myself

R 352. Ok

P 353. And very quickly I thought to myself 'this is not right, this is not ok. I don't want this, this is completely sterile'

R 354. Mmm

P 355. Mm

R 356. So you were aware of it?

P 357. Yeah, yup. And I pulled away, I got rid of the app on my phone and all that and erm, (pause) and I felt practically immediately much better

R 358. Mmmm, and so what were you erm, what was going on for you around that time afterwards, you were feeling better, what was happening then?

P 359. I think I was reconnecting with myself. I was looking to find myself again, I had lost myself in work, I'd lost myself in twelve years working in the ***** industry in Jersey erm, where I've been through three buyouts and an office closure erm, so erm, err, an impermanence shall I say, like things you know, you invest a lot and then it's taken away from you kind of thing, erm, there's no growing on that, there's no future prospects because you could be sold any time, and, and so it was, it was really a, a point where I needed to connect back to, to, to **me**, what is it I need?

R 360. Mm

P 361. What makes **me** happy, what makes me feel good about myself

R 362. Mmm

P 363. Erm, what would I be if I hadn't done these twelve years of service as I call them, you know. Erm, it's come to light since that I'd forgotten how much of a creative person I am, erm, and er in the corporate environment its well know that creativity, a lot of people who are creative just dry up and, and, and turn miserable, and that was what happened was happening to me. So, erm, during this time I was really trying to just **feel** again.

R 364. Hmm

P 365. And if I wanted, like, felt like doing something on the moment, well I was going to do it and see what it felt like.

R 366. Mm

P 367. And reconnect with that spontaneity.

R 368. Mm

P 369. Yeah. I'm still working on that (little chuckle)

R 370. So, you've taken me on this journey of erm, explaining what the critical voice means to you and how it affects you, and the feelings associated with it, and your journey through the work and coming to an end of that and now a journey of self-discovery, so what do you make of your critical voice now?

P 371. Well I, (pauses abruptly and exhales) I (said slowly) need to protect myself from it, not let it get out of hand cause I know how much it affects me, how much I am harming myself basically with that voice. I, I've come to understand how (pause) wrong (said in a higher tone) that voice can be, how it's just one point of view, it's just skewed, it's not reality, it's not, it's a voice that makes you forget your achievements

R 372. Hmm

P 373. And when you remember those achievements you realise that you were wrong to listen to that voice, erm, so I want to try and change it into er, well like I was saying before about the chaos creating new opportunities, change it into a strength in the

sense that 'well maybe my critical voice can spur me on, can give me ideas, can challenge me, erm, to be more creative, erm, it's just getting there, it's just erm, finding the strength and the ability to actually control that, erm, it's you know, it's a bit like I suppose it's just come to mind now but like a racehorse, like thoroughbreds, a proper Arab horse, you, you, they're very hard to, to control, but if you can you'll get the best racehorse you can dream of kind of thing. You know it's that kind of thought process, erm, so it's still work in progress on, on, on that but that's what I'm aiming for erm, I know it's part of me, I'll never be rid of it, of that voice inside me

R 374. Mm

P 375. That, you know, erm, I'm a firm believer in critical thinking, for example, as in critical thinking, the good one, not the negative one, erm, and you know it's like I've read apparently the Buddha said erm 'don't believe something just because I tell you, believe it because you've gone and checked it out for yourself'. I paraphrase but, so I think it's, you know, I don't want to believe that critical voice

R 376. Mm

P 377. I want to say 'oh well maybe you've got a point, let me explore that, let me think about that and then I'll make my idea as to whether you're right or wrong'

R 378. Mm

P 379. And that's what I'd like to make of it

R 380. Mm

P 381. Erm, yeah

R 382. So, kind of there's a selection of viewpoints that you could take

P 383. Yeah

R 384. Erm, and you'll choose which one of them, you know, well I mean it could be 'you really messed up there'

P 385. Yup

R 386. Or it could be 'well yeah I could have done, yuh'

P 387. I see people project managers, good project managers are those who are able to build on a mistake or something that, that, that fell apart that didn't work, and go forward

R 388. Mhm

P 389. You'll never get a good project manager whose going to stay on that '(inhales sharply) oh my god, the time, the money we've wasted' and all that, erm, so, I want to, to be like that, you know, learn the lessons really quickly and say 'right, so, that kind of didn't work out, how can I use the same tools knowing that that could happen and make them work out for me'.

R 390. And what do you think the difference is, to the way that you reacted in the meeting, I mean I know there was a number of other issues going on, that you were going to hand in your notice anyway, but in that meeting where you felt (pause) awful from

P 391. I was in a, in, in a fragile state, I was burning out from work stress, from erm, personal issues, erm I was nervously exhausted so I didn't have the strength to laugh it off basically, or to change it into 'right, note to self for next time' kind of thing, no, I just started hitting myself

R 392. Mhm

P 393. Erm, because I, I was feeling fragile, I was feeling literally exhausted, yeah, definitely exhausted, erm, so, mentally exhausted as well, erm rational mind was

sitting in the corner saying 'I can't do anything here sorry' (said in a low exhausted voice) kind of thing (laughs), so, erm, I know I need to build that strength, I need to get proper sleep because I had developed insomnia, I need to, all these things that build your self-worth, your self-confidence because then that impacts your way of thinking, you know, I'm, I, I don't like the 100% happy positive thinking (said in a high pitched tone) you know, 'whey', erm, but I do believe that it's your mindset that, that, that decides how you react to events and how you come out of them. Yeah.

R 394. Mmm, cause that's interesting because at the beginning when we erm, started talking was you, I remember you said something about 'I don't know how to look after myself'

P 395. Mmm, yeah.

R 396. I'm not getting the right words

P 397. How to self-care, how, how to, to be gentle with myself.

R 398. But then that is quite different from what you've just said

P 399. Again, rational mind.

R 400. So,

P 401. It's the adult, the child, and that is that, that dichotomy constant dichotomy inside me, erm, the adult is when I am feeling rested, strong, erm, confident, the child is always there going 'whaaaa!'

R 402. So yeah there's this, the child going 'I don't know what to do!'

P 403. Yeah

R 404. And the adult says 'well actually we do, what we need to do is this, this and this'

P 405. Yeah, yeah

R 406. And then that'll help

P 407. That's it, so because emotionally I'm still at the stage where I'm conscious of it, I'm aware of that child going 'whaaaaa!' erm, and going 'I have no idea how to self-care' and all that, I have no idea, I've got the theory, the adult with the rational mind saying 'listen to me, I've got this. I've got this, I can sort this out' but it's constantly that, that warring inside me, it's, it's when you least expect it.

R 408. Yeah, so the child's very much, yuh. So how does the adult feel in comparison to how the child feels?

P 409. The adult feels bloody frustrated, I can tell you that, yeah. Because it's, I know, I know how I could function differently, erm, but the child has got so much power, and I am someone who is very emotional, very sensitive, I can pick up the atmosphere in a room as soon as I walk in, I can, you know, I feel people, erm, by small tiny body language things, and, so I'm a very sensitive person, erm, and so that doesn't, it makes for a very ermmmm, err, wobbly base kind of in a way.

R 410. I see, so it's unsettling …

P 411. Yeah

R 412. … when there's high emotionality?

P 413. Yeah, yeah, yeah, the emotions will always take over in me.

R 414. Mm

P 415. Erm, unless I'm in danger, or there is a, a, a, a, a very dangerous moment if I have to look after someone else or when my cat was run over, things like that, it's like straight away I go into **Boom**! That mode of **survival** instinct.

R 416. Right

P 417. And then I'll fall apart once everything's ok, but I, I definitely see myself go straight to that survival instinct mode, erm, and um, very firm, very confident, erm, but that's in only extreme moments.

R 418. Mmm

P 419. Otherwise it's the emotions, I get 'Ahhhh! Oh my god there's blood everywhere' and that kind of thing, erm. Yuh.

R 420. I'm wondering if you are defining strength or, I don't know if I can get the words right, erm, by strong feelings, or, or,

P 421. Strength, if I was to put a feeling on it I would say it's confidence. That's how it feels to me, erm, I know I am someone who's extremely resilient, err, like I said I have survived a few things and, but the thing is that emotionally I have been through a lot of trauma and I've, I've struggled through but I'm resilient in the sense that I've always picked myself up, only it's like burning the candle at two ends, you know, it's like, it will cost me down the line so I have that resilience, um, that ends up in a backlash um, some point down the line, yeah, yeah, so I've got that strength, erm, I just wish I could have it a bit more constantly (laughs) you know.

R 422. So what's it been like erm, talking about your critical voice today and is there anything else that you wanted to add?

P 423. Well I think it was interesting because um, I mean I've just bleugh, just you know, tried to answer as best I could erm, it doesn't always make sense, erm, but that's a lot of the nature of what goes on in my mind, erm, there's a lot of pulling, erm, both ways so, I've just tried to just react basically not overthink. I'm an overthinker as you can imagine as a perfectionist, erm, and that is really quite freeing, it's really quite, erm, for **me** quite therapeutic.

R 424. It's been freeing just to be able to bleugh?

P 425. Just to be able to explore.

R 426. Ok

P 427. To not worry if it doesn't make sense and I hope you will be able to make something of this, but erm, to let the thought follow it's, you know, it's trail and, and, and see where that, that leads. I mean there is a lot of things that I've already erm, worked on a lot over the years that I've, I've, I've, I've, I've erm, looked into a lot, but there's also, there were some aspects that hmm, that's a good point, you know, I hadn't actually explored that, that thought yet, erm, so I suppose I am going to leave here and things are going to keep processing inside me, erm, maybe from things that I've said that right now I can't remember, but from ideas that have come up, and I think (pause) I was interested in taking part because I think, I like, I think it's (pause) enriching, erm, I think it's good to help out, erm, I, I'm a, a, a great believer in, in, in psychology research and things like that, erm, and but I suppose it was also maybe a bit selfish as well, because in a way it was a, an opportunity for me to explore, explore without the boundaries of, you know, of taking a subject apart and you know, try to be like really constructive and, and, and all that so I think it was, it was, it was a good wander in the woods in a way (laughs)

R 428. Well I really, really appreciate your contribution, thank you so much

P 429. Thank you

R 430. So I've got this er, debrief sheet and I'll turn this off now is that ok?

P 431. ok

Transcription of Interview Three

R 1. So, did you get a chance to read the information, and understand everything and are happy with everything?
P 2. Yeah, yeah, I came to your presentation in The Green Olive
R 3. Yes!
P 4. I thought that was really interesting.
R 5. Brilliant, thank you very much. Ok, so first of all shall I just, cause I am just going to collect some demographics
P 6. Ok
R 7. If that's alright
P 8. Mhm
R 9. Erm, erm, so just to check, erm, you are over 18?
P 10. Yes
R 11. Erm, do you recognise sort of like your internal thoughts and voice as your own?
P 12. Yep
R 13. Ok, erm, cause as I mentioned I was screening out any kind of mental illness diagnosis of Schizophrenia or anything like that
P 14. Mhm
R 15. Erm, you're not a psychotherapy student?
P 16. No
R 17. Erm, that's fine. Marvellous. So may I take your age?
P 18. Err, *****, no I'm not, sorry, I'm ***** in April (laughs)
R 19. Ok (laughs)
P 20. I'm *****, I'm almost *****
R 21. Fabulous
P 22. I'm getting to that age when I forget how old I am
R 23. Gender female?
P 24. Female
R 25. Ethnicity, what would you say?
P 26. English, white English
R 27. May I take your profession? Or do you have a profession?
P 28. Erm, I'm a *****
R 29. Ok
P 30. Erm, I'm not currently working as **a** *****, erm, I am the *****, erm, so, er I suppose a civil servant I suppose, I don't know. Let's put civil servant, that just makes it easier.
R 31. Erm, and geographical Jersey, that's just because err, I was looking, I was thinking of working outside of Jersey as well but I'm not so that's all fine. Erm, just a note on confidentiality obviously it's, it's in the information erm, but just to confirm that any names that you give me, any locations, any indications of reference to erm, that maybe, err, you know, will be anonymised. Ok I'll change them, err, and I, so I might sort of change something that might be an indication to something else but try and keep the idea, I mean you know, obviously you're familiar with confidentiality, erm, and anonymity (I couldn't pronounce the word so we both laugh). Right them, shall we get going with the, ok?
P 32. Yes
R 33. So, are aware of a critical element to your thoughts and inner speech?

P 34. Yes
R 35. Can you describe what that's like?
P 36. Erm, I suppose it mostly stands out when I'm shouting at the computer (laughs) erm, or shouting at myself, err, particularly when I do something wrong on the computer
R 37. Ok
P 38. Erm, so yeah, I think I may attend, my critical voice tends to be more when I talk out loud
R 39. Ok
P 40. To myself, erm, (pause) or sometimes there will be a nar, particularly when I am writing emails, there will be a narrative when I'm reading over and over the email 'No ***** don't write that, no that doesn't sound very nice, no *****', it tends to have, I tend to name, it's like a third person kind of thing, so that I will say 'no *****' that kind of thing
R 41. So like as if a third person is talking to you, you know, that
P 42. No as if I am talking to me
R 43. But you're doing it in the third person
P 44. Yes
R 45. Oh that's interesting, so around about the computer, it's when you're doing stuff on the computer, writing an email it kind of comes out
P 46. I think that's when it's most noticeable
R 47. Ok
P 48. because that's when I tend to actually talk out loud
R 49. Ok so you actually verbalise it
P 50. Yeah (laughs)
R 51. Ok cause what we didn't erm, what I did talk about in the talk is like err, what you know, what a critical voice is, and what that might mean to you
P 52. Mhm
R 53. And I wonder if you might be able to, I mean do you understand what **I** mean by a critical voice erm, firstly, and secondly what do you understand of it?
P 54. Ok, I believe **you mean** erm, any kind of critical thought or comment about anything, so it could be yourself, another person, a thing
R 55. Mhm
P 56. Erm, I would also understand it as well as just criticising others, I don't tend to criticise others a lot though
R 57. Mhm
P 58. Though my husband would argue with that when we're watching Gogglebox, I often think disparaging comments (we both laugh) about people, I make disparaging comments about people on the telly a lot, I wouldn't necessarily criticise others in my day to day life even when I'm just out and about in public, I wouldn't necessarily think disparaging thoughts about other people
R 59. Oh ok
P 60. Erm, I would tend to think more disparagingly about myself
R 61. Ok
P 62. But I think the people on the telly are there to be criticised, they're on the telly (we both laugh)
R 63. Yes, there's nothing better 'ah why are you doing that' (laughs)
P 64. Yes, yes, or 'what is she wearing, what does she think' all those kind of things

R 65. Yeah, but it's interesting, is it just limited to Gogglebox, or is it, you know, does it expand out to other kind of programmes?

P 66. (pause) Yeah (said slowly) I suppose it does expand to other programmes, my husband and I wouldn't, don't tend to watch a lot of reality TV, and I wouldn't necessarily criticise a drama, cause you're watching a drama

R 67. Mhm

P 68. I would tend to criticise actual people, so they're on reality TV

R 69. That's really interesting because that sort of type of program is watching people, watching something else

P 70. Yeah

R 71. Or its that, that's fascinating isn't it?

P 72. Yeah

R 73. Yes it is something about watching, watching, watching, watching, you know watching others who are watching something

P 74. Yes

R 75. Or the reality TV shows for, for example, what would you

P 76. Erm well anything kind of erm, the kind of things we would watch would be 24 hours in A&E, we, we quite like that,

R 77. Ok

P 78. I may have made comments about that, although my husband would say if we watched a program that had ***** in I would criticise what they do (laughs) and so I've now learned to shut up cause he says will you just be quiet and watch the television (laughs)

R 79. So it's about observing others

P 80. Yeah

R 81. There's something about observing others doing stuff

P 82. Yeah

R 83. That's like a step removed, wow that's fascinating

P 84. Yeah, I quite like observing others and

R 85. Yeah

P 86. Looking to see how people interact, watching to see how, I quite like Big Brother, erm, I haven't watched it more recently because it tends to just be horrible people being nasty to one another, but the last, the last celebrity Big Brother I found fascinating because it was more, people actually being nice to one another, and having conversations and watching that interplay between people so I, I like things like that

R 87. Mmm, I think erm, (laughs) I must stop assuming things but it's, I'm fascinated because erm, of your profession that you've identified is interesting because it's about people, it is observing people isn't it, and that's the nature of the work that you do

P 88. Mhm

R 89. So, there's something very much linked up with that. Erm, so, your critical voice is mainly directed towards yourself in the third person when you're writing emails or on the computer doing stuff

P 90. Or just generally in life

R 91. To other people watching, oh ok so lets come back to the generally in life

P 92. Yeah, I mean it's more noticeable when I'm on the computer because it's more out loud

R 93. Ok
P 94. But I would be more thinking critical thoughts about what I'm doing, what I'm, yeah what I'm doing
R 95. So how would you know that you're being critical towards yourself, and with your thoughts
P 96. Because I often think 'Daw, what a, what did you do that for?' because I'm very clumsy, I break stuff, I forget stuff
R 97. Ok
P 98. Erm, and particularly now I'm err, post-menopausal so I'm getting lots of stuff wrong, I'm very confused, very forgetful, so I just do tend to be thinking 'Daw, what have you done, what have you done that for, oh' (whispered) just that constant 'what did you do that for, why have you got that wrong, waa'
R 99. Ok, so what happens in that time, you know, for you, does it affect how you feel, or how you behave?
P 100. (pause) It amuses me I think now, I think now I'm older and more mature (pause) it, it's more of a, although it's critical, it's more of an amused (exhales) what, just kind of eye rolling, whereas in the past it may have been more, much more critical and much more erm, putting myself down
R 101. Ok
P 102. Whereas now, it's not so much, I'm just amused by the stupid things that I do
R 103. So there's been a softening
P 104. Yeah
R 105. effect?
P 106. Yeah,
R 107. Ok, so are you aware of it in your past? Erm, you said, you know it was worse in your past
P 108. Yes
R 109. What was that like?
P 110. (7 second pause) I think it would have been much more erm, less amused more kind of I don't know how to verbalise it (7 second pause) I suppose now I am more empathic towards myself and I'm more understanding of myself whereas in the past I would have been very disparaging and you, and more annoyed at myself when I got stuff wrong
R 111. Mmm, (pause) mmm and other people as well?
P 112. Yes, I used to be a very angry young woman
R 113. Really?
P 114. Particularly in my twenties, yes, I was very angry at myself, at the world, at people in general
R 115. Mmm
P 116. Erm, yeah. Not so much now
R 117. Mmm, can you think of why that might be, why you've softened.
P 118. Hm, I think there are lots of reasons, I think erm, I didn't have a particularly good childhood and I think in my mid-twenties I did about eighteen months of counselling, kind of moved on from that, err, so I like myself more erm, I think also I think doing a degree in my early thirties and thinking learning more about you know, psychology, sociology, all those kind of issues, and being able to do something so I not only was I liking myself more but I was then able to do something that was more productive

R 119. Mhm

P 120. Erm, I think going through an early menopause as well, I think a lot of my anger was linked to my hormones so when those stopped and now I don't have hormones I'm much calmer and much more, my mood is more flat that constant up and down, I'm just generally content

R 121. Mhm

P 122. Erm, and I also think meeting my husband, erm, so I was a single mum for err, eighteen years, erm, and then I met my husband, erm, and I think just the (pause) acceptance from my husband and having that mutual love and respect which I'd never really had before has also impacted on the way I feel about myself and been able to, he **really** does contain me and some of the stuff I learnt in my degree I actually watch myself play out, so I've watched myself kind of erm, going back and being nurtured by him, when we, when we first met I spent all my time sitting on his knee (laughs) just being loved (laughs) which was nice, so yeah, I think that has had a huge impact being in that relationship

R 123. Mmm

P 124. So yeah, **all** those things I think have, and I'm no longer angry, I'm just generally fairly happy

R 125. You feel loved and safe and chilled

P 126. Yeah (we both laugh), yeah

R 127. Sounds lovely

P 128. Yeah, it is, hmm

R 129. Ok, ok, so, the feelings around that have changed over time so going from anger to more of a chilled approach, or amused kind of like 'haw, what are you doing'

P 130. Yes, yeah

R 131. Erm, how have they affected erm, erm, (pause) your behaviour, so previously what kind of behaviour would they, I, I guess there's two questions there isn't there, how does it affect your behaviour, and then I, I would be interested to find out you know, when you were younger, and, and now

P 132. (5 second pause) I suppose when I was younger, when I generally would feel more angry I would react to most things, anger was my base emotion, err, so I probably would be more (pause) aggressive generally, erm, kept more people at, at bay. I think I would be harder on myself (pause) and I suppose that then led to, I, I took a lot of drugs in my twenties and my thirties so I probably self-medicated a lot whereas now erm, I don't think it affects my behaviour at all, I, I think in fact I'd be much more likely to share things with my husband 'oh guess what I did today' whereas in the past I would have just pushed it under the carpet, not told anyone because 'look, you know, I've failed again' or 'what I've done now la la la', whereas now I'm much more likely to say some things to my husband whereas you know, 'today I left the car at home and then I walked to work and then when I needed to go to a meeting (can't make out what she says) and I walked out the office and thought 'oh where have I left the car?, I've left the car at home' (laughs) so I'd tell him that

R 133. So there's a lot more of a willingness now to be vulnerable, or err, to appear vulnerable because of something silly, or yeah, whereas previously there's just no way you'd let people inside

P 134. Yeah, and I think it's now an acceptance that some of these things happen not internalising it, these things have happened because of external reasons

R 135. Mmm
P 136. They're happening because I've got a lot in my life
R 137. Yeah
P 138. They're happening because there are physical changes going on that are affecting my brain and making me more confused, making me more forgetful, whereas in the past I would have internalised those feelings
R 139. Ok
P 140. 'I've done that because I am at fault, I am stupid, I have'
R 141. Ok
P 142. You know 'there's something wrong with me'
R 143. Right
P 144. Whereas now it's, you know, I **know** it's not me
R 145. So yes, so you would have personalised it completely and thought it was your **fault**, erm, rather than now taking a broader perspective and thinking 'well actually that's probably that, and that's probably that' so a broader picture, that's really interesting
P 146. Yeah
R 147. Mmm, (pause) erm, so have you ever noticed a dialogue that happens when you've got that critical voice going on? (7 second pause) It's not a
P 148. I suppose so, yeah, erm, there's no back and forth, there's just the one voice so it's not necessarily a dialogue
R 149. Ok, yeah
P 150. It's more just me, well no actually I suppose I do answer it sometimes, I suppose yes there is a bit of a dialogue that goes on so I would 'oh ***** what have you done that for, oh da da da' and then I may, I may answer that 'oh well never mind because now we can do this, or
R 151. Ok
P 152. 'don't write that in the email, yes but if I write this then I'm not sure how to word that' and yes, so I suppose there is a dialogue
R 153. It's a thought process
P 154. Yeah
R 155. It's a thought process of going backwards and forwards and
P 156. Yeah
R 157. Ok exploring it sounds like now
P 158. Yeah
R 159. And previously, what would have happened?
P 160. (5 second pause) I'd probably just would have got angry or (pause) not depressed but felt more a, a lower mood, I wouldn't and, and then gone and done something so it would have try into like physical activity so I maybe would have gone and put some music on and, and had a dance, or gone, gone for a walk, or got stoned, or err, yeah, gone and shouted at someone, made an argument with someone
R 161. Mhm
P 162. Physically if I'd done that rather than sitting and thinking it through, it would have been a more, I'd done something
R 163. So it kind of erm, spurred you to action in some way
P 164. Mhm
R 165. Erm, so tell me, you know, the actions erm, would there be, was there some sort of purpose in those actions or, or was it, was there any kind of awareness of why

you were doing those things, you said you know, put the music on and had a dance, you know, for what reason would that be?

P 166. Cause that made me feel better

R 167. So there was a purpose to make you feel better

P 168. Yeah

R 169. Erm, possibly to distract yourself

P 170. (pause) Yeah

R 171. Kind of thing

P 172. Yeah

R 173. And

P 174. Just more to lift my mood so I've got all this angry energy

R 175. Ok, yeah

P 176. I need to do something with this energy, what can I do with the, with the energy

R 177. I'm, I'm curious to know how you would know to, what made you think to do something about it, or to make it better

P 178. Erm, I suppose there's always been an underlying emotional intelligence, I think I've always been quite emotionally aware of my own emotions, how to manage them, and not to let them get the better of me so I've always been aware that when I'm feeling low or when I'm feeling angry, the best thing to do about that is work that energy out, do something with that energy, erm so yeah

R 179. So what's behind that do you think, you mentioned emotional intelligence, what's do you think, well yeah behind that, what would be the, would there be a purpose to that concept that I need to do something with this to get myself better?

P 180. Sorry I don't understand

R 181. No, no I'm kind of, so I'm interested in how, what you make of that, so you're aware, so previously you're aware you were angry, you got some sort of sense that you need to do something about it to shake off that anger or, or to make yourself better

P 182. Mhm

R 183. So what do you think is below that?

P 184. Wanting to be a good mum (said straight away)

R 185. Wanting to be a good mum?

P 186. Yeah, so I've got that I'm a single mum, I've got this little girl, I want her to have everything that I didn't have and I **know** that unless I can burn off this energy or burn off this anger then the likelihood is I'm going to be short with her or I'm not going to have as much patience with her or I'm not going to want to do the things that she wants to do and actually making sure that her emotional wellbeing and making sure that I am around and able to meet her needs is the most important thing, so I need to make sure that I'm ok so that I can meet her needs and that is the most important thing. That is probably what has got me through and not led me down a path, I would have been along down a completely different path if I hadn't got pregnant at 18

R 187. Mmm

P 188. Cause even though I was pregnant at 18 I always knew that I needed to be a really, really good mum because she was going to be surrounded by all these other crazy people so I need to be able to meet her needs and make sure that she had a good upbringing

R 189. Mmm, where do you think that came from, that, that knowledge that you needed to be a good mum?
P 190. Not having a good mum
R 191. Mmm
P 192. I, I do think emotional intelligence is innate, I think there are different types of intelligence, I don't have any spatial awareness, I don't have any skills with language, I don't have any skills with music, erm, (laughs) but I, I, I, I've always been quite emotionally aware, I can even at a very, very young age be, have an awareness of how I was feeling and why, how other people were feeling and why they might be feeling that way
R 193. Mmm
P 194. Erm, and I think I've always known that I wanted to be a better mother than what I've had
R 195. Mmm, mmm
P 196. So, everything I did I think, yeah there, it was always there in the back of my mind that everything I was doing needed to be for the good of this child so even, and I might be able to twist it, even if I was going out clubbing all night, I was going out clubbing because having a social life and being able to be me made me then be a good mum because I wasn't just you know, all seven eleven with this child, you need to go and have your own life so that then when you're with her you can give her everything that she needs so, yeah that was always
R 197. Mm, and was there some kind of self-nurturing going on there as well, looking after yourself in the sense that you're looking after **your** needs so you can also be fully present and look after the needs of your daughter?
P 198. No, I'm very self-destructive, oh I **was** very self-destructive so I don't think it was self-nurturing
R 199. I guess it depends how you perceive self-nurturing
P 200. Yeah
R 201. Erm, if to put it another way, you were trying to look after your own needs so that you can **be** the better mum
P 202. Mhm, mhm
R 203. So, I mean, I would call that self-nurturing
P 204. Ok
R 205. But you see it differently, and that's (5 second pause)
P 206. I think in, I think (pause) I think sometimes I was just using that as an excuse, this is what I wanted to go and do, I wanted to go and dance all night and take lots and lots of drugs, that's what I wanted to go and do, and to make myself feel maybe a bit better about that I would say 'oh well I'm doing that because if I do that then I can be a better mum when I'm with her because I'm focussed and I'm not feeling resentful' because I knew a lot of other people who didn't have time away from their child, didn't get to go and do what they wanted to do and that built up a lot of resentment so,
R 207. Yeah
P 208. I think sometimes I'd just use it as an excuse
R 209. So, yeah I was going to say so you know, in the back of your mind there's this thought of 'oh it's just an excuse, I can be selfish' to be quite frank, **but** there are many different perspectives about that, you know, that is a valid, a valid thought

process, a valid reason actually, I mean I just think it's (pause) what' the strongest feeling there for you? (6 second pause) I mean what are your

P 210. Oh I don't know

R 211. Or your gut instinct, what would that say? (8 second pause)

P 212. I honestly don't know, I'm trying to think if, if there came a, would there have come a point where if I'd have, if I'd have (pause) yeah well actually no, being a good mum because if there had come a time when I didn't, I couldn't get a babysitter, or she wasn't going somewhere else, I would never ever have put her to bed, left her on her own and gone out cause that's what I wanted to do, if there were, you know if she couldn't go and stay somewhere else for the night I wouldn't have gone out

R 213. Mhm

P 214. So yeah, that would have been the strongest instinct

R 215. Mmm

P 216. She had to be able to, I had to have somewhere else for her to **be** for that night, for her to come back the next day

R 217. Mmm, mmm. It's erm, what was I thinking, it's err, (6 second pause) I've lost that thought but it's (6 second pause) it's taking care of things, but it's, it is as you said coming back to that emotional awareness that if you didn't have your time out, your outlet, whatever it was, then in the long run it would be detrimental to you and your child

P 218. Mmm (said quietly)

R 219. So there is a sort of an emotional taking care of everything

P 220. Mhm

R 221. Of a bigger picture

P 222. Mhm

R 223. Even cause you were saying, what we were talking earlier about now you have a different sense, a bigger picture, a bigger perspective of seeing things and choosing different erm, ways of thinking about it, or a softness erm, and before you weren't quite aware of that but it seems that there was some sort of awareness there, some sort of you know

P 224. Yeah, but not as, not as much

R 225. Not as much, no

P 226. I think I would have thought more things were (pause) down to me and if I did, I think as well, I think a lot of that was where the anger was coming from in that sometimes I was aware that it wasn't down to me, it was down to other people or down to other things but I had no control over that

R 227. Mmm

P 228. So where I, it was probably a, a feeling of lack of control in that these things are happening to me

R 229. Mmm

P 230. And I don't know how to get out of that

R 231. Mmm

P 232. Whereas now there is much more, I have much more self-control but then I think, in my twenties I probably didn't have (inhales and exhales) whereas now I understand more about psychological things that are going on and, and sociological things that are going on, beforehand I may have had, thought what is going on but not, I didn't understand the theory and the processes behind it, I just thought here

I am stuck with no money and how I don't know what to do about this and all these things are happening and I've got no control over it

R 233. Mmm. A feeling of trapped

P 234. Yeah

R 235. Whereas now you don't have that feeling, there's a greater awareness of different things

P 236. Yeah, but also I'm no longer in that situation

R 237. Yeah

P 238. I'm no longer a single mum on the dole, with no money, living in a house full of damp and no food, now I've got a great job, a great house, plenty of money, I'm not in that situation

R 239. Mmm, mmm

P 240. If I was in that situation now, I would hope that I would (pause) have the, the skills and the knowledge to not revert back into that type of thinking

R 241. Mmm

P 242. But that is a, is a fear, that you know, what would happen, now my daughter has grown up and moved away, she's 25, she doesn't need her mum, you know, if something was to happen to ***** it is a fear, if something was to happen to *****, you know, what

R 243. ***** being?

P 244. My husband, sorry, my husband, if something was to happen to my husband and he was no longer there, you know would I then cycle back down into all those previous behaviours

R 245. Do you think you would?

P 246. (inhales and exhales) yeah (said quietly), yeah I do, I do

R 247. Mm

P 248. I would hope, hope not, I hope not but I think actually I would

R 249. Mmm

P 250. But who knows?

R 251. I wonder if it would be the same?

P 252. (5 second pause) probably not because I probably, yeah, (7 second pause) I think it would probably be worse actually, I think that is my biggest fear, and is probably why I stayed away from relationships for so long in that I, I don't believe that it is better to have loved and lost than not loved at all, I think having, having had my husband who meets all my emotional needs and cares for me and loves me, to not have that, to lose that I think will drive me into despair

R 253. Mmm

P 254. And I will not be able to see the light at the end, there is no end of the tunnel, I'm just alone

R 255. Mmm, mmm

P 256. And I think that, that is a huge fear of being unloved again

R 257. Mhm

P 258. And alone again

R 259. Mmm

P 260. So yeah, I think that will drive me back to self-destructive behaviours

R 261. Mmm

P 262. But

R 263. Ok

P 264. That's not going to happen so

R 265. (pause) One of the questions that I've got is around whether or not the critical voice serves a function or a purpose, what would you think about that?

P 266. (inhales and exhales, 10 second pause) I think it does serve a purpose in that (pause) partly it can help me as we were talking about before, that dialogue, it can help me have a, a thought process so it sometimes actually verbalising your thinking helps you see the next steps and think what to do now 'ok well that's not worked, what, what, what can we do more' but I also think it serves a purpose particularly when I'm just laughing at myself to help not internalise this and to just pass things away, they, they, they don't then fester 'yeah that's happened, oh well, move on'

R 267. Mmm

P 268. I think it helps build resilience particularly in me

R 269. Mhm

P 270. That, yeah, so you're not festering on things, you're not overthinking things

R 271. Mm

P 272. You're just laughing at that as if it, it's sometimes as if how you've got another person stood next to you and you're able to laugh and have a joke about it and it doesn't become a big issue because you then, you've laughed about it, it's moved on

R 273. Mmmm

P 274. So, for me I think it does yes

R 275. That's interesting so talking about, getting it out in the open, thrashing it about, sort of erm, makes it not so erm, (pause) don't know, harsh (said tentatively) or, or, yeah, it doesn't sort of go back inside

P 276. Yeah

R 277. And then what happens, you know, what, what did happen when it went back inside, or what does happen if it goes back inside?

P 278. Well I think it, that's when it becomes a bit more negative, I think actually thinking about it the, we had a dog and when, if I was in the house I would talk to the dog, now the dog's not there that is when I'm more, particularly when I'm in and around the house I would talk to my, myself more so I think I, you're right it's about talking and just getting it out there, you know

R 279. Mhm

P 280. I think yeah, that's why it's probably happened more at work, I notice it more at work cause the dog was never at work whereas in, when I was in the home you can talk to the dog, it doesn't matter what you say to the dog does it (laughs) the dog doesn't care but I think yeah, if it wasn't there then you would, it would fester and you would maybe erm, it would become more negative

R 281. Mmm, mmm. More negative, and get worse

P 282. Yeah, so that would affect me, you know the way you, you, I would think about myself and I think, and particularly I think if I have done something stupid, which happens a lot (pause) just being able to laugh about it rather than (pause) cause I think more recently as well as I'm becoming more and more aware of the menopause and menopausal symptoms I don't mind being hot and sweaty, I don't mind going to the toilet a lot, I don't mind having to get up, it does worry me about becoming more confused, it does worry me about becoming more forgetful, more

anxious, more angry because they're all the emotions that I don't want to have and I've worked really hard

R 283. Mmm

P 284. To get away from them, so it, it does worry me about having some of those more mental symptoms of the menopause and if I didn't laugh about them then maybe that would be quite scary

R 285. Mmmm, yeah

P 286. So being able to just laugh them off and the 'ohh here we go again' it, it just makes it less frightening

R 287. Yeah, yeah I can see that, just gets it out there and, yeah, yeah

P 288. Because I think that's a particularly in my job, or you, you, you see it in you know the police and the ambulance service that black humour being able to laugh at things that are actually not very pleasant is a way of emotionally working through them so they don't become traumatic

R 289. Yeah

P 290. So I think that is the way I kind of use it a lot so that the things that are going on

R 291. Mmm

P 292. Aren't traumatic

R 293. Mmm, so you, you're quite self-aware, you know and I, I wonder if that's to do with erm, just to do with the nature of the work and your learning through, you know becoming a civil servant, erm, I wonder if, (pause) if you'd done any personal development and that kind of thing, you know, around, oh you said you had counselling

P 294. I've had counselling

R 295. Yeah

P 296. For about 18 months, I think the counselling became, yeah it wasn't very helpful by the end of the 18 months I think there was too much of a, a relationship there to be honest, I don't think, but yeah, that, that was, it was, it's an odd experience in that when I was having the counselling I didn't think it was helpful, erm, but it was only afterwards I was able to reframe things and think about things in a different way

R 297. Mmm

P 298. Erm

R 299. 18 months is quite a long time, did, was that, hm personal interest, was that erm, (pause) you, you chose to carry on going for that period of time?

P 300. Yeah I had a lot of stuff to work through

R 301. Mmm

P 302. It kind of became longer, I kept living my crazy life whilst I was having the counselling (laughs) by the end of the counselling the, yeah, I'd, I'd, I was in a, I **was** in a much better place, still doing some crazy shit but (laughs) yes it was better (laughs) less self-destructive I think, much less self-destructive, yeah

R 303. Mmm, sounds intriguing (both laugh) ok, so what do you make of your critical voice now, what would you say? Your feelings seem to have changed **over** time

P 304. Definitely, yeah. I quite like it

R 305. Do you?

P 306. Yeah

R 307. What do you like about it?

P 308. It's like a little friend (researcher laughs) to be honest, because there's no, there's nothing wrong with being critical, there's you know, you know, (exhales) a lot of what I do in my work, you know, when I was a, a ***** which I'm not now, and but a lot of the work that I do its about being analysing things and thinking about the why this happens and what we can do to move on, and I don't necessarily think that's a, it's not a bad thing, I mean that's how people grow and changed and develop isn't it, it's about analysing what you're doing, why you are doing it, and what you can do better next time

R 309. Mmm, so do you think it's about perception, you know that, that perception of the word critical (pause) I was just wondering because if critical isn't bad then is critical how sometimes we say 'I'm going to critically appraise this situation and that's not thinking and looking at it negatively that's looking at it with a different eye, or without the emotion type thing, so that seems to be what you're suggesting, the critical appraisal in terms of the voice

P 310. Mhm

R 311. Erm, rather than, the nasty aspect of critical

P 312. Yeah, I think erm, most people would think of a critical voice as something that is negative but it, the word critical or to erm, to critique

R 313. Yes

P 314. If you critique something, that's not necessarily negative, you're looking at the positives, you're looking at the what went well, the what didn't go so well and the what we're going to do about that

R 315. Yeah

P 316. So I think that is more how I would think of it, not a, a critical voice although when I'm being disparaging about the people on Gogglebox, that is criticising them (laughs) but for myself it's more err, a critique of 'doh, you've, you've done something really stupid there yet you need to be, what can we do to solve' it's more of a problem solving kind of thing

R 317. Right

P 318. There are still sometimes when I 'doh, ***** you dickhead' (both laugh) I often call myself some choice words (both laugh)

R 319. Yes, me too! (both laugh) erm, one thing you mentioned erm, about the Gogglebox thing, coming back to that, so what's going on there for you when you're criticising the people on Gogglebox

P 320. (pause) the ability just to get it out because I think particularly in the, in the job that I do, and the job that, now I'm more erm, in the managerial role I spend my whole time being nice to people, sometimes you just need to be mean (laughs) sometimes you just really need to be really nasty and horrible about something and just get it out because being lovely and nice and nurturing all day is hard word

R 321. So there's some sort of redressing of a balance, you know 'if I've got to be really nice all the time then I'm going to be really nasty'

P 322. Yeah at people that can't hear me

R 323. Yes!

P 324. And they're not going to hear me, that's not going take offence, it doesn't really matter

R 325. So there's like a safety in that, it's a safe, so yeah not a safety valve but it's a safe place to be, err, you know to let off steam

P 326. Mhm

R 327. would that be the right thing?
P 328. Yeah, yeah, I like the word open the valve, just open the valve
R 329. So there is, it is that was, open the valve for you
P 330. Yeah, because I don't think at down at heart, and this is not me being critical of myself, deep down I'm, I don't think I am a very nice person (laughs) I'm not
R 331. Ok
P 332. a naturally nurturing, kind, giving person naturally, and I think that's why I'm struggling with my new role of being a manager, I don't like being a manager cause I have to be nice to people, I much prefer being a ***** because you go in there, you say what needs to happen, you're very firm about it, that's why I'm really good at being a *****, I'm not in there to make friends
R 333. Mmm
P 334. I'm in there to tell you what you're doing wrong and to be really firm and get you to do it better
R 335. Mhm
P 336. And I can't do that anymore, so yeah, it's good to be able to just let off, let open the valve and tell those people what they're doing wrong
R 337. Mmm, I like that, that sounds really good, that sort of, for **me** I perceive that as a balance
P 338. Mhm
R 339. Erm, but for you, it's, it's you framed it in terms of opening that valve, yeah
P 340. Mhm
R 341. Yeah, that's a really interesting, (pause) perception of it
P 342. Mhm
R 343. Erm, I would, the, the whole, the manager nicey, nicey manager thing, erm, I wander if you can't be firm within that role as well
P 344. (exhales)
R 345. There's an element of you kind of have to sugar coat it
P 346. Yeah, I think I can be firm but it's a fairly new team, they only started in September so, so far a lot of what I've been doing is trying to get them to be a team and because it's quite a difficult job, you know what they, what the team do going into people's homes and working with families, then you know they, they come back to the, I see my job as a manager, when I've had good managers, good managers are those people who erm, contain you, allow you to come back to the office and offload and they take on your negative emotions and contain you and make it better and support you and yes, there are, there **will** be times when I need to be a bit more firmer when they're not doing the job that they're supposed to be doing but so far, it's a new team, they're really eager to please me, and so I've not had to do that as yet
R 347. So you feel that, was I right in thinking when I heard you, you feel that you have to be nice
P 348. Yeah (pause)
R 349. Mmm
P 350. Yeah, and I think as my job has got, so I'm a manager of a team but being the ***** manager a large part of my role is to get people to do ***** and to do that they, I need to be approachable
R 351. Mmm

P 352. They need to want to, you know if I go in there and start laying down the law, they'll all say 'we're not doing that'
R 353. Yeah, erm, I want to ask you erm, how you would like me to anonymise erm, some of the information that you have told me
P 354. Mhm
R 355. So, primarily about your work
P 356. Mm
R 357. Erm, because I don't want to go away and think ok well I'll change that to that and it's not perhaps quite accurate, it doesn't quite have the same tone to it
P 358. Mhm
R 359. So I wonder if you have got any ideas that you could
P 360. Well there's only one ***** manager
R 361. Well this is, this is
P 362. There's only me
R 363. what I'm thinking, in Jersey it's quite a small thing so I wonder if we can change it to something that would work (5 second pause) cause this might not transcribe as well
P 364. Just maybe a States of Jersey manager, or
R 365. Civil Servant?
P 366. Civil Servant
R 367. That's quite yeah, I think
P 368. That's quite broad
R 369. Yeah, ok. Actually, ok erm, is there anything else cause I've pretty much done my questions, erm, and maybe some of that we should have off tape in terms of what I am going to change things to erm, actually no it's fine, I'm waffling, erm, what, is there anything that you feel that you haven't said about this concept of a critical voice?
P 370. (8 second pause) No not really, I mean only that I think your critical voice really depends on where you are in your life, I mean I think if you are in a fairly negative place then your critical voice is going to have a much bigger impact or if you're able to, if you're in a positive place I think and even in, in different times in your life it will play a very different role
R 371. Mmm, yuh
P 372. And I think it depends on what other networks and voices you've got around you to counteract anything that it is saying to you
R 373. Mhm
P 374. And how much you believe them
R 375. Mmm, well that's quite a big subject isn't it, how much you believe them, what do you think would impact that? How, you know, can you say a bit more about (pause)
P 376. Erm, I suppose I'm thinking partly not just about myself but partly about some of the people that I work with, erm, or have worked with that have very, very low self-esteem, you know don't have a very good attachment, while much more likely I think there's two types of people isn't there that have poor attachment, there's those who really, really think badly about themselves and everything is their fault and it doesn't matter how many other people tell them that it's not they're going to internalise that and that's their fault, and then there's those other people who think that everything they do is completely right (laughs) and that doesn't matter that other people tell them actually no that's right, there is (can't understand the

word) a super-ego take over isn't it because they've never had that anybody to say 'no actually that is not how the world works' so I think it's, it's yeah, I think the critical voice in people with a huge super-ego would not have as much impact as those who have no erm, self-esteem and self-worth.

R 377. That's intriguing cause my erm, cause so you know a bit about the super-ego because my erm, study of the super-ego, well Freud's super-ego is like your morals, your sort of sense of you know, you should do this, you shouldn't do that and it's very authoritative in that perspective but you also referenced erm, you know what I spoke about in the thing, Eric Berne I'm OK, you're OK, or I'm OK, you're not OK erm, and that, but it kind of depends how you conceptualise the super-ego because Freud would say the super-ego conceptualised the good parent as well as the bad parent so there is that sort of nurturing caring aspect to it as well, erm, and the conscience erm, that kind of just observes all the time

P 378. Mhm

R 379. Erm, so coming back to what you were saying, you said about if you had a big super-ego you might not, what was it

P 380. Erm, I think (exhales) it's about, I'm also, I don't know if it, whether you would think this is gendered but in **my** when I've worked with people in the past it tends to be males, particularly when we're thinking about males who are perpetrators of domestic abuse, I think their super-ego, everything they do is, you know, they, they, this is what they want to do, their, their morals are because they want to do it, it meets their needs therefore it's ok

R 381. Mm

P 382. Their values are all mixed up around how it meets their needs and not about what everybody else thinks or wants or may think that might happen, they're all wrong, it's all mixed up in what they want and meeting their needs

R 383. Mm, so it's very closed in, yeah.

P 384. Yeah, so I wouldn't imagine that the critical voice for someone like that would (pause) be very critical, it'd be critical of the others

R 385. Mmm

P 386. it would be very external

R 387. Externalised

P 388. You are wrong, you have done this, this is your fault, that happened because you did that, not necessarily criticising themselves

R 389. Yeah, do you, I find that subject absolutely fascinating because erm, (pause) I'm not entirely sure about what happens, err you know, that's not a subject area that I've worked with err, male perpetrators of crime, erm, (pause) I suppose this is going off, maybe going off topic but erm, I take it you have and, is it, is it the case then that there is no self-awareness or very little, or that self-awareness is shut away?

P 390. (inhales and exhales 8 second pause) there is no, in my experience there's very little self-awareness, and I'm just thinking in that, obviously as, as a, a ***** going in asking questions, delving, a lot of, you don't always get the honest and correct answers

R 391. No

P 392. people give you the answers that they think you want

R 393. Absolutely

P 394. But I've also spent a lot of time working with *****, erm and a lot of other people who would also, you would imagine get more honest answers and they also come back and say actually they've got no self-awareness, they have absolutely no understanding of how their behaviour impacts on other people and it is all about what they get from it

R 395. So how does the process of erm, going into programs, because obviously the programs are very helpful to develop that awareness of 'actually you know what, you can't just do what you want to do because other people are going to be impacted'

P 396. Mm

R 397. Erm, and by all accounts those programs are quite effective, not completely, so how does that process work then if there is

P 398. I think it starts with trying to build some empathy and trying to erm, (pause) I'm just trying to remember it's been a long, long time, I've actually done one of the domestic abuse programs

R 399. That's ok, I was thinking we've kind of gone off topic and perhaps you know, that's maybe a subject for another day

P 400. Mhm, I think it would be interesting though if you could get more of a, if you were going to do your research a broader range of society

R 401. Absolutely

P 402. And that's going to be more difficult I would imagine

R 403. That was the, that's my intention, that's why the erm, sample is so erm, wide open, well fairly wide open, erm, it's my intention to get as, as many people coming forward as possible

P 404. Mmm

R 405. From a wide demographic area but we will see

P 406. Yeah, I'm really interested in, in seeing the err, yeah. It's something professionally and personally I'm very interested in so I'm looking forward to it, so thank you for the opportunity to take part

R 407. Well thank **you** for coming forward, I really appreciate it.

P 408. Thank you Georgina

Transcription of Interview Four

R	1.	So you've read the information
P	2.	Yes
R	3.	Any questions from that?
P	4.	No, it all looks quite straightforward
R	5.	Ok, at any point if you feel that you want to stop just say stop
P	6.	Yeah
R	7.	It's not a problem erm, if you want to after, after the interview if you think back and think 'do you know what, I don't want to do it anymore
P	8.	Yeah
R	9.	Just let me know
P	10.	Great that's, yeah
R	11.	That's not a problem
P	12.	Yeah
R	13.	Erm, and in terms of confidentiality I will anonymise your data so what that means is that any names that you say or any kind of places or identifying material
P	14.	Yeah
R	15.	I will slightly change
P	16.	Mhm
R	17.	Erm, to retain that. Erm, so first thing is to get you just to read the written informed consent and get you to sign that
P	18.	Yeah, mhm
R	19.	So there's two copies, one for yourself and one for me
P	20.	Is it the third today?
R	21.	Third of the third yeah
P	22.	Ok
R	23.	Brilliant, so you can have the other one
P	24.	That one right, yuh that's fine
R	25.	Ok, erm so oh, I wanted to get some demographics if that's ok
P	26.	Mhm
R	27.	So can I ask your age
P	28.	Yes, *****
R	29.	Ok, gender female?
P	30.	Yeah
R	31.	Erm, ethnicity, what would you say?
P	32.	European
R	33.	And profession?
P	34.	Err, *****
R	35.	Probably if I just put *****
P	36.	Yeah, yeah
R	37.	Is that ok, and that kind of keeps it generalised
P	38.	Yep, broad, yep
R	39.	Erm, that's all fine, so ok, first question I've got is are you aware of a critical element to your thoughts and inner speech?
p	40.	Yes I think so, yeah yeah
r	41.	Can you say some more about that?

p 42. Erm, sorry I'll just switch it off (participant's phone kept making noises) just ***** might be phoning me 'where are you' erm, am I aware of it?
R 43. Yeah
P 44. Yes I'm aware of it all the time
R 45. Ok
P 46. Yeah
R 47. I mean, and what do you understand about when I say a critical voice, what do you understand about that?
P 48. The, I suppose the, I would say it is the negative thoughts I think, yeah
R 49. Ok
P 50. Yeah (laughs as her phone kept buzzing)
R 51. Ok, because I think probably everyone's got a different concept of what it means
P 52. Yes of course
R 53. And I don't want to influence what I think it means in terms of what you make of it
P 54. Yes, yeah
R 55. So if you can describe it in as a full as possible way what it is for you
P 56. Oh I think I'd find that really hard to do, the critical voice, the critic in me
R 57. What's it for you, yeah
P 58. Yeah, it's the critic in me so it's the yeah I'm going to find this really hard to describe, it's the thoughts that I have, the negative thoughts I have, erm, about myself
R 59. Mhm
P 60. And my life, or about, which would be erm, I suppose sort of self-esteem and things like that
R 61. Mhm
P 62. And thoughts that I have that I'm like not good enough and things like that
R 63. Mhm
P 64. Yeah
R 65. Mmm
P 66. I can't elaborate it any more than that unless you ask me specifics about it
R 67. Ok, yeah I mean I was thinking can you give me an example of like
P 68. Yeah
R 69. What, you know, what would it say?
P 70. Yeah, so I suppose my biggest thing is I haven't got a career and that might be my biggest critic, that I'm not good enough, that I never went to university, or I never studied anything, so that would be, it so then I'm not good enough because I haven't done that
R 71. Ok
P 72. Yeah
R 73. So in your head
P 74. Yeah
R 75. You're not as good as, maybe people that have
P 76. Yes, yes
R 77. Got like a university degree
P 78. Yuh definitely yuh, yuh
R 79. So, have you kind of always felt like that, or has it been

P 80. No, I think, yeah, yeah for quite a while I think, yeah but more so recently I think yeah
R 81. Ok
P 82. Yeah
R 83. Erm, I mean are you aware of (pause) I don't know, it's difficult to say what a reason might that be, I mean more so than why might it be more so than before?
P 84. Well because I've got all this time, cause my daughter's gone and left to university and the job that I have I quite like it but it's probably not enough and I, I think I'm looking for something else
R 85. Ok
P 86. And I think if I would have gone to university, if I'd have had a degree, if I'd have had a career, I could have really gone down that pathway now
R 87. So not you've got a bit more freedom
P 88. Yeah
R 89. There's this sort of openness to life
P 90. Yes
R 91. Ok so 'what am I going to do with my life'
P 92. Yes
R 93. Because of your life is no longer on your child
P 94. Yuh
R 95. But is now on **you** and the opportunities for you
P 96. Yuh
R 97. So, it's more of a
P 98. Yuh
R 99. You know, not good enough feeling you said
P 100. Yuh, erm, (pause) yeah because I don't have those skills to do something
R 101. Ok
P 102. Yuh
R 103. Ok, so I guess I mean I'm intrigued really
P 104. Yuh?
R 105. In all of this and I, I don't want it to be, or sound like a counselling session because it's
P 106. No
R 107. It's research into
P 108. Yes yes, yes
R 109. So, I'm conscious of myself (we both laugh) what kind of questions are we going to ask
P 110. Yuh
R 111. Ok, erm, have you
P 112. And then I suppose part of this as well is that I actually don't know what I'd be interested in, so yes
R 113. Ok
P 114. So you could say, well why don't you go and do some courses and that
R 115. Yuh
P 116. Which yes, I, so my main interests would be art
R 117. Mhm
P 118. Or creative stuff
R 119. Ok

P 120. Or physical in doing stuff, I'm not, I don't like studying, I don't like sitting down at a computer, I don't like writing, I don't like any of that, I'd rather go out and dig a field up, you know
R 121. Mmm
P 122. So, erm, I've done lots of art courses
R 123. Mmm
P 124. You know, and I've thought about going to do the foundation degree at Highlands in Art, which a lot of people my age do, and they say it's amazing, but I can't afford to do that
R 125. Mmm
P 126. Erm, you know I can't afford to just take a year off work and do that
R 127. Mhm
P 128. So, erm, yeah although *****'s just inherited some money, so I keep hinting at him, well I keep hoping that he'll just say 'why don't you do that *****' but I think men you need to spell it out for them
R 129. ***** being your husband
P 130. Yes yes, so erm, but yeah, but **then** art, I remember at college I was, at school that's what I wanted to do
R 131. Ok
P 132. When I was 15 / 16 I wanted to go to art school
R 133. Ok
P 134. And the career guidance teacher at school said 'you don't want to do that, you don't get a job out of that'
R 135. Oh right
P 136. So I never did
R 137. Ok
P 138. But I probably couldn't have done it anyway because being the eldest of eight kids I had to go out to work
R 139. Mmm
P 140. Mum needed me to go out to work
R 141. Ok
P 142. So I had to do that anyway, erm and then life just went on and on, you know and I never
R 143. Mmm
P 144. Did it myself, I know people do stuff like that themselves but I never did
R 145. Mmm
P 146. I'm also quite lazy (laughs) things as well, and sometimes I feel like yuh, I should do that and then I think 'well if I did an art degree and go back to what that woman said, well what am I going to do with it' and I know loads of artists and they're not
R 147. Mhm
P 148. They, they need to find themselves a job because they're not making money in what they're doing, you know
R 149. Well that kind of suggests that there must be a purpose in what you do, you know a purpose erm, and it's also interesting that you perhaps thwarted in your potential career of going down the art route because of this teacher, erm, and your idea that (pause) you know, I don't know maybe I'm going to put words in your mouth but like the clever people who have got degrees or sort of thing that I am not comparable to them

P 150. Mmm
R 151. This kind of idea and I was wondering how that all developed
P 152. That's an interesting thought (laughs) because not necessarily everybody would think like that then
R 153. Mmm
P 154. Just because she's got a degree she's better than me sort of thing
R 155. Mmm
P 156. Yeah I don't know
R 157. It was what you kind of suggested at the beginning
P 158. Yes, yeah
R 159. And you've not explored that before?
P 160. No (said straight away)
R 161. That's interesting
P 162. Yeah
R 163. What do you make of that?
P 164. (9 second pause) yuh, but, but that's the way **my head thinks** in there, you know, and so if I'm out with my friends and they're all talking about all their jobs and stuff like that and they're like you know, how they're doing this and they're progressing and they're going and they're doing this it makes me feel small
R 165. Ok
P 166. Yeah, cause I'm **not** doing that
R 167. Mmm, it makes you feel small
P 168. Yeah
R 169. You can't take part in that discussion?
P 170. Yup. But some people I suppose, yeah, but then with other people I don't feel like that, they might be the same kind of people but I don't feel like that with them so maybe it's just the particular people or something I don't know
R 171. Mm
P 172. Don't know
R 173. Mm
P 174. Yeah (laughs)
R 175. Interesting! (pause) erm, so how do you, so you cause my next question is how do you feel when you experience your critical voice, so you said it makes you feel small, no that the small making you when they're talking about, so ok. I mean that, what, what is kind of, can give me some examples of what the critical voice says then?
P 176. (laughs) so erm, the critical, I've got a lot of critical voices I think
R 177. Are you happy to share that with me?
P 178. Yeah, I think so, I might start crying but I do cry a lot so don't take any notice of me (her eyes are watery)
R 179. That's ok, tissues (I gesture to the tissue box)
P 180. I think cause recently
R 181. And if you want to pause at any point
P 182. Yeah, yeah, yeah so recently I suppose because I am *****, I think it's menopause, I've got other friends the same age as me and they do the same thing (said in a high pitched voice) they just start crying and they don't feel like they're good enough and they feel like their kids have left home, their kids don't want

them anymore, the husband's sailing or doing whatever he's doing and then they just feel like 'well what have I got now?' you know

R 183. Mmm

P 184. So that was that, what did you say that that question was?

R 185. Mm

P 186. What other things the critical voice says to you

R 187. Yeah I was thinking of examples because it's about how do you **feel** when you experience that, when you, when you

P 188. Lonely

R 189. You feel lonely, yeah

P 190. Because, and then I suppose because a lot of my close friends they still have children so they're really busy with those children

R 191. Mm

P 192. And it was the same when I had my daughter

R 193. Mmm

P 194. All my friends are younger than me, so I again felt isolated then because and I had post-natal depression then (participant is crying at this point) erm, but because I felt isolated again, and another part of it is as well that my family all live away and I have a very big, very close family, so we've got the WhatsApp and it's always pinging, but they're always down in the house with each other or visiting each other so I feel very lonely over here because it's only me and then all my friends are busy, I mean I have other friends, you know that don't have children but, ohh, and I see them but you know, it's just, I think it's that family thing as well, I think, you know where you can just go around and have a cup of tea with your mum or something

R 195. It's a shared, the sharedness of things

P 196. So then I get, then I suppose the critical voice comes in and it's like, so what have I done with my life

R 197. Mmm

P 198. You know so I'm at this point and I feel lonely, you know I don't have my family around me so then I suppose I wonder if I've made mistakes

R 199. Do you think?

P 200. Yeah

R 201. And how do you feel when you think you might have made mistakes?

P 202. (sniffs) well then I feel lonely (laughs)

R 203. So it's a cycle

P 204. Yeah, so I, I think I'm stuck in a bit of a rut of thinking

R 205. Ok

P 206. Yeah

R 207. Goes just in that circle of 'I'm lonely, I've made a mistake, or I've made a mistake and I'm lonely and

P 208. Well not so much I've made the mistake but

R 209. I might have made a mistake

P 210. Yeah possibly, I mean, you know my sister travelled a lot as I did but she ended up going back to *****, and I'm like 'well maybe I should have gone back to ***** then I'd have been there with my family' but then I can't live in that climate either you know, so

R 211. Yeah

P 212. And then sort of, then part of me just thinks 'well this is just normal, lots of people think you know, everyone thinks you know, analyses stuff and they have down days and they have up days and all that as well', so
R 213. Mmm, so you begin questioning yourself?
P 214. Yes, yeah, yeah
R 215. Mmm
P 216. Yeah, and then I've talked to other people and they feel the same as well
R 217. Mmm
P 218. So then I think 'oh well it's no big deal, you've just got to kind of go through those days and then you have your good days' and like that
R 219. And does that help then talking to other people?
P 220. Yeah (said sort of hesitantly) yeah
R 221. It does
P 222. But then I still have those feelings you know
R 223. It doesn't take it away
P 224. Yeah and I do meditation as well, and you know, I do yoga breathing and all that sort of stuff to you know, try that, I do that erm, the dance thing, you know that *(name of dance group)* stuff which is fantastic but erm, yeah I still get that in my head
R 225. Mmm
P 226. And I think if I did really have something to focus on it would be great, even if it was my mother over here who was ill and I had to take her to the doctor so it's the self, that's you know, what purpose do I have now
R 227. Mmm
P 228. You know
R 229. That's a big question
P 230. Yeah
R 231. What is my purpose now
P 232. Yes, and I would, I imagine every woman feels like that when you get the empty nest thing you know
R 233. Mmm
P 234. So
R 235. Mmm. (pause) were you aware of like a critical voice before your daughter went away
P 236. Yes. Still that I wasn't good enough and that I didn't do all the university career thing, yes I still felt like that, yeah
R 237. Ok
P 238. Yeah, yeah
R 239. Mmm
P 240. And I think I'm not academic and I wasn't academic at school erm, so I think then maybe you know, I'm not clever enough to do that and that's why I didn't do it, but that isn't really the reason why I did it, or I didn't, I just didn't because of first I was told it wouldn't do me any good to go to art college, that was a career guidance teacher told me that, and then um, and then you know I was the eldest of eight kids and I needed to go to work cause you know there's not much money at home and all that kind of thing you know
R 241. Mmm

P 242. And then I came to live in Jersey, my father had a lot to do with stuff as well, you know cause he used to drink a lot and he was horrible, and then, and I remember once he was always questioning me, like doing the maths and he was going 'come on add this up, add this up' and I couldn't add it up quickly in my head so that made, I think that is one little thing that went back to, you know 'I'm not clever enough' because he literally did that to me, you know

R 243. Mmm

P 244. Erm, I don't know

R 245. So hearing him pressurising you

P 246. Yeah

R 247. Made you think

P 248. I mean he didn't do it a lot but there was a time when he did do it, it might have just even been one day but it was enough to shatter me kind of thing

R 249. It was quite significant for you

P 250. Yeah

R 251. Yeah, mmm (5 second pause) there's a lot isn't there (4 second pause) so at the moment, I mean you described that at the moment it's a lot worse in relation to your daughter going away but it was there before your daughter went away

P 252. Yeah

R 253. But in a different way around academia, are there any certain points, times of day, or when you notice it more or less

P 254. Yeah **definitely** like weekends

R 255. Weekends

P 256. Yeah, and the funny thing is my job, I only do four days a week, they'd like me to do five days a week, but I don't want to work five days a week erm, because I like my Fridays off and I know, when you're at work you like to get out of work erm, and I like the Friday off cause I have it, I think what I should do is actually work Fridays and then I would have a little bit more money

R 257. Mhm

P 258. And then I would have just the Friday, the Saturday and Sunday so then all the jobs and things I've done on Friday then I would fill my weekend with doing those things

R 259. Yeah

P 260. But because I'm off on Friday I arrange to meet a friend, or I go to a Pilates class, or I go for a walk with someone, or I go for lunch with someone, so I kind of do all that then and so then I have my weekend free, which was very good when I had ***** because you know it's nice to be able to get everything done and then you're free for the weekend, so but there's just that part of me when it comes to Thursday I think 'do I want to work tomorrow?' No! I don't, I just want to escape (laughs)

R 261. So it's this big spaciousness that just makes things a lot worse for you in your head

P 262. Yes

R 263. Ok

P 264. Yup, yup

R 265. And you notice that by distracting yourself actually helps

P 266. Yeah

R 267. Mmm

P 268. Or having something to do

R 269. Having something to do

P 270. That's it Georgina, I mean I could, I could you know sort the house out, I could paint the bedroom or something but I don't want to take on a big job like doing that

R 271. Mmm

P 272. Erm, yeah so that's where I think maybe, it's that part of me, the laziness part of me or something I don't know

R 273. That's an interesting concept that laziness, what is that, what do you make of that

P 274. Well I don't know, cause I'm not lazy at all (laughs) I don't consider myself lazy but then so if I had this space to fill, well why don't I just tackle that room, you know, I mean my house is quite organised and clean and tidy and everything and I do that all the time, sort that out but you know I could do stuff, more stuff in the house but I don't want to be tied in the house all the time either you know, so I do fill my time, I go for walks, I meet people and I go for walks with them, erm, and yeah so I suppose I, like *(husband)* goes surfing or sailing but I don't have those interests you know. Like my mother always used to say about my father 'I wish he had an interest' that that would be good for him and so I've been thinking 'well maybe I'm like my dad, maybe I don't have an interest in sailing or an interest in cycling a bicycle around the island, you know wearing all my lycra like people do (laughs) err, err

R 275. But I mean is that, what's behind that, is that a feeling of like 'you **should** have an interest' (pause) because that could

P 276. Mmm

R 277. Be linked to this idea of you thinking you're lazy

P 278. Mmm

R 279. Would that be something that's come up, I don't know

P 280. I don't know (exhales) I don't know

R 281. Cause you don't, you know, it sounds like if you're working, working four days a week, I'm just wondering where this idea of laziness is coming from

P 282. Hmm

R 283. Is that like a critical voice kind of thing

P 284. That's not really, maybe it is, it's just that like, you know I suppose other people if they want to do something they'll find something to do and they'll just work at it

R 285. So it's

P 286. And I just can't be bothered (laughs)

R 287. That kind of thing of motivation

P 288. Yeah, but then you know, (pause) someone said to me I would be a good counsellor, like they went on from my job, a few people have done that and assumed counselling but I don't want to sit and study, you know, I don't want to sit at a computer and study, write sheets and sheets and sheets of writing, you know

R 289. Mmm

P 290. So, yeah

R 291. So you're struggling to find your passion

P 292. Mmm, but then my passion is like creativity

R 293. Mmm

P 294. You know, so then yeah I have to find how that creative side of me, how to enact that, you know
R 295. Mmm
P 296. I suppose because that's what would be, what I would enjoy doing you know
R 297. Mmm
P 298. But I've done that as well, I've sat at home and I've sold art, and I've done it but that's again sitting on your own, I don't want to be on my own
R 299. Mm
P 300. You know, I don't mind being, I actually like being on my own sometimes, *(husband)* says 'oh you know, I've got to go away for a night' I think 'great, I've the sofa to myself' and I don't mind that, I'm actually kind of alright being on my own, erm, but yeah with the creative stuff I made art but all I was doing was just sitting on my own all the time doing it
R 301. Was the critical voice apparent when you were doing your art
P 302. No, well I don't know, I don't know, there was something else going, *(husband)*'s dad died at the time and *(husband)* was like really stressed and in an awful place with it *(daughter)* was at home then and I did these beautiful, beautiful hearts with little beads I had and stuff
R 303. Mmm
P 304. No, I was really focussed on doing them and that but then it started getting, I then the gallery asked me to do more, to do an exhibition of them cause they said they could sell them so I was doing more but then you know, by the time I got to the fifth one I was getting a bit tired of doing them you know
R 305. Mmm
P 306. So yeah
R 307. Mmm
P 308. And I suppose even as artist you'd always be looking at the next new thing to do, and I don't have those skills anyway, you know the skills to be an artist like you know, that's why if I went to do the foundation degree at Highlands it would give me the skills, some more skills
R 309. Do you need skills to do art?
P 310. Yes (said exhaling) you do need some skills, yes, yeah it does help I think, I've been to like life drawing classes and that's helped like really good but again for me, for money I can't afford, they're really expensive, I can't afford them you know, so
R 311. Mmm, I was wondering because it comes back again to what's the purpose of it, you know and that also, it just seems that there's an awful lot linked up in that you know, what is my purpose, erm, I'm not clever enough, or you know, what's my worth and, but your passion is art and creativity but I was wondering and it didn't, your critical voice didn't seem to be apparent
P 312. Mm
R 313. When you were doing the art but there was an awful lot of other stuff going on around erm, do you need, is that something, I'm just wondering what's holding you back from just doing art in a way that you want to do it?
P 314. Because it's such a broad spectrum (said laughingly) and I find that with a lot of things it's such a broad spectrum like 'where do I start' and I am, I've picked up sketch books
R 315. Ok
P 316. And I start drawing

R 317. Ok
P 318. But
R 319. Ok so a question is where, where do you start, so what's, what's stopping you from, you just, I don't know, what's stopping you from just following your instinct or
P 320. Well because I might try something but then, I might sketch something but then it's gone then, because I want to do it as a group of people like with a group of people you know, so if I went to Uni I would **be** with a group of people or learning and bouncing ideas but you know you're sitting at home with a sketch book on your own, well I'm still lonely then
R 321. So it's a
P 322. And the loneliness is part of it
R 323. So it's about a socialisation
P 324. Yuh
R 325. Art is a social thing for you
P 326. Yeah
R 327. Ok, cause I was wondering if the critical voice affected your behaviour and I guess that's where I was going with the questioning, is you know, is it, I was wondering if it stopped you from starting as it were
P 328. Yeah (5 second pause) well no cause I can't, I can't so, it stops, has the critical voice stopped me from doing the degree at er, maybe at Highlands or doing some art, I don't think so I just haven't had the opportunity to do it
R 329. Ok, mmm
P 330. I'm trying this thing at work, though, I'm going to do a lunchtime club with the kids with another woman that's like me, that likes to do art and we're going to set up this little lunchtime club to try and persuade the head teacher that we could be really good at this, and if you just let us like run an art thing, more than just half an hour at lunchtime so we're kind of working on that you know
R 331. Mmm
P 332. But we'll see where that goes because then I could incorporate that actually into my job, you know sort of thing
R 333. Mmm
P 334. Mm
R 335. Mmm, and so what happens in those moments when that critical voice is there you know when it's sort of saying 'oh, you're lonely, or you're not worth it' erm, is it just the criticism that goes on or is there some kind of dialogue that goes on, what, what happens
P 336. Oh that's hard isn't it. Or is it some dialogue that goes on in my head, um, so like for instance I, I got up this morning and I do all my jobs that I kind of do, and then yeah, and then I go 'right, I've got time now, it's half ten in the morning, what am I going to do' and then I'll think, or there'll be a WhatsApp from the family and I'll think 'oh, that'd be nice if I could go and see them' can't do that (something inaudible) and I'll think 'right what'll I do' and then I kind of just think 'well, what' yeah so it'll be dialogue like that going on in my head
R 337. Mmm
P 338. Yeah, and then I'll look for something to kind of do, and do that
R 339. Mhm

P 340. But if I had something that I was able to do like *(husband)* goes surfing or he goes windsurfing but I don't have that then, well I do, I go walking
R 341. Mm
P 342. But you know some days you can't go walking especially the last couple of months you haven't been able to walk, and I do get seasonal affective disorder
R 343. Mmm
P 344. Desperately, I know I get that, and I'd ne, I don't feel like I don't have this so much in the summer
R 345. So what happens to you during those times
P 346. During what times
R 347. When you have seasonal affective disorder
P 348. Well I feel like, yes I can't get out and I like being outside so, well I'll just, I'll be a bit sad won't I
R 349. Ok
P 350. Err
R 351. So feeling sad
P 352. Yeah, mm
R 353. Mm
P 354. So I'll just do something, don't know what I'll do, go into town or meet somebody or something and erm, get over it (laughs) and move on to the next thing, day, whatever, evening
R 355. And does that help, you know meeting someone or
P 356. Yeah
R 357. Do you get over it
P 358. And getting out, yeah
R 359. Ok because when you were talking before you said erm, about having that dialogue in your head you know, where your WhatsApp will go and you think 'oh wouldn't it be nice to go and see the family, oh but I can't, can't afford it' and that dialogue going on (pause) it seemed to sort of halt you in your doing something but then you said 'well no I'll just get on and do something else' so does, it doesn't stop you from doing things, it makes you **feel** (pause) do you understand what I mean
P 360. No but keep carrying on
R 361. Ok so, you seem to describe it as like a downward spiral so that that dialogue 'oh well I should go and see my family, or I can't'
P 362. Mmm
R 363. 'can't afford it' and then your body language seemed to suggest you just sort of spiralling down
P 364. Mmm
R 365. But then you mentioned 'well I just get on and do something else'
P 366. Mmm
R 367. So, cause initially I thought well maybe it stops you from doing anything
P 368. Oh, no it doesn't stop me from doing anything
R 369. But it doesn't stop you from doing something
P 370. No
R 371. So what happens, what happens in that moment before, between it making you feel lonely and you thinking, or you getting on and doing something else, what's, what's that moment in between

P 372. Well that moment I'll probably, so (pause) well I just live with it, and I accept it kind of thing
R 373. Mhm
P 374. Cause that's just the way it is
R 375. Mhm
P 376. Yeah (pause) yeah, that'll be it
R 377. Yeah
P 378. Yeah
R 379. So there's an acceptance
P 380. Yeah
R 381. And then
P 382. But then it's, it's an acceptance but yeah, but it's still there the next day and the next day you know
R 383. Mmm
P 384. Sort of thing, well it's not there everyday
R 385. Mm
P 386. Erm
R 387. Mm, and how do you get from that point of accepting it to getting on and doing something else
P 388. Well I just carry on with the day
R 389. Is there any kind of thinking that goes on in that point
P 390. Well yeah so I suppose in my head I think like (pause) right so, yeah, so I'll have done all my jobs and then I'll just sit down on the sofa and go 'right' and pick up the phone maybe, have a look at the phone, all that, and then put that down and go, think 'what'll I do now' so then I might go up and have a bath, yeah it's just that I've got so much time on my hands and it's just I want to fill that time, but then they say don't they that 'it's a time of rest in the winter, and it's time to rest yourself' and things like that you know, I, I'd like to have more, much more going on
R 391. Yeah
P 392. Erm, so then, well then I'll just get up and then I'll have a bath and I might think a bit in the bath again, which will be the same thought again
R 393. Mhm
P 394. 'Oh if only I had, yeah' (pause) oh probably one that would come into my head 'if I had more kids I'd still have like more things to do' because I think that might be a thing you know, just having the one child, if you have more so that'd be quite, so if I had another child you know, because maybe I regret not having another one, so you know if I had another one I'd still have another one at home, do all that
R 395. Mm
P 396. And then oh, if only I'd done something, you know
R 397. That's a lot of if only's
P 398. Yeah
R 399. And how does that feel
P 400. I think
R 401. Does that, how does that affect you

P 402. And then sometimes, sometimes then I don't give a fuck about any of it and I just think 'well, you know, my life's fine' cause I don't have any pressure, I don't ugh, I don't have this, or that sort of thing
R 403. So you explore the options of if only this
P 404. Yeah
R 405. And you've thought about that and then think 'well actually if I did have kids then I would be tied up with that so actually
P 406. Yeah
R 407. You know, sounds like you talk yourself round
P 408. Yeah, yeah
R 409. To like a sense of freedom
P 410. Yeah, so and then I've got my, you know if I've things on I really like it you know and then, yeah we could, I don't drink alcohol either
R 411. Mhm
P 412. And I think that's a massive thing, drinking alcohol is so sociable but I don't, I don't like, I'm not into drinking you know, and I don't like going to the pub, I hate going to the pub
R 413. Mmm
P 414. And that would be a sociable thing to do, wouldn't it, to go to a pub and have some sociable side there as well, there's also a lot going on with *(husband)* and I because I mean we get on alright, you know, fairly alright, but you know it's, it's us two now *(daughter)*'s gone so we've got to kind of rebuild, that's a big thing as well you know for most people so I understand, you know what's going on there, erm, and recently he's, well he's going to inherit loads of money, about half a million, so he's going to buy a big boat (laughs) and he wants to sail it all round the Caribbean
R 415. Mmm
P 416. But he hasn't said to **me** you know, he nearly bought one in the Bahamas a couple of weeks ago, and he was going to go over and sail it back, it would take him five weeks, I mean he was going to leave me on my own (said in a high pitched voice) so not only has my daughter left me but my bloody husband's going to go and leave me, I'm living in this great big fucking house all on my own
R 417. Mmm
P 418. It's not like I can go round and see my mum everyday
R 419. Mmm
P 420. You know
R 421. And then
P 422. Could go and see ***** but *****'s busy all the time you know with the kids (she's sounding angry now) it's not the same is it you know
R 423. Mmm
P 424. And then could go and see *****, could go and see the other people but yeah, and then all the other people then that I know through work they all like drinking
R 425. Mm
P 426. We went out for a walk there, and erm, at the last holiday that we had and erm, they just went for a walk for half an hour and then they all ended up in the pub and just sitting in the pub drinking (laughs)
R 427. So your social group is not (pause) where you are, your social group doesn't do the same kind of things

P 428. Yes
R 429. And your husband doesn't do the same kind of things that you
P 430. No
R 431. Like doing
P 432. I have found the groups that dance and I love the dancing but sometimes it's not **on** for a while, you know it might like, ***** hasn't been there for like three weeks so I've missed that for three weeks and then, and ***** has cut hers down to once a month sort of thing you know
R 433. Mmm
P 434. So that's, I really love that you know and that's good for me you know
R 435. And I imagine like from growing up in a large family
P 436. Mmm
R 437. Erm,
P 438. I think I grew up in a large family and I'm used to all this around me all the time
R 439. Yuh
P 440. And now I don't, and I always assumed that would be there
R 441. Right
P 442. Which is silly but you just, because that's normal isn't it so then you have that normal big, people popping in and popping, **yes** I think that's it
R 443. Yeah
P 444. But **now** I live in a house that's very quiet
R 445. Yep
P 446. But that's not normal
R 447. No
P 448. For my growing up, it's always been you know, I go home to my mum's house now my mum's still staying in the same house but my sister, husband and their two young children have moved in with her (pause) but everybody still treats that house the same as when mum was there so you get up in the morning and there's no one there (pause) half an hour later ***** will have popped in with the newspaper and he'd be having a cup of tea, ***** will have come from next door for his cup of coffee at the weekend, if it's the weekend, then they'll both go, the there'll be three or four phone calls happening, and then the next minute there'll be five people come in the house with loads of like bread or cakes or something and the whole kitchen would be chaos, then the next minute they're all gone
R 449. Mm
P 450. And so this is what's happening all of the time in my house, at home and what is normal and people in, and when I grew up in a different house it was even more because there was a row of five houses with like, every house had five or six children in it
R 451. Mhm
P 452. And mum, my mum let everyone come and play in our house so it was massively busy but now I'm in this house where everything's really quiet
R 453. Mmm
P 454. You know
R 455. Mmm, it's not like it was, it's just not the normal that you grew up with
P 456. Yeah
R 457. It's not what you expected it to be
P 458. Yeah, but then it's not like that cause I didn't have loads of kids you know

R 459. Mm
P 460. I was never that inclined to have loads of kids
R 461. Mm
P 462. Anyway so
R 463. Well it's a different, different erm, Jersey is quite different to *(home country)*
P 464. Yes, yeah the social side of things, Jersey is different you know
R 465. The cultural thing going on
P 466. Yeah
R 467. Mmm, and so you miss how it was
P 468. Yes, I have a brother over here but I don't speak to him cause he's horrible
R 469. Mm
P 470. He's nasty to women and he's horrible to, he's not been very nice to his girls either
R 471. Mmm
P 472. Been kind of rough with them, not, he hasn't done anything that, terrible, but in my books and when my, my father died last year
R 473. Mm
P 474. And erm, I was home in ***** for two weeks and he erm, yeah my brother was really horrible to me (laughs) he, he's, he just kept picking at me and picking at me and picking at me all the time (said with a high pitched voice) and making fun of me kind of thing
R 475. Mm
P 476. And I turned round I just said to him 'can you please stop that ***** because it's like upsetting me' and he carried on
R 477. Mm
P 478. And on, and on, and on
R 479. Mm
R 480. Yeah, so I just, I just decided not to speak to him anymore
R 481. Mm
P 482. (laughs)
R 483. And was he always like that before or not
P 484. Yeah he's always been like that, he's done that with other members of the family as well who haven't appreciated it
R 485. Mmm
P 486. Yeah, so
R 487. Mmm, with the other members of your family were they quite critical or picky growing up (pause) your other brothers and sisters
P 488. What like he was?
R 489. Yeah
P 490. No, not at all, no but he had erm, with my father and my father's drinking thing he had a quite a bit of a volatile relationship with my father and he drank a lot as well
R 491. Ok. So I was wondering, so part of erm, the questions that I'm asking is that do you think that the critical voice serves a function or a purpose, do you think, do you think it has a function?
P 492. Personally I'd rather I didn't have it (laughs)
R 493. You'd rather not have it?
P 494. Yes (laughing)
R 495. Ok

P 496. Yeah those doubtful thoughts, I'd rather not have them, yeah
R 497. Ok
P 498. And I wondered does like, does everybody have them as much as I do, or are there some people just wander around without much critical voice, and are they just like in a constant state of like, positiveness
R 499. Mmm
P 500. Yeah, don't know
R 501. (pause) I guess that's a really important question, isn't it, to how you know, or if they do have it, how much notice do they take of it
P 502. Yes, yeah
R 503. And how much does it affect them
P 504. Yeah
R 505. So for you, kind of the function is what would you say?
P 506. The function of the critical voice
R 507. Yeah
P 508. (pause) to annoy me (laughs)
R 509. To annoy you
P 510. I don't know what the function of it is there, I don't know
R 511. It makes you feel lonely, you said that earlier
P 512. Yeah, yeah
R 513. And annoys you
P 514. Sorry?
R 515. Annoys you
P 516. Yeah
R 517. You wish it wasn't there
P 518. Yeah
R 519. Mmm, mmm so
P 520. But I think sometimes that you can kind of get stuck in like thought patterns
R 521. Yup
P 522. Yeah, and they'll just kind of, yeah so I try to work with that, like the meditation stuff that I've done you know to try and
R 523. Mmm
P 524. To try and get that out
R 525. Ok, so can you describe what you do and how that works
P 526. (pause) yeah, so I will do the meditation, so sit down like you know the way you're supposed to sit down and meditate and just focus on my breathing
R 527. Yep, ok
P 528. And I'll do that, and I focus just on my breathing so I'll try and do that for like five or ten minutes
R 529. Ok
P 530. Erm, yeah and just focus on that, just focus on something, stop all, stop the, spiral
R 531. Ok
P 532. Thoughts like that, and then that will help
R 533. Ok so that helps
P 534. As in right, ok, well get outside, go for a walk and then that helps as well you know, then meet someone or do something
R 535. So it kind of helps to change your feelings, or just change the thoughts, just break that cycle

P 536. It breaks the thoughts, the cycle yeah
R 537. Ok
P 538. But then they still come back again
R 539. Ok
P 540. Yeah
R 541. Yeah
P 542. Yeah
R 543. But it lasts for a while, for a little bit
P 544. A little bit
R 545. Ok
P 546. Probably ten minutes
R 547. Ok
P 548. I don't know, it's really hard to tell
R 549. I know it's really hard
P 550. Minutes I'd say, maybe a minute I don't know
R 551. Ok
P 552. I don't know
R 553. Mhm, erm, and what do you make of it, you know has your feelings changed over time, or does it change in different situations
P 554. Yuh it'll change in different situations because I won't have it if I'm doing something
R 555. Right
P 556. Yuh
R 557. So when you're busy it's not really there, you don't notice it as much
P 558. Yuh
R 559. And it's those moments when there's nothing going on
P 560. Yuh
R 561. There's nothing taking your time
P 562. Yuh
R 563. Nothing you've got to do
P 564. Yuh
R 565. Mmm, mmm, (participant laughs) it, it's really an intriguing, it's, it's really interesting the fact that it's there when there's a sense of space
P 566. Yuh
R 567. Yeah
P 568. And why is it interesting like
R 569. I'm just, I just find it interesting that everyone's experience is different
P 570. Yeah
R 571. Erm, and you notice it when there's space but you don't really notice it when there's more stuff going on
P 572. Yuh
R 573. Yuh, and I'd say that's
P 574. Although I can notice it when, yuh I **can** in crowds as well
R 575. Ok
P 576. So we, I can be at ***** and *****'s for dinner
R 577. Mmm
P 578. And erm, yuh I can feel isolated in that situation as well
R 579. Ok

P 580. Yuh I can, yes I can feel that
R 581. Can you describe that for me
P 582. So, yeah, so *****'s lovely, she's really nice but she's really busy all the time isn't she so busy, busy, busy and 'I've got this going on and I've got that, I've got the yacht club and I've got this and I've got that and I've got this dinner party and I've got that and lalalala' and then, so that's ok, and, and then you'll have the others, you know who all the others are, that are there, so then they're sitting talking about like so maybe ***** and ***** are sitting there and they'll be going on about like, you know, and they'll be there in all their gear and everything and then you know, and I'll just sit there going 'oh for fuck's sake' (laughs)
R 583. So you feel excluded
P 584. So I can feel excluded there as well yeah, yeah, yeah **and** as well because they've still got young kids as well
R 585. Mmm
P 586. And I'm not **blaming** them for that
R 587. Yeah
P 588. Because they've still got young kids so they're where I was at, it's the same situation that happened to me when *(daughter)* was born
R 589. Mm
P 590. Because they didn't, I remember going round to ***** and *****'s for dinner *(daughter)* was like a month old, ***** served me dinner at eleven o'clock at night (laughs) I was breastfeeding! I was with a four-month week old baby and she serves me fucking dinner at eleven o'clock at night, so you know they're in a different zone to me totally you know
R 591. Yeah
P 592. So yeah, mmm
R 593. It's yeah, it's fascinating the way that different people's lives are kind of go on around but it's that's sense of isolation that is just the thing that excludes
P 594. Mmm, so that's that, that's there
R 595. But it takes you off erm, does it sort of, how do you deal with it in that situation
P 596. There
R 597. Yeah
P 598. (pause) umm, well I just fake it don't I, and just stay there and, actually *****'s great to talk to (laughs) she'll be great so I don't know, yeah, I suppose I'll go and talk to the kids or something, or yeah, or, I will then talk to somebody but sometimes I, I think the last time I went I felt like out of it, you know
R 599. Mmm, so you make an effort to try and be included in some way
P 600. Yeah
R 601. Whoever it's with
P 602. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah
R 603. That, that feeling
P 604. But then (said emphatically and quickly) so then, but then I look at like ***** and I don't think ***** **ever** feels like this and ***** and they **never** feel like this I don't think
R 605. Mmm
P 606. I don't think they **ever ever** feel like this. I've spoken to ***** cause ***** has spoken to me sometimes about things she's been, erm, not comfortable with or whatever, and she's understanding and understands you know because you know

we'd talk more like that and things like that but ***** and ***** are so confident you know, yeah, so I feel very different from them, yeah, yeah, and then like ***** in more in particular I would say I mean she's just like Jersey princess you know, she's had everything given to her on a plate you know so yeah, but she's worked very hard as well for stuff you know

R 607. Mmm
P 608. So
R 609. There's that sense of sort of like you know 'we're very different people'
P 610. Yeah
R 611. That kind of feeling of
P 612. Yeah, yeah
R 613. Mmm, mmm. Ok is there anything else that you haven't talked about that you wanted to say
P 614. I don't think so no
R 615. Mmm. (pause) Well thank you very much
P 616. That was it then yeah
R 617. That was it yeah, were you expecting anything else
P 618. No that was sort of what I thought it would have been yeah
R 619. Yeah
P 620. So I'm not, I don't think I'm very good at like erm, explaining how I feel (pause) yeah, or what's happening, what do you think
R 621. Well erm, (pause) yeah well there were moments when I thought erm, I was wondering if you were aware of like that kind of thought dialogue that goes on
P 622. Mmm
R 623. Erm, particularly around like the moments when you have that feeling or that, that voice or the thought in your head and then you feel very lonely, erm, (pause) and there, there seemed to be a bit of a gap there between maybe, maybe it is, maybe it goes silent for you in those periods, just that kind of feeling of 'well I accept it and that's how it is'
P 624. Mmm
R 625. Rather than a, like a voices in your head or other thoughts going on
P 626. No I think it does actually just
R 627. Just goes
P 628. There is an acceptance of it kind of thing, yeah
R 629. It just
P 630. I'll think about it maybe some more and try and see
R 631. No it's interesting actually cause it's not something erm, I've interviewed erm, three other people and that hasn't come up so that's really
P 632. Mhm
R 633. A really interesting feature actually
P 634. Right
R 635. Cause other people have been able to verbalise 'well this, I think this, this, and this and this and that' and
P 636. Mmm, I think I, I'm not very good at verbalising stuff
R 637. Ok
P 638. Thought so, yeah. Not because I can't, not because erm, not because erm, I **won't** but I just can't

R 639. Ok so it's difficult to get to form the words and to actually yeah, to actually speak them, erm, you don't know what to say
P 640. Well no because I don't think there **is** anything to say
R 641. Ok
P 642. Yeah, yeah
R 643. Ok
P 644. I think I've said what happens
R 645. Yeah
P 646. And then nothing can happen, then I suppose, I suppose I talk myself out of it then you know
R 647. Mm
P 648. Erm
R 649. Mm
P 650. So I say 'right well if we get up and we go and do something' or I do this or do that but I think what you said there, that just the growing up, you know within a massive great big family and having all that
R 651. Yeah
P 652. That was my normal and now I, I have something completely different
R 653. Yeah
P 654. You know so that's probably where maybe I get that from I don't know
R 655. And when you were younger was there a lot of dialogue, a lot of like saying about how you felt or what you thought, was it quite an open dialogue (pause) or was it not, did you not say how you thought or felt
P 656. (pause) I don't know, I would have thought there was yeah cause my mum's quite, but it was always busy our house, no probably was, probably didn't because there was probably never any time (laughs) because there was so many people in and out of the house and that a lot of the time you know
R 657. Yeah
P 658. And stuff going on constantly you know
R 659. Right, yeah didn't obviously sit down and talk about your feelings
P 660. (pause) at home?
R 661. Yeah
P 662. Probably with my mum yeah
R 663. Mm
P 664. Now more than then
R 665. Now more that then?
P 666. Yeah
R 667. Ok
P 668. When where you're the eldest of eight kids your mum doesn't have a lot of time for you I suppose does she yeah
R 669. Gets you to do everything probably
P 670. Yeah (laughs)
R 671. '***** can you just fetch that?'
P 672. Yeah, yeah I suppose, I mean I had, I had a good childhood and stuff you know, its fine, anyway
R 673. Well thank you very much
P 674. That's ok, that's alright

Transcription of Interview Five

R 1. I'll just check it's going then I'll put that to one side
P 2. I've got some things written down
R 3. Oh no that's absolutely fantastic that, erm, that you've thought about it
P 4. Mmm
R 5. Err, ok so just to confirm you're over 18
P 6. I am
R 7. And, well, I'll describe what I see as the critical voice in terms of cause everyone's got a different picture of what it is
P 8. Yes
R 9. Erm, so for me the way I describe it, I describe it as a voice but it essentially could be thoughts or images or any kind of sound you know, that sort of 'arhhhhhh'
P 10. Yes
R 11. Sound, it's, it's that type, type of thing
P 12. Yes
R 13. So it's usually negative
P 14. Yes
R 15. Derisory but either towards yourself or towards other people it could be someone cutting you up in the road and you go 'what are you doing, this is my lane' you know
P 16. Yes
R 17. Kind of that sort of thing so it's all of that sort of critical element of thought processes, voice, the little voice in your head, so is that the same kind of thing that you would describe
P 18. Yes
R 19. Something
P 20. And it erm, when I saw it written on, in the church the, the flyers, it absolutely jumped out on me
R 21. Did it?
P 22. At me because I had, we might have to record this but, I'd not
R 23. It is recording now is that ok
P 24. Oh yes, yes, yes
R 25. Yuh?
P 26. But I haven't actually thought of it as the critical voice but as, oh the inner critical voice but when you'd put that on the title, that, suddenly I thought that's what it is
R 27. Ah!
P 28. That's it, that's it, that's it
R 29. Yuh, it really
P 30. Jumped out
R 31. Jumped out, touched, touched something
P 32. Yeah, yeah
R 33. And I also just need to confirm erm, that you recognise that that voice is your own, coming from yourself as opposed to coming from an external party
P 34. Yes
R 35. Erm, so you might call that, you know kind of reference a hallucination or something

P 36. No, nothing like that
R 37. Erm, and that you, you don't have a diagnosis of mental health issues, voices or hallucinations
P 38. No
R 39. Are you a psychotherapy student?
P 40. No (laughs)
R 41. Erm, and we've not met before
P 42. No
R 43. So that's my checklist erm, also can I collect some demographics?
P 44. Yes
R 45. Would you mind if I asked you your age
P 46. Yes, err, *****
R 47. Ok, gender female?
P 48. Female
R 49. Um, ethnicity what would you say
P 50. White British
R 51. And do you have a profession
P 52. *****
R 53. Um, Jersey location cause I was looking at interviewing outside of jersey as well but at the moment I'm just doing Jersey
P 54. Yes
R 55. So that's fine, I mean I've got some questions or do you want to go right ahead with what you've got written down?
P 56. No, you, you cause I think it's probably easier to, to for you to ask the questions and then I'll, I'll fill in if I need to
R 57. Brilliant
P 58. With other things
R 59. I think that's the really important thing because erm, although I have identified some questions they are really guidelines or guide questions and I think what erm, I would really love you to do is to say what is important to you
P 60. Ok
R 61. So if my questions don't relate to what you've got to say that's absolutely fine
P 62. Ok, ok
R 63. We'll go with that
P 64. I might cry but I see you've got tissues
R 65. That's ok
P 66. So that's fine
R 67. And if at any point you want to stop the interview that's not a problem
P 68. Yes, yes
R 69. We, at that point you can chose to erm, halt it completely and I won't use your data, won't use the interview
P 70. Mhm
R 71. Erm, or you could carry on, whatever **you** feel, you know you, you lead this and you tell me what's right for you
P 72. Mhm
R 73. If when you go over, go away from here and you think back and think 'do you know what, no that's not right for me now, I don't want you to use my data' just let me know it's **not** a problem

P 74. No, it, that will be fine
R 75. Ok
P 76. Ok
R 77. Did you want to start or do you want me to ask
P 78. So you, you ask a question for me
R 79. Ok so the first one is, is quite general so erm, are you aware of a critical element to your thoughts and inner speech
P 80. Yes I am, all through my life
R 81. Can you describe it for me
P 82. So it's um, it's, it's thoughts and they affect my feelings
R 83. Mmm
P 84. But once I heard the words inner critical voice I then thought, it's, it's mostly a voice, it's, it's mostly a telling off
R 85. Mhm
P 86. It's a reprimand erm, and it comes from childhood I remember it, as long as I can remember I can remember telling myself off
R 87. Telling **yourself** off
P 88. Yeah, yeah
R 89. Can you, would you like to
P 90. So, so what I wrote down was some thoughts that, that seem to be the triggers
R 91. Mhm
P 92. So the first one I've written is 'come on, **come on**, come on' to myself 'come on, speed up, do this quicker' erm 'pull yourself together' erm that's the 'come on' it sort of jolts me and makes me think I've got to do better
R 93. Mhm
P 94. So that's the first thought that I have and then there's a disparaging thought, you know 'what, what are you **thinking** of, you can't possibly dot dot dot' so it might be 'you can't possibly consider doing that, you can't possibly go there' (participant's phone rings) I'm sorry I'll turn this off (participant turns her phone off) erm, you erm, 'what are you thinking of' it's a very much a err, erm, err, it's another jolt it's, it's 'what are you thinking of *****, what are you' you know 'you can't, you can't be serious
R 95. Mmm
P 96. It's that sort of thing
R 97. Mm
P 98. Erm, and then I've quietened down this one but I used to say it to myself a lot which is 'you **are** an idiot'
R 99. Mhm
P 100. It's the intonation, the intonation that is quite important in the critical voice
R 101. Ok
P 102. So the
R 103. So the intonation being on '**are**'
P 104. You **are** an idiot, what are you **thinking** of
R 105. Right
P 106. It's, it's erm, it's, it's right inside (said with a shaky voice)
R 107. Mmm
P 108. So that's, that's but I have, I have erm, made that go down in my erm, I used to say it a lot 'you are an idiot'

R 109. Mmm

P 110. Erm, one illustration erm I want to tell you Georgina is of erm, when I was collecting my sons from school in the car and now the oldest one must have been about five, he was very young and I meant to collect another child at the same time but I completely forgot about him and I got half-way home in the car and then suddenly I realised ***** 'gosh I've forgotten *****' and so I said 'you are' to myself 'you **are** an idiot, you **are** an idiot, idiot, idiot, idiot' and then from the back after a long pause then ***** suddenly said 'I love you mummy' and it was, erm, he was trying to reach out to me to err, comfort me at that time but it, it made me think I don't want him to learn that, erm, that way of thinking so, erm

R 111. So, you thought I don't want him to learn that

P 112. I don't want him to learn that thought sequence from me

R 113. And did that then change anything for you, what happened as a result of that realisation?

P 114. Well I remembered it from then onwards thinking I mustn't be so hard on myself

R 115. Ok so it then changed the way you thought or changed the way that you felt about yourself

P 116. It changed, no it didn't change that, what it changed was that I must be careful not to say that to myself

R 117. Ok

P 118. And I've since recently heard one of my colleagues say it when she's forgotten something at work or done something that she thought, and she, she says to herself 'oh I'm such an idiot' and I instantly put my hand on her arm, I've done it a few times now and said 'don't say that to yourself, just don't say that to yourself, that's not right'

R 119. Mhm

P 120. Erm

R 121. So your motivation to, would it be right to, to stop that thought was because your son heard it and you didn't want him to model it

P 122. Yes, yes and also it pulled me up and made me realise actually the way he's trying to comfort me from a child to comfort an adult must mean that he could recognise something very hard about the way I was talking to myself

R 123. Mmm

P 124. That he didn't like and that he wanted to somehow comfort me

R 125. Mmm

P 126. So it just made me reflect, self-reflect and, and sort of be critical about being so critical about myself if you can imagine that

R 127. Yes

P 128. Yeah

R 129. That's an interesting story

P 130. Yeah, erm, the other thoughts I have are 'you should have, you should' it's the word should

R 131. Mmm

P 132. 'you should have done that'

R 133. Mmm

P 134. Erm, and then there's ones that, one, thoughts that make me stop doing something or thinking I can do something and the voice says 'don't even **think** you can do that, don't even **think** you can say that'

R 135. Mmm
P 136. 'don't even **think** you, you should go there, you could go there'
R 137. Mmm
P 138. Or 'don't even **think** you should think that' you know there are a lots of erm, err, it's sort of erm, it's like a full stop for me, it means I can't, I can't take something further, I can't do something
R 139. Mmm, and it stops you from doing that
P 140. Yep, yuh, and then there are, I'm, I've got quite a **poor** body image and so there's lots of things about my body so, erm, 'no you can't do that you're too fat, no you're, you can't do that you're too old, too unfit, too, too, too' it goes on and on
R 141. Mmm
P 142. Erm, 'you look ridiculous in that' erm, so there's (exhales) that stops me doing things like exercise or erm, dancing, or you know doing something that I think other people are going to say 'oh look at her'
R 143. Hmm
P 144. (clears throat) So yeah
R 145. So the voice of judgement
P 146. Yes
R 147. Judgement about yourself but involves other people and the potentiality of other people seeing you
P 148. Definitely, yes, very self-conscious and I've always been self-conscious
R 149. Mmm
P 150. So, erm, that feeds into it
R 151. So what, (clears throat) what is it, is it a case of you're thinking that they might be thinking something
P 152. (pause) yes, very much so, I think what other people think of me is important and I try not to let it rule me but it was very much how I was brought up
R 153. Mhm
P 154. And I guess we'll touch probably on some of your questions about where does this voice come from erm, but it does come from childhood, you know, you, you had to be presentable, you had to erm, look (pause) pretty or look decent or behave yourself well and so drawing your attention to me was not something that was encouraged, in fact it was frowned on, so I, I suppose exercising is a way of erm, putting yourself into some clothing like going jogging you wouldn't jog in this sort of garb, you'd get into something more clingy and that's absolutely you know, 'you can't possibly wear that'
R 155. Ok
P 156. So it's that, that sort of thing
R 157. Mm
P 158. Yes
R 159. So you said it's, erm, I'm just thinking (pause) I, it wasn't part of, I mean it is part of where does it come from, is part of it but that wasn't really the focus of my research but you've, you've mentioned it and I wondered if you wanted to go into that a little bit
P 160. Well only so far as erm, um, I'm very close to my mother and I feel that the way that I was brought up was quite, quite strict. She acknowledges that now that you know I was the first child and, and the strictness was not there so much for

the other children, um, and I was the only daughter so we were always together and I'm very close to my mum but erm, I hear her, her strictness come through

R 161. Right, so

P 162. Erm

R 163. When you hear that voice saying 'you shouldn't' or 'you must do this'

P 164. Yes

R 165. It's like that

P 166. It's sort of her voice, it's not her, it's not her, but it's, it's her, it's, it's the way I've been brought up yeah

R 167. Mhm, mhm

P 168. So, I did write down 'smile and the whole world smiles with you, cry and you cry alone' and that's very much erm, what they used to say, erm

R 169. Who's they?

P 170. Mum and dad

R 171. Ok

P 172. Yup, yup and so you put on this face, you put on that persona

R 173. You present yourself well

P 174. Yes, yes

R 175. And everything is fine with the world

P 176. Yes, yes, yes, so I don't, I haven't told anyone about this, um, not this interview but this inner critical voice

R 177. Mmm, you've never really spoken about it before?

P 178. No, no

R 179. Mmm, because you mentioned that your mum said that she acknowledges that she was quite strict and I wondered if you had explored that strictness with her

P 180. I think it would be a good thing to do

R 181. I, you know, it wasn't that I was saying that you

P 182. I know

R 183. Because

P 184. I know but that's a very good point, I think that is a good thing to do erm, I don't want her to feel guilty though about it because it was how she was at the time

R 185. Mmm

P 186. But she was very cautious with me

R 187. Mm

P 188. And I was very timid as a child, very timid, so very much (pause) clinging to her and she did all the talking and I was behind

R 189. Mhm

P 190. Erm, and so there is that sense of coming out as I got older and into the limelight and taking more responsibility for myself and, and yet still frightened about that so, drawing back on this inner voice I think as the guide to what behaviour was expected of me

R 191. Mmm

P 192. And how I was supposed to live I suppose

R 193. Mmm

P 194. Mmm

R 195. And that shaped, you think that shaped

P 196. Shaped

R 197. Shaped who you are now

P 198. Yes and because of that I think it's difficult to get rid of it
R 199. Mmm
P 200. Um, perhaps
R 201. Mmm
P 202. But yeah
R 203. It makes it very, I think that's one of the main questions that I'm asking in this research is 'should one get rid of it, is it (pause) all bad' and I wonder you know, that's what I'm exploring, is there more to it, what is the purpose of it
P 204. I think it comes from erm, (pause) yeah, from, from, from being cautious and not wanting to make mistakes and so you, you, you have this, this voice but I think it can be very erm, negative and a dampener on life and a dampener on everything
R 205. Mmm
P 206. And I, I, I feel it's been quite a disservice to me actually, I think it's made me (pause) erm, you know I'd love to, to dress in a bohemian style, I'd love to dance madly, I'd love to let my hair down, and I just can't do that
R 207. Mmm
P 208. And I think life's for living and yet, and I'm encouraging our sons to do it but I can't do it myself
R 209. Mmm
P 210. Erm
R 211. What do you think would happen if you were to do those things?
P 212. Erm, (pause) I think I would be misunderstood by my, my family, my husband, perhaps my, my friends, yeah I just would find it, it's, it's thinking about other people and I shouldn't be thinking about other people, you know, certainly at my age I should be living how I want to live
R 213. So the thoughts of other people are important
P 214. Important
R 215. To you
P 216. Yeah, and they're **very** important to my mother
R 217. Mmm
P 218. What people think is, is key erm
R 219. Sort of rules for life, this you know, how one should be, erm, but also the, (pause) behind that is saying 'well actually I value what you say so I'm going to follow your rules'
P 220. Yes, and they worked for her
R 221. Mmm
P 222. And she has a really interesting life, and (pause) I suppose I'd like a part of that really
R 223. What do you mean
P 224. Erm, I'd like to live the sort of life that she leads and I don't live that sort of life, she's much more gregarious and sociable and (pause) yeah, just she's a better person I suppose, and I don't feel that
R 225. Mmm
P 226. Yeah but I'd like to, but I, I don't think I've answered your question about would you want to, you know is it always a negative and would you, is it always right to have erm, (pause) I mean I'm, I'm thinking about faith, my faith is very important to me and that's full of goodness, so that's full of love and patience, kindness,

mercy, forgiveness, acceptance, that sort of experience and so you feel emboldened, and you feel relaxed and you feel (exhales) at peace with yourself

R 227. Mmm

P 228. When you're thinking in terms of faith which I think is a positive whereas this inner voice is everything again, err, err, contrary to that

R 229. Mmm, mmm

P 230. It's, its, it's very hard, it's very cold

R 231. Mmm

P 232. It's very stern

R 233. Mmm

P 234. It's not pleasant

R 235. Mmm, harsh and cutting

P 236. Mhm, mhm

R 237. Mmm

P 238. And very hard on myself but also very hard on other people so if I'm watching the news I'm very cynical and sarcastic, you know my asides are very cynical and sarcastic about politics and I feel very **despairing** about the world, and so I'm critical about them

R 239. Mmm

P 240. As well

R 241. Mmm

P 242. And I feel it's a very (exhales) unnecessarily hard way of living really, so I think I would like to get rid of it (laughs) that's a long answer to your question

R 243. Mmm, it's, it's a fascinating topic because it (pause) you speak in terms or erm, you know, almost good and bad if you can put it that way, so the good being your faith, the good, the love

P 244. Mhm

R 245. You know the warmth erm, and the bad being the harsh critical voice and then I'm thinking about your mum and the way that she was very strict and some of these voices have developed as a result of, of things that you've been taught

P 246. Mhm

R 247. And then I'm wondering where the love is there, in amongst that relationship

P 248. Oh very much so, yes, yes

R 249. So there's a duality to that

P 250. Yes, yes there is

R 251. And what, how do you make of that

P 252. That's very crazy isn't it, erm, she's a very interesting person because she's very hard on herself, very hard on herself and I think that's where I get it from, I've listened to how she's responded to herself much like my son did with me, and erm, that's quite an interesting link really, and, and so I've learnt the mechanism that she has for herself but she exudes love and you know, kindness and she'd do anything for anyone and

R 253. Mmm

P 254. Erm, she and I have a very close loving relationship, erm, err, so it's, it's not now it was when I was a little child

R 255. Mmm

P 256. That she was very harsh

R 257. Mmm

P 258. Erm, yeah
R 259. So she, she's changed over time
P 260. Erm, (pause) she's just erm, she's just, she just thinks of other people before herself, it's, she's quite sacrificial in the way she lives so, she erm, she, she, she would do loads for other people and she's (pause) loads for the family, you know, so she's not erm, she's not, she's not harsh with other people, it's with herself
R 261. Mmm
P 262. And she was quite strict as a parent, you know she wouldn't let us get away with anything
R 263. Mhm
P 264. Erm, (pause) and she was fierce about weight, she's fierce about her own weight
R 265. Mhm
P 266. Her mother was very obese and she said 'I'm never going to be like that' and she never has, very strict with herself but of course I couldn't keep up with that
R 267. Mmm
P 268. And I err, have a sweet tooth and she was very cross with me for becoming (pause) tubby I suppose in my, when I was nine, ten (pause) and I felt her displeasure, well no, no, her embarrassment for me being slightly overweight I mean now it's, it's laughable because I wasn't wildly overweight but then it was an issue
R 269. Mmm
P 270. Erm, and I remember being deeply ashamed and I do feel very **ashamed** of myself, this critical voice makes me very ashamed of myself, ashamed of my figure, ashamed of my (pause) my thought processes, erm, ashamed of not being the person that I think I should be
R 271. Mmm
P 272. Or could be
R 273. And I guess that comes back to the question, is, is that the person that you want to be
P 274. (pause) I want to be more at peace with myself
R 275. Mmm
P 276. I want to be more relaxed, I want to not have to erm, be checked all the time
R 277. Mmm
P 278. By this inner person, inner, not person, inner voice, inner thought process
R 279. You want it to stop halting you from, well holding you back
P 280. Yes, yes
R 281. Mmm (pause) erm, are there any particular **times** that the critical voice becomes more dominant, or you notice it more?
P 282. Erm (pause) if I, if I, I'm quite a perfectionist, well I am a perfectionist so if I feel that something hasn't gone as well as I think I **could** do then that's when the, the voice starts to, to do something, to say something, erm, I think also winter time err, is, is a time when I get lower emotionally and I think there's more time in the winter erm, to think about things cause you're not out and doing stuff and
R 283. Mmm
P 284. You're not in the sunshine and I, I, I think my mood affects the voice, so the voice is more prevalent when I'm alone and I've got less to do
R 285. Ok
P 286. Erm, and that happens more in the winter times

R 287. Mmm
P 288. Erm
R 289. So when it's dark
P 290. I don't like being alone, I, I find it's, it's where the voice is free to talk
R 291. Ok
P 292. You know, and
R 293. That's interesting isn't it because you, you mentioned earlier that the thought of, so when you were alone it's more prevalent but also it stops you from socialising
P 294. Mmm
R 295. Because of the potential kind of criticism of other people
P 296. Yeah, socially erm, it's not easy, I've got, I think I do a big act actually erm, but somebody's only got to mention something like I might say 'what do you do' and then if they say what they do and I don't understand it that completely envelops me, you know, if they, if they give an answer of a job and I have no idea what that is suddenly I'm completely flawed and I feel '(sharp intake of breath) I don't know what that is at all, I'm going to have to crawl under a stone now' you know how can I follow this
R 297. So what does it mean to you when you don't understand what it is
P 298. It makes me feel really inadequate (pause) that erm, I've failed
R 299. You've failed?
P 300. Mhm
R 301. Failed to know about all different types of jobs
P 302. Yeah
R 303. And that links in with 'I'm an idiot'
P 304. Yep
R 305. Mmm, so this (pause) thing behind there is saying that you **ought** to know about lots of different professions and you **ought** to know what that means, you **ought** to be, I don't know (pause) cleverer
P 306. Yes, definitely
R 307. Mmm, something like that
P 308. Yeah (pause) it's really good that you get, that you understand
R 309. Are you ok?
P 310. Yeah, fine (pause) so it, so yes, erm, easily ashamed erm, very low self-esteem, I think that's the outcome of this voice
R 311. Mmm
P 312. And confidence is low
R 313. So it, it lowers your self-esteem and makes you feel less confident
P 314. Yes
R 315. Mhm
P 316. And in my job for **years**, I've done my job for 33 years but I would say in the first 15, 20 years I used to think 'it's only a matter of time before I'll be found out' that's probably quite a common thought that's 'it's only a matter of time before they'll realise I don't know something, I don't know this job, I don't know how to
R 317. Mmm
P 318. how to be' and that, that critical voice comes in so if I did act in some way, or I did something that I thought no, that, I haven't done that right or I could do that better, erm, the voice would say 'you see, it's only a matter of time' so that critical

inner voice is, is, was there until after about 15, 20 years I thought 'come on *****, really you do know your job'

R 319. Mmm

P 320. And

R 321. You built up your experience by then that gave you that foundation of 'actually I can do this'

P 322. Yeah

R 323. So that experience built up your self-esteem in that way

P 324. Yeah

R 325. And is that critical voice still there about your job? Does it ever appear?

P 326. I think the job means that that's always there and it has to be there to some extent, you have to self-analyse, you have to critique your actions, you're always thinking 'can I learn from this experience'

R 327. Mhm

P 328. Yes in a different way I could have done this, or could have supported somebody so, I think the nature of the job erm, allows one to be critical and it feeds into that

R 329. Mmm

P 330. And that's one of the reasons why I'm going to give up this summer because I just feel I need to do something that's less life and death

R 331. Ok

P 332. And less critical

R 333. Mmm

P 334. Erm

R 335. So the job hasn't helped you with your sense of you know, erm, with your critical voice I suppose

P 336. Yes, yes, and that it's fed into it really

R 337. It's fed into it

P 338. And I did an MSc in erm, in erm, err, well doesn't matter what it was but it was to do with ***** and erm, and I felt that it **taught** me how to be even **more** critical

R 339. Mhm

P 340. And I remember doing the critical, err, evaluation erm, module and then about a year afterwards thinking 'wow it's just upped me even more, upped my critical abilities even more' I don't actually think this is very healthy for me

R 341. Mmm

P 342. Erm, but it was, it, you, you've learnt something now and you can't unlearn it erm, so yes the job's not, you could say it's tailor made for somebody like me but somebody that's self-analysing and self-critical

R 343. Because I was just wondering if it erm, because sometimes it can motivate you to do a better job because you're scared of being found out so you put more effort into it

P 344. Mmm

R 345. And that takes, that costs a lot

P 346. Yes, it's tiring

R 347. Mmm. But what you're also saying is that actually 'do you know what, I've had enough now, I don't need to have this in my life any more'

P 348. Mmm, mmm yes

R 349. And so it's somewhere inside of you, you've decided to be kinder to yourself?

P 350. Yes

R 351. To, to not sort of be living in that, that state of you know constant critique
P 352. Yes, it's ti, it's not that I'm bored of it but I am fed up with it now
R 353. Yuh
P 354. Erm, lived with it a long time
R 355. Mhm
P 356. I feel it's created an enormous amount of anxiety in me that didn't need to be there
R 357. Mmm
P 358. Erm, I've developed hypertension and I wonder if that's an element of it, always on the …
R 359. Mmm
P 360. On the state of alert
R 361. Mmm
P 362. And, and I think doing a more gentler job might just be the right thing for my health really
R 363. Mmm
P 364. Mental and physical health
R 365. Mmm, it sounds like you've thought about it and there's something that thing to do
P 366. Yeah
R 367. It is the right thing to do to be kinder
P 368. Yes, yes
R 369. Mmm, I wonder how, how did you get to that point
P 370. Erm, I think being diagnosed with hypertension was the, one of the key reasons erm, and also work has changed over the years and in this last five years I feel that the blame culture has absolutely taken off …
R 371. Mhm
P 372. In my career
R 373. Mhm
P 374. And erm, I'm already deeply self-critical so then if I'm criticised at work erm, it's just like raining down on my head a tonne of bricks
R 375. Mmm
P 376. Because I already know that you know, I could have worked better in that sphere or I could have done something different erm, I don't need other people to tell me
R 377. Mmm
P 378. Erm, so when they do tell me erm, its, it's, it's so hard to take
R 379. Mmm
P 380. Erm, that it's, it damages my mental health actually
R 381. Mmm
P 382. I feel, so that's, that's the reason why I want to change
R 383. Mmm
P 384. Mmm
R 385. Ok (pause) I wondered also if there was any kind of dialogue that goes on erm, with the critical voice for you (pause) apart from you know the critical element so when you're saying, earlier on you said that you used to say to yourself 'god you're such an idiot' erm, or words to that effect
P 386. Yeah

R 387. Over a period of time what, because of that incident it made you stop and so expanding that out to other forms of the critical voice is there a, a dialogue or a

P 388. There is erm, I've, I've learnt to mediate err, or mitigate against it erm, so I'll listen to the critical voice and then another part of me will say 'oh come on, come on that's, that's too much'

R 389. Mmm

P 390. Erm, and sometimes I'll actually swear (laughs) and say erm, 'fuck it I'm going to do it anyway' (both laugh)

R 391. Love it! (laughs)

P 392. So there's erm, there's a sort of reasoning voice through it, through the middle of it

R 393. Yuh

P 394. That's saying, that's saying 'you don't have to, you don't have to accept that criticism, that's too much'

R 395. Mmm

P 396. Erm,

R 397. And there's that you know, erm, devil may care attitude

P 398. Yeah

R 399. Fuck it!

P 400. Yeah, exactly, exactly, erm,

R 401. Would that be that bohemian side

P 402. Well I'd love to think it was erm, yes, err (pause) but I've written, I've written here 'it's important to know that that fluctuates'

R 403. Ok

P 404. So my courage to, to stand up against the critical voice fluctuates according to how my mood is on that day so

R 405. Ok

P 406. Err, sometimes it's just, I'm, I'm just overwhelmed by the, the negativity and I can't do anything but accept it erm, and then other days I can rise up against it

R 407. Mhm

P 408. I've got the courage to say 'no, that's, that's too much'

R 409. Mmm

P 410. Mmm, and I don't know quite (pause) when, when it's, when it's strong, when it's weak, it's a bit like self-esteem and confidence some days I'm, I'm ready to take on the world and other days I want to crawl under a duvet and I'm very up and down erm,

R 411. And there's no erm, points that lead up to that that you could say 'oh well you know, erm, that was because of that' or any kind of analysis around when those moments happen

P 412. Yes, erm, I know it's worse if I feel lonely and I do feel lonely quite a bit so when I feel particularly lonely I feel I'm at my lowest ebb

R 413. Mmm

P 414. Erm

R 415. Mmm

P 416. But if I feel you know, things are going well, or socially, or I've got things to look forward to I (pause) yes, I, yes, the menopause doesn't help of course

R 417. Ok

P 418. that's kicked in as well and that's robbed I think quite a bit of my confidence

R 419. Mhm
P 420. Erm
R 421. Can I ask how long that's been going on for, was it
P 422. Erm,
R 423. When did you notice that
P 424. Well about eighteen months, I've been not menstruating and I think the erm, the confidence, it's all wrapped up so it's just that I can't cope with the changes in my career erm,
R 425. Mmm
P 426. As well as I did
R 427. Mmm
P 428. My confidence at work is less but then my concentration is less and my memory is less so I just think well, you know it's not so easy to cope here
R 429. Mmm
P 430. And, yes, so that's not helped the situation
R 431. Mmm so that's roundabout the same time it's all happening there
P 432. Mmm, mmm, mmm
R 433. And before that you know maybe two years ago how was, how was it then
P 434. My critical voice or my confidence
R 435. Yeah, I guess, yuh, whatever is, all of it
P 436. Erm, critical voice has always been the same I would say
R 437. Mhm
P 438. But my confidence is less
R 439. Ok so it has, you had more confidence perhaps two years ago
P 440. Yeah, yeah, yeah (pause) yeah
R 441. And how do you feel about that
P 442. Erm, a bit, bit worried cause I think is this the slippery slope now to older age where you just think erm, you know, is this the start of memory loss I just can't keep things in my head but then when you read up about the menopause this could go on for a while and this is just hormone changes and erm, that's, that's not the critical voice bit of it, it's just
R 443. Yeah
P 444. An anxiety there (laughs)
R 445. It seems all to be linked and one has an effect on the other
P 446. Yes, yes it feeds in
R 447. More than one thing actually, you know, there's the critical voice, the confidence, the job and then erm
P 448. Yes
R 449. Menopause you would say
P 450. Yes
R 451. Yeah
P 452. Yes
R 453. All of these things interplaying
P 454. Yes and the job changing
R 455. Yeah
P 456. Yeah becoming more blame cultured
R 457. Mmm

P 458. Erm, the feelings that I have about the critical, from the critical voice I've written here erm, I do tend to blame myself first

R 459. Ok

P 460. And then **much** later on I think actually that it might not be my fault (said tentatively) but like **always** you know it's very quick 'huh, that's my fault, I should have done that better' or erm 'oh gosh that was forgotten, that was, that was me, I should have' erm

R 461. So that's your default setting

P 462. Yeah, so one illustration I have is erm, when I was nursing this was way back in the eighties and I was in London doing night duty and I was doing night duty relief which meant I was on a different ward each, each night and the night officer, the nursing officer err, used to do err, a ward round at one o'clock, two o'clock in the morning and she would expect me as the newly, well the nurse in charge to remember thirty five patients and all their diseases and why they were there and she would expect me to, she would shine a torch at each bedside and I would have to say the name and the diagnosis of the person and she was furious if we forgot or, yes, just didn't know and it never, ever crossed my mind that this was an unreasonable expectation that somebody who walked in at that ward at nine o'clock and by one o'clock needed to know everything erm, but it didn't cross my mind for years I just, I just took the Cardex into the office all my lunch break, at twelve o'clock was trying to memorise thirty five patients

R 463. Mmm

P 464. Erm, and feeling absolutely gutted if I got it wrong and feeling the, you know, that I was a hopeless nurse and all of that and I just think now how unreasonable and I'm really quite cross about it that I was made to feel so belittled

R 465. Mmm

P 466. And it did such damage to my confidence as a ***** erm, but that's to illustrate the blame you know, I felt that I should have done it, I should, and I felt an idiot

R 467. Mmm

P 468. And it goes back all those feelings that you feel so I thought that was quite a good illustration of the blame

R 469. Mmm, yeah

P 470. The self-blame that comes from it

R 471. Mhm (pause) and so (pause) in terms of if it has a function it halts you

P 472. Mhm

R 473. Erm, it decreases your confidence, makes you question yourself

P 474. Yes, mhm, very much

R 475. Am I jumping in there? Erm, to make sure 'have I done that right' you know 'am I going to be found out' erm, and I wonder if there was any other function at all, you mentioned that it makes you improve your game as it were, you know, to make sure that you're more on top of things so increasing your hypertension, making sure that you're doing a better job

P 476. Yeah

R 477. Erm

P 478. It feeds into my perfectionism

R 479. Perfectionism

P 480. But maybe my perfectionism has come as a result of the inner critical voice, I don't know which came first actually

R 481. Mmm
P 482. Erm, but yes it helps me erm, develop skills, my skills so whatever I chose to do I'll try and do it to the best of my ability and I'll critique myself along that path
R 483. Yeah
P 484. Erm, until I've got somewhere with the skill, whatever it can be, sewing, playing an instrument, erm, learning a language, you know, whatever it is
R 485. So it's important for you to do your best
P 486. Absolutely
R 487. The best that you can
P 488. Yeah, yeah
R 489. And what is that best, you mentioned you've got a masters, erm, you know, is it possible for other people to judge that in a way that's different to yours?
P 490. That's an interesting question erm, I suppose there's an invisible expectation err, on myself to, to, to achieve things, erm, to demonstrate that I'm not an idiot
R 491. Mmm
P 492. And it feeds into feminism where I've got three younger brothers and a father all of whom are old school I would say, yeah, and erm, you know women, women aren't, aren't as key as, as men and my career was never sort of erm, important in terms of where I was going
R 493. Mmm
P 494. Compared to my brothers, erm, and so I'm living up to that ex, or trying to disprove that expectation
R 495. So you're fighting against that …
P 496. Yeah
R 497. Assumption to prove a point
P 498. Yeah
R 499. Mmm
P 500. Illustrated by one of my parent's friends who was a erm, a consultant who said at a dinner party and I don't know why I'm saying this but he said erm, he turned to me and he said 'now my dear what are you, what's, what do you think you're going to do for a career' and I said, I'd just started nursing and I said 'erm, I'd like to do an MSc and a Phd' and his retort was 'ohaw my dear!' and erm, and to me it just made me turn round and think 'damn you, right I'm going to do it' so the MSc was for no other reason years, twenty years later than to prove this blooming man wrong (I laugh)
R 501. 'see I told you I can do it!' (laughs)
P 502. And it was a wonderful moment erm, to, to get that MSc under my belt having done not very well in my O levels and even worse in my A levels, I wouldn't be able to do the career I've done now
R 503. Mmm
P 504. Because you need two or three A levels don't you and I didn't get that so I've been chasing tail …
R 505. Mmm
P 506. all this time but that was just too, and I, we laugh about it now, my parents and I, do you remember 'yes I remember' and they laugh about it but it, it has such a serious point underneath
R 507. Yuh
P 508. Doesn't it

R 509. Yeah it says a lot about your values you know, that you're quite a fighter
P 510. Yes
R 511. That it's important to you to be seen
P 512. I think taken seriously
R 513. To be taken seriously
P 514. Yes
R 515. To be on a, an equal par
P 516. Yes
R 517. You mentioned feminism and men and women on that equal level
P 518. Yes
R 519. And respected
P 520. Yes
R 521. Mmm
P 522. Very much so
R 523. So that, that 'Fuck you!' attitude, excuse my language
P 524. Yes
R 525. Has, has served a purpose for you
P 526. Yes
R 527. In terms of getting you to that point and proving a point
P 528. Yes
R 529. So it contains a social, erm, there's meaning there socially, not just individually
P 530. Yes, yes
R 531. And in a family
P 532. Yeah
R 533. It goes (inhales) quite wide
P 534. Yes
R 535. It's funny these things that drive us isn't it?
P 536. I know, if only he, probably has **never** remembered that himself but err, gosh it was a big moment
R 537. Mmm
P 538. And, yes so that was exactly 'well I'm going to do it anyway'. God I'm going to need the loo and you haven't got a toilet
R 539. Erm, its, yeah I can, that's fine I can take you
P 540. I'm so sorry
R 541. Do you want to go now?
P 542. Yes I do
R 543. Ok, right I'll just turn that off (meaning the recorder)

Transcription of Interview Six

1. R Right I'm going to start it again, and we'll just start from there. Erm, how are you, you know, how are you doing, are you ok
2. P Yeah, yeah that's fine
3. R Are you sure you can't, cause I am a little bit, erm, I suppose I am quite worried that you're basically, it's a one way thing going on right not and this is quite a sensitive topic for, you know for you erm,
4. P Yeah no, it, it's absolutely ok. It's kind of, topics that I've discussed more in the last couple of years so yeah, it's absolutely ok
5. R Ok good. So erm (pause) ok so I'm interested in what happens in the moments that you've been describing, the moments when your critical voice kicks in, erm, you've mentioned you know, erm, given me some examples and things and I wonder if, if, if you could sort of err, go a little bit deeper into the example in terms of breaking it down moment by moment. (pause)
6. P Ok
7. R You know so what happens for you in those moments, how it feels and describe it a little bit more fully?
8. P Ok, just trying to think of a recent example that, erm, (pause) so I guess in kind of erm, (pause) yeah so I guess this is quite an in depth example but not erm, not a massively kind of distressing one
9. R Mhm
10. P Erm, but I guess kind of, so as part of our teaching week, we usually have teaching kind of, a big group of erm, 21 people, but we have smaller group sessions of about kind of 7 or 8 where we're kind of in that session for the day so it's a much smaller group
11. R mhm
12. p Erm, so generally kind of when we have a big lecture I kind of don't very often erm, ask questions or volunteer information erm,
13. R Mmm
14. p And that used to kind of stress me out more at the beginning of the course when I thought there was an expectation on that and now I'm kind of ok with their, erm,
15. R Mhm
16. P And just if there's something I really want to ask I'll kind of ask or ask in the break but I guess the kind of, the smaller sessions that we have are less sort of erm, didactic teaching and, and much more kind of interactive where we might do role plays or have discussions
17. R Mhm
18. p Erm, and it's like, we'd be in the same, we stay in the same group for a couple of years so it's a group that I'm really familiar with and it's facilitated by a course tutor erm, but I guess I was in that kind of earlier this week and we were kind of having a sort of group discussion about erm, an ethical dilemma and I wanted to contribute something erm, and I was kind of, I'd kind of thought "oh yeah I want to erm, I want to say something about this" erm, and part of what, so a lot of our discussions come from either kind of, we might contribute based on our own personal experience, or we might contribute from professional experience erm, and I was kind of, what I wanted to say was a little bit linked to my own personal experience as well.

19. R Mhm
20. P So I kind of thought "yeah I think this is kind of relevant and it will be helpful for the rest of the group" and then (exhales) I guess there was that kind of pause where I hesitated, I guess maybe because it was a little bit more based on my own personal experience and then kind of had a critical voice sort of saying like "no you can't say this" like "people don't want to hear this, they don't want to hear about your experience, erm, you're just gonna, you're gonna interrupt the session and people don't want to hear this, don't be so stupid" which I guess kind of (pause) like I guess made me more anxious
21. R Mhm
22. P About wanting to share erm, so made me continue to hesitate and erm, (pause) and then kind of, I guess because it's a more familiar setting, so I guess if it had been kind of towards the start of training when it was all a bit newer I might have kind of listened to the voice and stepped back
23. R Mmm
24. P But I was kind of like "no actually I think this is, erm, I think this **is** relevant and I think it's ok to share and this is a group I know"
25. R Mmm
26. P Erm, so having felt, maybe a little bit angry towards, a little bit angry towards the voice
27. R Mmm
28. P In that like "no I **want** to share this" (laughs) like
29. R Yeah
30. P "stop telling me I can't do this" erm, and a little bit kind of angry at myself I guess for having, having this voice
31. R Mmm
32. P And kind of thinking like "I bet no one else is kind of experiencing this, I bet they just think of what they want to say and then they say it"
33. R Mmm
34. P And it like, its fine erm, and I just
35. R And all of this is going through your head at that moment when you're in that split moment of the possibility of saying something and having this internal dialogue going on
36. P Yeah, erm, so again and I guess kind of erm, I guess that spark of anger made me think "no I want to say this, I'm in a point where I actually want to contribute to the group discussion"
37. R Mmm
38. P Erm, so then kind of I guess wanting to get in before erm, before that session changed or before the critical voice starts again cause I
39. R Yeah
40. P I kind, I kind of had that awareness that if this continues too long I'm just going to get kind of caught up in the, the dialoguing with this voice or just caught up in my own head and the moment passes and
41. R Yeah
42. P then I don't do it anyway (laughs) so kind of wanted to say it and then ended up sort of you know doing that awkward thing where two people in a group start speaking at the same time
43. R Yes

44. P Erm, so then I was kind of back and like “no, no, no you say, you say it” and then the voice is just kind of back going “oh look you’ve interrupted somebody, you’ve spoken over you know, you’ve spoken over somebody, you can’t contribute in a group discussion”
45. R Mmm
46. P And then kind of, I guess that was a point where it, it kind of continued with because it was harder to kind of argue against because although, although I guess we kind of both spoke at the same time and I hadn’t intended to interrupt somebody or anything like that it’s kind of hard to go cause, cause I did
47. R Mmm
48. P Erm, so yeah and then kind of and then when like this person kind of finished what they were saying the facilitator kind of came back to me
49. R Yeah
50. P And then I said what I wanted to say, that voice is still there going “oh nobody wanted to listen to this, they’ve only kind of come back to you because erm, you know they were being kind, and they’ve got to do this as a facilitator but really like, your point doesn’t add anything to the discussion”
51. R Mmm
52. P And then I guess because erm, I guess it maybe hadn’t gone as I’d hoped to I guess because what I would have hoped is that you know, you get that natural pause in the discussion
53. R Mmm
54. P I would have said something, …
55. R Mmm
56. P it would have been ok, people would have built on it but then because it’s that awkward kind of where two people speak and then you maybe speak on different points and the facilitator who’s just trying to kind of you know, listen to both those points but equally you might want to follow one of them
57. R Mmm
58. P Down that discussion erm, so I guess because that hadn’t kind of gone you know 100% perfectly
59. R Mmm
60. P That was kind of, it, it I guess it kind of added fuel to the critical voice so it made me kind of want to withdraw a bit and feel very kind of to, to be very self-attacking and to feel very kind of anxious that “oh what is everyone in the group thinking about me” are they, have I done this before and then the voice is kind of going “yeah you know you did that last time where you accidentally spoke at the same time as somebody” and then it’s that kind of continuing anxiety of “well I **must** not, I must not say anything now because I’m going to do it again and what is everyone kind of thinking about me” erm, so I guess it kind of continues on that and, erm, maybe a couple of years ago that would have continued and really affected me for the rest of the day, it got to, it, it’s kind of in a place where, although it, that will continue for a little while I am able at the moment more to kind of to put it aside and to really join the discussion and kind of look at the positives
61. R Mmm
62. P From there so I’m not kind of spending the whole day sort of in my head listening to this voice

63. R Mmm
64. P Erm, but yeah it's still (laughs) I guess kind of talking about it now, it, it's still very present
65. R Mmm
66. P Even if I can kind of set it aside it's still present like a sort of, it's still kind of being in my head for a little while before I can kind of do that
67. R So it, it's sort of dampened down for a while but now talking about it has sort of made it quite real again?
68. P Yeah, and I guess not, not in a bad way, like I'm not, I guess it's not kind of going through my head right now it's erm, it's at a kind of distance
69. R Yeah
70. P I'm looking back sort of as an observer on it
71. R Mmm
72. P Erm, but yeah I guess kind of saying it all out loud makes you realise how much it says during the day
73. R Ok
74. P Erm, and just in that kind of you know, those few seconds how much it actually says
75. R Yes cause I was thinking about it, you know so going back to the, the beginning of that example it, it sort of got in the way of you being spontaneous, you know a spontaneous sort of erm,
76. P Yeah
77. R remark, you know so you had an anecdote you wanted to say it and then the critical voice came in which sort of made you stop and attend to the voice rather than being spontaneous in your speech
78. P Mmm yes
79. R So it took you back inside of yourself erm, and sort of almost halted that to the point that the gap in the conversation then somebody else was aware of that gap and thought "ah I'm going to jump in to that gap, there's a gap" but which point you had kind of gone through that conversation, had that dialogue and then sort of tried to force your verbal speech as it were by which time the moment had passed for the spontaneous act of speech erm, it's really interesting isn't it, and then because of the fact that you you've got two people speaking at once then you're sort of like you jump back into yourself go "oh well you know that's your fault you shouldn't have spoken"
80. P Yuh
81. R And, and then it kind of like as you said it snowballs on again, you've got like a double whammy then, you know, erm, going on and then when you **have** your turn to speak as it were, the facilitator brings it back to you it then seems rather forced you know, your anecdote "well actually what I wanted to say was" so rather than spontaneous
82. P Yeah
83. R And then so how were you **feeling** throughout all of that, you know the beginning, the middle and the end?
84. P Erm, (pause) I guess kind of, do you mean the beginning, middle and after I'd spoken or

85. R Well yeah so like the beginning of the kind of like “oh there’s something I would like to add” and then you know you kind of halt yourself from spontaneously adding or verbalising rather
86. P Erm, I guess kind of at the start feeling more positive, so feeling kind of energised and curious
87. R Mhm
88. P A little bit confident like “ooh I’ve got something that I think fits with this, and I think will be helpful to the discussion”
89. R Mmm
90. P Erm, and then I guess that kind of, that dips a little bit when kind of the critical voice comes in and a little bit of kind of anxiety creeps in about you know, kind of linked to those thoughts that of “what if this isn’t relevant” etcetera erm, but I guess it’s, it’s still feeling kind of confident enough to actually you know say it and participate and then that kind of, that middle bit where I’ve spoken and it’s not, it’s not gone particularly well I guess that kind of, all those feelings of kind of confidence and all of that you know sort of really dip and it’s an immediate kind of spike in feeling very anxious
91. R Mmm
92. P And sort of feeling kind of very annoyed with myself erm
93. R Mmm
94. P Because I didn’t kind of get it just right and I’ve interrupted people and I don’t like to do that
95. R Mmm
96. P And erm, and then yeah, then I guess kind of towards the end then when the facilitator kind of pulls it back to me it was still feeling kind of quite anxious and then I guess a bit guilty that then I’d you know, I’d made the discussion more forced and not kind of as flow,
97. R Mmm
98. P You know, flowing as well as it kind of it had before, erm, and then I guess a kind of feeling of, so one of the things that I have tried to do to kind of erm, manage the critical voice more is to kind of notice when I want, when I want things to, when I want to be able to say something exactly perfectly
99. R Mhm
100. P And then kind of notice, observe people who I admire or who I kind of, you know who are very good at speaking
101. R Mmm
102. P Who are very good at kind of presenting, you know all those, those kind of things and then watch for how often they you know, get their words mixed up or say “mmm” or you know
103. R Mmm
104. P all these things that I kind of get annoyed at myself for doing
105. R Mmm
106. P I try and really notice that actually everybody does that (laughs) all the time and nobody notices like
107. R Mmm
108. P We don’t, you know when the presenter got a couple of words wrong we just remember the kind of the bulk what they were saying
109. R Mmm

110. P Erm, so I was trying, kind of trying to notice that but I guess kind of the end part of the anecdote was feeling kind of more annoyed at myself for **being** annoyed at myself
111. R Mmm
112. P Kind of noticing that, you know what actually like 5 minutes later two other people in the group spoke at the same time
113. R Mmm
114. P And like they all look fine about it, they don't look like they're beating themselves up about it
115. R Mm
116. P So that fact that I am, I kind of continue to feel annoyed at myself like, nobody else is doing this, and that I guess kind of sometimes that, that feels like, it feels very kind of isolating and quite kind of that I am separate to the group
117. R Yeah
118. P The group, you know, cause that outwardly none of them look like they're beating themselves up
119. R Mmm
120. P So outwardly they are kind of you know normal (laughs)
121. R Mmm
122. P Erm, and there's something kind of different and a bit sort of wrong with me
123. R Mmm
124. P Erm, so it can feel quite kind of "why am I the only one who, who does this?" even though I guess everybody might be
125. R Mmm
126. P But it, you feel that it doesn't feel like that so it feels very kind of, it can feel very isolating, very separate from, …
127. R Mmm
128. P Kind of peers or from any of your colleagues
129. R Yeah, makes you feel different because that's not how the others appear to be you know based on what you can notice
130. P Yeah, they appear to kind of stumble over their words, interrupt and just be fine with it
131. R Yeah, yeah, and its difficult sometimes to notice what other people are feeling
132. P Yeah
133. R Yeah, erm, an interesting thing that you mentioned was erm, you mentioned the word perfect a few times so this idea of wanting to say the perfect thing, wanting to **appear** in the perfect way, wanting to **speak** in the perfect way, and I wonder if you could say a bit more about that
134. P Erm, (pause) yeah I don't, I don't know if that, if that came before the critical voice or if that kind of comes from the critical voice whereas like it's come from kind of, if I don't say things exactly right the voice kind of attacks that erm, but yeah I guess it's kind of (exhales) I guess being so self-critical it's kind of hard to feel that its ok not to get everything right sort of like I guess like we're all human and we sometimes say things, inadvertently upset other people or you know do something erm, but I kind of I find that really difficult to sit with erm,
135. R Mmm

136. P I guess because there's that tendency to kind of, to be so, you know for that critical voice to kind of jump on that and kind of continue with that, remind me about it, erm, so I guess that leads me to be a bit more cautious in what I say
137. R Mmm
138. P Erm, because I kind of want it to come out right and I want, you know I don't want to, kind of what I say to kind of, yeah, to, to be misconstrued
139. R Ok
140. P And erm, and I guess that kind of unfortunately that, that kind of fuels it because I kind of notice it for example we do a lot of work in college erm,
141. R Mmm
142. P And kind of therapeutic interactions erm, and we get, we get you know kind of feedback from these small groups we get feedback like part of it is that you get kind of positive and developmental feedback from your peers
143. R Mmm
144. P As part of it and it's all kind of it's all done pretty safely erm, but because I'm kind of a bit more cautious erm, and that is sometimes **is** a strength erm, but a lot of people kind of, I guess a lot of kind of my cohort are not so cautious, like they're all very kind of confident, erm, in their interactions so I guess kind of one of the things that gets erm, sort praised in a lot of my role plays is that I can use silence a lot and I'm kind of comfortable enough to sit with silence and give a client, give whoever's playing the client
145. R Mmm
146. P Time to speak and that you know I kind of, I can word things very well, erm, so people kind of praise that as a strength and it **is** a strength but I guess kind of a lot of the origins of that come from being critical
147. R Yeah
148. P Sort of like although I kind of value silence as a therapist and when I am a client I've, I value therapists who let me you know who can sit with silence long enough for me to speak because sometimes kind of when it's a difficult topic it, it can take me a while to kind of figure out the words so although I kind of, although kind of I guess using silence in my therapeutic encounters is something that I value anyway sometimes it comes from me in my head thinking "oh I don't know what I want to ask next"
149. R Mmm
150. P And then that voice is kind of going "what are you gonna do? You're stuck doing a role play, what are you gonna" erm, and somehow I seem to have developed an ability to not **look** anxious
151. R Mhm
152. P So I look very **calm** apparently
153. R Mmm
154. P Erm, when in my head I'm going "what are you gonna ask next, your mind's gone blank, you're about to screw this up and everybody's about to kind of realise that you're a fraud and you're not supposed to be here" (the last part said emotionally / laughingly?)
155. R Mmm
156. P Erm, and then people kind of praise that, so although it's something that I value it, erm what do I mean erm
157. R It's

158. like
159. it's kind of like, …
160. P pressure to say, because people are so like "oh yeah you use silence and then when you do say something like it's really well worded" and the cohort's wording things right which is great but it adds that pressure in that I have to word things right otherwise
161. R Yes (participant laughs) so you've got like the beautiful swan serene on the water and underneath the little feet going "din din din din din" going really, really fast so you have this appearance of serenity but underneath you're thinking "oh my god, I don't know what to say" and they're going to think "I'm a fraud" and when they say you know as I say you said it adds the pressure when they say "well you say things, you word things so well" you then think "oh my god I've got to carry on that" you know
162. P Yuh
163. R So it, it is because there it's the difference between the internal world and, and the external environment, you know what's going on internally for you is quite different and I wondered if you have ever shared your internal world with your cohort?
164. P Erm, yeah not, well not in detail with the wider cohort like I don't think erm, people like think, people would know that I'm self-critical and that kind of calmness is a, is a erm, façade but I think certainly within the smaller groups that we meet regularly with the same group to do these role plays or group discussions
165. R Mmm
166. P Erm, quite frequently like maybe not, I can't remember if I did in our first meeting but certainly kind of I think early on within our first year in these meetings erm, and I think I kind of, I find it really difficult to hear positive praise as much, like possibly more difficult than kind of developmental stuff
167. R Mmm
168. P Erm, and part kind of how they set it up at, at Lancaster is that we kind of so you do your role play erm, for so long and then you have to say first of all things that you thought went well
169. R Mmm
170. P And then you have to say kind of your developmental stuff and then the rest of the group say the positive and then developmental so it's very structured in a way that you kind of have to say positive things about yourself which I find
171. R Yeah
172. P I found really difficult and I got kind of, my facilitator after would very gently point out that what I'd said in the kind of positive category was actually kind of developmental stuff, …
173. R Mhm
174. P and we weren't moving on until I said something positive erm, but I think kind of I think my sharing of erm, kind of that internal world came initially from kind of being very uncomfortable with the sort of developmental stuff that, sorry the positive stuff that people were saying about you know, you seem so calm I wish I could kind of be like that or this, and me feeling incredibly kind of uncomfortable with that
175. R Mmm

176. P Especially in a kind of group setting where you've got sort of 8 people saying really nice things about you
177. R Mmm
178. P Erm
179. R So
180. P So yeah I kind of shared it as more of a like "you're wrong, like you think I'm calm but actually I'm not"
181. R Right
182. P So sharing it in a very sort of jokey way but wanting to be like "oh my gosh stop saying nice things because this is really hard …
183. R Right
184. P … and I need to tell you that actually you're wrong because of the nice things that you think are wrong" and I think it's kind of as we've maybe come into the sort of second half of the second year it's, it's erm, it's a fairly safe environment, that group, it's less but like when I share that it's less of a kind of erm, wanting to erm, discount what they are saying and more of a kind of trying to normalise it but I don't want people to kind of like to think that I guess kind of I don't want the people who maybe do look more anxious to think that I'm not feeling that so it's kind of wanting to be normalising and, …
185. R Yes
186. P supportive but I think definitely in the start it was "well I can, I can be vulnerable and share this because I'm actually", that's safer than having people say positive things about me and that I have to agree and
187. R Mmm
188. P Actually like they're saying things that aren't true and that's, that's not ok, they can't think that I'm calm if I'm not, so I think it started off that way even if it's become a bit safer now
189. R That's a really interesting point isn't it that there's this concept that we think that what's in our own internal world **is** the right thing, that's the truth, that is the truth
190. P Yeah
191. R And that anybody else's opinion is not true
192. P Mmm
193. R It's, I mean to put it **really** black and white, you know so it's, it's an interesting concept that someone else's opinion, how they see you erm, for you is not valid but for them that's their truth so there's this incompatibility there, erm, and almost by sort of, I mean it's difficult for you to accept that you know, they might see you like that
194. P Yeah
195. R Because that's not your truth erm, so anyway I don't know if we're veering off on a different tangent but it was just an interesting thing to, just to observe there
196. P Yeah
197. R Erm, so how are we doing for time because we're at half past twelve now so I said you know we would be going for about an hour you know and erm, is there anything that you wanted to say cause erm, and we've covered a lot and I wondered if there was anything in particular that you wanted to say about how you feel about your critical voice or if there's anything that we haven't discussed

198. P (pause) No, nothing that springs to mind erm, I think I wasn't too, I wasn't too sure what kind of this would cover so I didn't come in, into it I guess with a lot of sort preconceptions erm, so no there's nothing that kind of springs to mind.
199. R Mmm, because one of the questions I haven't asked and I think we kind of covered it but without me specifically asking the question is that erm, I guess the purpose of my research is to discover if there's a erm, a purpose or a function that the critical voice serves and you mentioned about you know, it sort of, it, it stops you from spontaneously acting erm,
200. P Yes
201. R it makes you reflect and think but also want to do better, to want to do things better next time so there's this striving for erm, what, you mentioned perfection so this kind of achieving the 100% thing, to reflect back to you know perhaps your childhood experiences erm, was there anything else that you wanted to add on that?
202. P Erm, I guess, I guess two things I mean one, well they're probably kind of connected to the same thing. We had erm, a teaching session a couple of months ago and I can't, oh it was Compassion Focussed Therapy so we were talking a lot about our kind of self-critical voices
203. R Mmm
204. P Erm, and kind of like you know, within Psychology trainees, there's a lot kind of, we're a group of very kind of generally quite self-critical, quite kind of people with high standards so it was kind of a teaching that resonated for a lot of the people in the room
205. R Mmm
206. P Erm, and there were some kind of, there were some people who were sort of on my end I guess so it was kind of a very high level of self-criticism and it being really difficult
207. R Mmm
208. P But the really interesting part was there were a couple of people who erm, really embraced their critical voice
209. R Mhm
210. P And embraced the I guess didn't, maybe didn't know how to, to, and a kind of emotional connection to it like maybe I do but certainly kind of erm, you know really saw that the function their critical voice was to support them to keep striving, to keep kind of being ambitious and trying to achieve things and actually they, they really didn't want to get rid of their critical voice at all whereas I guess like I would like mine to be a little bit quieter, …
211. R Mmm
212. P or to be, maybe I guess to serve the same function erm, but to be more compassionate in the way that it does that, erm, because I think like although its maybe not so much now at the moment but certainly in, in the past when it's been more difficult you know the voice like its already, it, it's a really, it, it's been a horrible experience erm, you know to have that kind of internal voice being so kind of offensive and critical and continuous but I guess kind of if I step away from that like, although it doesn't, although it doesn't kind of go about its means in the most, it doesn't you know it doesn't do it in a very compassionate way, it's very kind of harsh, …
213. R Mmm

214. P and mean, erm, like there are things that I guess I could kind of like, that I would, that, that the critical voice has, has served a function for that I wouldn't necessarily change in that erm, so like the, the exercises in college is a good example that you know, I very much value kind of wording things in a way that feels, feels ok, like I like that I don't jump in with stuff generally, that in encounters where you know such as work or if I'm writing a letter or things like that that, I like that the voice has made me develop an ability to erm, like some of the time phrase things in a way that seems to really convey what I mean
215. R Mmm
216. P and means a lot to people and I think that's come from the critical voice kind of limiting my spontaneity and forcing me to you know really consider how I use words and language
217. R Mmm
218. P So although its maybe not gone about it in the best way, and I, I'd like I guess some control, I'd like it be a little bit quieter and more compassionate
219. R Mmm
220. P I wouldn't necessarily want to get rid of, well, it has served a function like it's not been all negative
221. R Mmm
222. P Like I taken stuff from it erm, and I think that coming to that point in the last couple of years of realising that, that it's although it's not been helpful the way it's done it I wouldn't necessarily change it
223. R Mmm
224. P I think because it has been really key in kind of accepting that it has a function and I maybe just need to work on how it does that
225. R Mmm
226. P Erm, and then yeah, it was really kind of interesting to hear that some members of my cohort really, really valued the function of having a critical inner voice
227. R Mmm
228. P Erm, and that I guess it's not necessarily seen as a bad thing all the time but that's
229. R Mmm
230. P That's quite in a weird, a weird thing to think about
231. R Yeah I mean I think it's really interesting because erm, I think that generally **my** view that erm, well there are some days when I think "oh god, shut up" and there are some days when I think "actually it" cause so what I think is, is that it can serve a positive or a negative purpose erm, and you know maybe things aren't always positive or negative they just are what they are without putting a kind of you know, any one end of the continuum on it erm,
232. P Yeah
233. R So, I guess that is why I'm doing my research because I want to discover more rather than just sort of automatically thinking "it's no good, let's get rid of it"
234. P Yeah
235. R You know, I think, I think if it's there well, why is it there, what's going on, so that's I guess what, so it's interesting to hear what you've been saying and erm, I really, really do appreciate you coming forward and, and you know offering to help.
236. P No, that's, I've really, I'd be really interested to see it kind of when you've written it up, I'd like to see what you've found
237. R Yup, so I'm not sure when it's all going to be done, it's one of those you know

238. P Yup, I, I know that feeling
239. R As and when I've got the time but erm, you know it might be the end of this year, next year something like that.
240. P Yeah
241. R But erm, I'll bear that in mind. Erm, so I will email you through the debriefing sheet
242. P Ok
243. R because you know after we've spoken there might be things that you reflect on and you know, that concern you or, or you've got any questions about, or you want to talk about more you know, there are obviously agencies, you said you were in psychotherapy so erm, you know that's, that's an option there but might be some other (my phone rings) oh sorry I don't know why that's ringing, sorry, that's my second phone that I never get any calls on. Erm, so yes I've got a debriefing sheet for you, I'll email you through and if you have any questions at all about the research just email me or erm, text me, call me on the numbers that you've got, so I think that, yup so I'll, on the debriefing sheet it's got my phone number, no it hasn't it's got email, it's also got if you want any questions about you know about the college or anything like that I've got my supervisor's name on that through my erm, my college. My college is attached to Middlesex University so it's all through that. Erm, but yeah, is there anything else that you wanted to ask at this point?
244. P Erm, no, no that's all ok.
245. R Ok, well thank you so much and I'm sorry about the problems that we've had with Skype
246. P Oh no that's fine, that's fine, good luck with the rest of the study
247. R Thank you, and you too, you too.
248. P Take care
249. R Bye

Transcription of Interview Seven

1. R Ok that's working, ok so first of all I just need to get some demographics if that's alright
2. P Yeah, that's fine
3. R So erm, age round about
4. P *****
5. R *****, gender female?
6. P Yes
7. R Erm, ethnicity, what would you say?
8. P I'm white British
9. R And your profession, would that be, you said you were a student, is that essentially your profession?
10. P Yeah, yeah I'm actually a stay at home mum and I'm doing an erm, a psychology degree with the *****
11. R Ok so I'll put mum and student
12. P Yup
13. R Ok and geographical location
14. P I'm in *****
15. R *****, ok, brilliant, that's it. Right then so you've read, yeah you've read the participant information
16. P Yes
17. R And everything, have you got any questions about that at all?
18. P No I don't think so, I'm happy
19. R Ok brilliant so erm, my first question, so I've got a range of questions **but** what I would say to you is erm, if, if you're not, you know, if the questions aren't right for you then you say what's important to you ok? So
20. P Ok
21. R I'd rather you, you tell me what's important to **you** that me sort of like making you answer the questions that I've thought of yeah?
22. P Yup, ok
23. R So erm, the other thing is the confidentiality, is that erm, I've erm made sure that I'm not going to be disturbed my end, just so you know, no one can hear or listen in
24. P Yeah ok
25. R Erm, and that so, just to reassure you about that
26. P Ok
27. R Anything that you say, if at any point today you think hmm, dunno I want to stop now just say so, it's not a problem
28. P Yeah ok
29. R And afterwards if you go back and you think 'ooh, do you know what I, I told her this but actually I'm not comfortable about that now' erm, just let me know it's not a problem, just email me
30. P Ok
31. R Or call me and tell me that you don't want me to use your data in the interview, you know in the research so
32. P Ok
33. R Not a problem

34. P Ok, ok alright
35. R Ok so the first question I have is “are you aware of a critical element to your thoughts and inner speech?”
36. p Erm, I would interpret that as being erm, the little voice that I have inside my head criticising things I do or criticising things other people do (laughs) would it be along those lines?
37. R Yeah, I mean you tell me what it is for you
38. P Ok so for me erm, I, I have times where I tell myself off
39. R Mhm
40. P Erm, it’s almost like I have, sounds very weird doesn’t it, but I have like a voice in my head that if I’m doing things wrong I sort of tell myself off or erm, talk about ways of doing things better
41. R Yep
42. P Erm, thinking things through, planning things out erm, but then it also surfaces erm, I don’t know if you’re familiar with Mutley erm, a, a little cartoon dog from when I was younger
43. R Dastardly
44. P He sort of goes “mrah, mrah, mucking mucker”
45. R Yeah, yeah
46. P I have a Mutley in my head so when other people annoy me I have an internal thing that I’m composed outside but inside I’m “meshing, mhah, mhah”
47. R (laughs)
48. P Which my husband suffers from an awful lot erm, yeah so, and then sometimes erm, probably more since I’ve become pre-menopausal and menopausal I’ve had quite erm, stark erm, feelings of erm, I don’t want to be here anymore, I don’t want to look after people any more, I don’t want to, if this is my life I, I need to change it which was part of me doing the course
49. R Mhm
50. P Erm, so I get these erm, quite destructive narratives going on in my head sometimes
51. R Ok
52. P Erm, yeah (laughs)
53. R That’s really interesting because erm, so basically are you saying it’s got a lot harsher or more destructive erm, so have you hit menopause or are you
54. P Yes
55. R So you have
56. P Yeah, I’m, I’m probably about a year, I’ve not had a period for about a year
57. R Ok
58. P Erm, so I, when I was peri-menopausal I think I suffered a lot with physical symptoms like headaches, difficulty in sleeping but since I’ve come out the sort of menstruation erm, I’m finding myself a lot more erm, I’m unforgiving of other people’s mistakes, I’m not tolerant if I feel people aren’t treating me
59. R Ok
60. P Or, being respectful or, you know, I’ll have arguments with my husband where previously I might be a little bit you know, I’d want to make the peace and I’d want to make it up with him and now I’m ‘d’you know if that’s us, that’s fine for me’ (laughs)
61. R Right

62. P You know and obviously it wouldn't be but at that moment in time that's fine, I can walk away, I don't, I don't need anyone
63. R Right
64. P You know
65. R So it's a different feeling
66. P And I can get very 'I wanna die, I, I don't want to be here, I can't do this, I can't do this' and I almost like I'm having some sort of meltdown (laughs)
67. R Right
68. P Once the moment's past I think what a ridiculous thing to think and say, you know
69. R Yeah
70. P But I can, I can really lose the plot really quickly sometimes, like if I can't find a parking space
71. R Right
72. P And I need to get to an appointment I can really completely act in a way that I would look at other people and go 'really, that woman's lost it' and that's, that's been really since erm, menopause I think, yeah I'm a lot (inaudible)
73. R That's really interesting, yeah that is very interesting that sort of erm, the difference
74. P Yeah
75. R You know
76. P I've got a lot of friends as well who have expressed similar so people whose marriages have split up because they've sort of had some catalyst in their life where they've said 'right ok that's me, if this is the rest of my life, it's not going to be with you'
77. R Yeah
78. P Or 'if this is the rest of my life it's not going to be caring for everyone else' that seems to be the common thread
79. R Ok
80. P Of not, of that role that you have as a mum erm, of everyone expecting you to nurture and be there and you're the, you're the backstop all the time
81. R Yup
82. P You're the wicket keeper erm, and then you reach an age where you go 'mhm ok then so for **me** that's stopping now' and everyone else is going 'no, no please don't stop that, please don't stop that' you know so I think that's my overriding erm, narrative at the moment
83. R Ok
84. P Erm, but I've all, all through my life had little conversations with myself sometimes where I've thrown things round my room when I was going through puberty
85. R Ok
86. P Out of sheer frustration of not being able to express
87. R So that's really interesting cause that's another time when all your hormones are sort of
88. P Yeah
89. R getting a bit mixed up again so
90. P Yeah
91. R For you it seems to be erm, more exaggerated when there's these kind of like hormonal period going on

92. P Yeah
93. R So like, you know puberty and menopause, that's
94. P Yeah
95. R Do you know this is, this is why I love doing this research because I had **no** idea about this, and you're not the first person to have spoken about how the menopause has changed their feelings
96. P Yeah
97. R So this is
98. P Can I, can I also as a **side** issue to this because I know this is an exercise about me erm, but just as a very brief side issue I've got a 14 year old daughter who has spent nearly two years out of school because of panic attacks and anxiety
99. R Mhm
100. P That I for one am absolutely convinced was linked to puberty
101. R Ok
102. P Absolutely unequivocally
103. R Wow
104. P It was linked to puberty and there are a number of girls, she's at a girls school, or she was at a girls school, a number of girls that also suffered similarly with anorexia, bulimia, anxiety all around that age where they were transiting from junior school to senior school and trying to cope with the pressures which I think is erm, there's an increased pressure because of social media but is by no means the only thing this impacts on and I think we are in a society at the moment where hormones are being overlooked
105. R Yeah
106. P For young girls, there's a lot of mental health issues with young girls
107. R Yeah
108. P Because I think we're just going 'ok well periods are something that happens, we brush under the carpet' and nobody, nobody talks about it and if you can't swim because you've got your period don't go telling the swimming teacher because she'll just show you up
109. R Right
110. P You know, that's a separate, I think there's a whole new research model going on
111. R Yeah
112. P Or could go on around puberty and menopause for women
113. R Yeah, definitely I mean you know like you said it's not something I've been aware of before you know, it's not been something that's spoken about but you know obviously there's a real thing going on and you know
114. P Yeah
115. R And needs some attention. Erm, you mentioned also the times sort of like between that so you know before menopause and after puberty, that period where you've had those conversations in your head, that you've got Mutley going on
116. P Yeah, ok so I think some of it comes down to erm, the time erm, and the sort of social status of how you're bought up and I came from, my mum and dad were both from quite big working class families, lots of children erm, and we're also of the children seen and not heard generation
117. R Mhm

118. P And so that followed through not completely but a little bit into my upbringing so I was expected to behave in a very adult way, I was erm, never encouraged to talk (The Skype call ends abruptly)
119. R Ooh, what happened. (I call her back) Hello!
120. P It's probably my internet connection, I live in a cave (we both laugh) so, so I was never encouraged to talk about erm, my feelings
121. R Ok
122. P So I think that's where that erm, need to have a little bit of a tantrum on my own in my bedroom when, when I was growing up because that was **not** something that would have been tolerated
123. R Ok
124. P You know being able to express that
125. R Yup
126. P My daughter's a lot more erm, open with me than I was ever able to be with my mum
127. R Ok
128. P Erm, so I think there's an element of that that you have this narrative going on when
129. R Ok
130. P You can't actually express how you feel
131. R That's an interesting point
132. P You know you sort of, and in some ways I think that's a good thing because I think that developed in me coping mechanisms that my daughter didn't develop because she has used me as her sounding board
133. R Right
134. P She's used me as her 'I can't cope with this, I can't do this because I can't' you know, that, that sort of erm, trying to either push her to do things or help her avoid which obviously then feeds the anxiety then she doesn't want to do it next time, I just couldn't go there because it was you know, if you can convince a doctor you're ill, you can stay home
135. R Yeah
136. P Other than that 'taraa, you're off to school'
137. R Yeah, 'off you go'
138. P So I'm very much from that erm, not the school of hard knocks I mean it was never a physical thing but there was a very strong you know, you, you do this, this is the way you do things and so then I had these conversations in my head
139. R Right
140. P About erm, talking myself into doing these things that I may be finding completely out of my comfort zone but I knew it wasn't an option to not go into school (laughs)
141. R Yeah
142. P So I have to do this
143. R So can you give me some examples of, of the conversations then that go on
144. P Well I was painfully shy when I was younger erm, painfully, painfully shy and erm, I, I suppose I used to erm, I, I had a, a pretend friend (laughs) erm, so I think that those are created for erm, you know, when you don't feel you're able to manage without one (laughs) erm, so I don't know erm, telling myself things, the sort of advice I would give to other people, I'll give to myself

145. R So would this be your pretend friend and you talking
146. P When I was younger yes, but now, now not obviously as I became an adult not so I would erm, if you came to me as a friend and said 'oh I've got this problem blah de blah' whatever advice I'd give to you I'd try to give to myself
147. R Ok
148. P If I've got a problem and I also find I can be quite logical even when I'm asleep so if I had nightmares or bad dreams I would tell myself when I'm asleep that it is a dream
149. R Wow
150. P And it's not, it's nothing to worry about, it's a dream
151. R Right
152. P And if I chose to wake up it will end so, I'd, I'll do that and I **know** I do that when I'm asleep
153. R Wow
154. P And I'll wake up and you remember dreaming, you go 'hmm' but really it wasn't that scary because I'm still in bed
155. R Yeah
156. P Erm, so that, that sort of thing like erm, I've noticed as well as I've got older when I was flying we were on a long flight and this guy in front of me lowered his seat down and I was starting to feel claustrophobic and it's not something that I've experienced before but I was really having to talk to myself and say to myself 'there's no point, you know, at this point I could go whoosh or I could contain this, and there's no point going whoosh because I can't get off this plane'
157. R Yeah
158. P There's nowhere for me to go so I have that internal dialogue 'there's nowhere for me to go'
159. R Yeah
160. P 'I need to stay here, perhaps I need to go to the toilet but I need to stay, I can't' I, I sort of think of my options
161. R Yuh, wow
162. P And discuss in my head my options and then become accepting of whatever is the only option or act upon one that may be
163. R Ok
164. P You know, something that perhaps I could get out if I had a parachute but I don't have one, you know, that, that sort of, I'll go through all my options and then I'll go 'right ok, no there aren't any options, now you have to just accept this'
165. R Ok, so at that point when you're having that dialogue, are you are able to step out of your feelings as it were, or you know because, I'm just trying to work out if it's **you** kind of like going 'la la la' on one side and then turning on the other and, or it's just all kind of floating around
166. P Ok, I suppose, I, I wouldn't describe it as erm, stepping out of it, I would probably describe it more as erm, say you've got a Coke bottle that you've shook up
167. R Yup
168. P You can take the lid off and the contents will explode or you can keep the lid on and you know at some point that will subside to the point that you can take the lid off and it will be ok
169. R Yup

170. P And it's more for me, at times where I feel either through anger or through that sort of scenario where I was feeling claustrophobic, times when I feel like I'm going to lose control
171. R Yuh
172. P Or times where I feel out my depth, erm, and the Coke could come out if I took the lid off, I'm keeping the lid on, so I'm keeping the lid on while I'm going, and it's getting shook up while the lid's on and I'm going 'ok so what are my options here because if this lid comes off'
173. R Yeah
174. P You know, so it's more, I would say it's, it's more like there's two sides to my conversation in my head, I'm not stepping away from, I'm still very much in that I'm feeling claustrophobic or I'm feeling like I want to kill the driver in the car over there
175. R Yup
176. P **But** I'm going to keep a lid on this until I decide what's the best move
177. R Ok, so like crisis management type sort of situation
178. P Crisis management, yeah, yeah
179. R Wow, that's fascinating that you've got the whole thing going on
180. P (laughs) it's funny because when you do things like that you think everyone does it
181. R Erm, yuh I suppose, I was thinking you know I probably do do that erm, yeah
182. P I also talk to my mum, my mum died 15 years ago
183. R Ok
184. P I talk to my mum so when I'm you know, bizarrely you're gonna think I'm right off the ball now, so I can't find my daughter's other sock
185. R Yuh
186. P And I'm going around 'somebody help me, I need this sock, mum where are you when I need you' you know, and 9 times out of 10 I find the sock (laughs)
187. R Ah, brilliant, I don't think that's bizarre at all
188. P The sock was always going to be found anyway but yeah so I will, I think that's another, that's another version of **me** talking to **me**
189. R Yeah, yeah but it's kind of like externalising it
190. P Yeah
191. R In a way so that you're, yeah you're kind of trying to elicit the help of someone else
192. P Yes, yeah because I'm out of options myself (laughs)
193. R Yeah, yeah, yeah! Yeah, no I get that (laughs)
194. P So I do, I do that
195. R Ok, erm, does, interestingly I don't know if this is a thing, do, do the people that you're having, so you spoke about like this Mutley type person
196. P Yeah
197. R So what's the critical, sort of like, do you notice who it is I mean would it be your mum criticising you, would it be your friend criticising you or just Mutley
198. P It's mostly **me**, it's mostly me criticising other people so other people that are annoying me
199. R Ok
200. P And I can't either I'm trying to tell them something, say I'm having an argument with my husband and he's just not taking on board what I'm saying I just feel like

'NNNNNNNN' that frustration I think it is, that frustration so either I try to erm, verbalise how I'm feeling and the other person's not getting it

201. R Yup
202. P Or, it's a situation where I can't because erm, you know perhaps they're in a car and I'm in a car
203. R Yup
204. P Erm, or perhaps I'm going round the supermarket and there's little old lady in front of me and every time I try to overtake her she gets back in my way, that 'MMMMM' sort of you know 'mucking shucking' erm, yeah, so I think that's more of erm, a light hearted
205. R Yeah
206. P Erm, yeah, when probably most people would use expletives and I just 'mucking shucking' that sort of yeah
207. R (laughs)
208. P I could use four letter words
209. R Yeah
210. P I chose not to so I think yeah that's not, that's probably more of a frustration but it is a very internalised thing I don't say it out loud, it's in my head that I'm 'mjshushmucking' I might be doing that with my face
211. R I mean are you aware of the words that you are using or are they just kind of incomprehensible
212. P Well this little character sort of did say 'mucking schmucking shucking' and I sort of do that in my head
213. R Ok
214. P It's my Mutley moment
215. R Yeah, so
216. P You're going to find him on YouTube now aren't you
217. R Yuh I know who you're talking about, Dastardly and Mutley
218. P Yeah, yeah, yeah
219. R From erm, Penelope Pitstop
220. P Yeah, yeah
221. R Yeah, yeah I know, Catch That Pigeon and all that yeah
222. P Yeah, yeah
223. R Yeah, but I'm thinking cause I think Mutley, they were like kind of proper words but like you say they were sort of almost incomprehensible
224. P Yeah
225. R You know
226. P But that's all I remember of Mutley at the time that 'NNNNNN' sort of thing you know and so I've adopted that for a large number of years (laughs)
227. R Ok, so at any point has there ever been like you know, the verbalisation rather than the kind of
228. P No, no it is just a sort of frustration thing
229. R Ok
230. P Erm, and I think if I was to say there was a verbalisation I would not then consider it to be a Mutley moment
231. R Right
232. P It would be something else
233. R What

234. P It is just a, Mutley moments are just 'MMMMMMM' and then I move on, they're very short
235. R Ok
236. P Moments of I need to get rid of this, not nervous energy but that sort of you know, little dump of that feeling and then I can move on
237. R Yup
238. P With my day, leaving the old lady and her trolley (laughs)
239. R So what are the other moments then, what are, are there any other moments where there's a verbal
240. P Err
241. R I'm not saying there has to be I'm just kind of wondering
242. P No, no, I'm just thinking. Erm, I have a lot of moments in the car when I'm driving, a lot of moments where sometimes I talk out loud as my daughter tells me where I'm criticising other people's driving or being very annoyed at them
243. R Ok
244. P But a lot of the time it's just going on in my head
245. R Ok
246. P Erm, I think a lot of you know, as you, I don't know if everyone does it but I think I do have a narrative to my life
247. R Ok
248. P I think there's a lot of internal chat going on all the time with myself
249. R Ok
250. P So particularly when I'm doing things like driving that require concentration erm, a lot of erm, I suppose with, you're going to think I, I need a divorce where I keep going on about my husband but erm, a lot of, if we have a, a big row and then I'll sort of, he seems to just forget it and move on and I take a bit of time to digest and talk myself into how I don't need him and I can manage without him and plan out a way that I can manage without him because I think that then gives me options
251. R Yeah
252. P And I suppose a lot of these conversations in my head probably stem from when I was really shy at school especially in the infants and juniors erm, and especially public things you know sort of public speaking or singing and things like that used to kill me erm, and so I would have those conversations about that erm as ways to develop coping mechanisms and I think I still do it now, I still if I get a problem I sort of sit there and I analyse the problem and then in order to be able to put it in a box in my head somewhere I have to have some options so a bit like with the erm, feeling of erm, claustrophobia on the plane I needed to know if there are options and if there aren't any options then I need to accept that and just keep the lid on the Coke and whether that's a good strategy or not I don't know, it was on the plane (laughs)
253. R Mhm
254. P But I don't know erm, going forward in life if not expressing but then again I tie that, and this is all amateur psychology but erm, I tie that back to the way I was brought up in a very sort of Victorian you know, you don't express, boys don't cry
255. R Yeah
256. P Girls don't talk about their feelings, you know, you don't talk about your periods, you don't you know, none of that. 'No. No, let's not talk about that' erm, and my

parents were very loving but there was no blurred line between them being parents or mentors or friends, they were parents

257. R Yep

258. P And my daughter and I have a different relationship and I've not yet decided which strategy is best from a parenting perspective

259. R It would be interesting to erm, I'm wondering what your dad thinks of your relationship with your daughter and how he views it

260. P My dad

261. R Yeah

262. P (laughs) err, (laughs) I'm not sure my dad feels about anything apart my dad to be honest (laughs)

263. R Ok

264. P Yeah, I think him and my husband's dad were both quietly critical of us not forcing her into school when she was having her panic attacks erm, and there was probably, I suppose if my mum had been alive I may have pushed further, pushed **her** more, pushed (daughter) more, erm, but that wouldn't have been a good thing, for (daughter), I think it would have expressed itself in a different way erm

265. R Mmm

266. P We had some proper bad times, yeah so I don't know, I don't know if my dad would have an opinion really I don't know if he would see my upbringing the same as I do

267. R Yuh, I just thought because it's interesting

268. P I don't feel a lot of it

269. R Different ways

270. P He, he works six days out of seven erm, and he was ill quite a lot of the time when I was growing up so my dad was always the one that weren't very well and we always had to sort of work around dad

271. R Mhm

272. P Erm, and then when my mum got diagnosed as being terminally ill that really shocked him terribly, he just, he was never going to be the one that was left, he was gonna die first erm, and he's, if I say selfish not in nasty way but the world is all about him and viewed from his perspective so I don't know if, yeah

273. R He sees himself as like the apex of the family as it were possibly?

274. P You what sorry?

275. R He sees himself as the apex of the family and everyone else

276. P Erm, I think when he was growing up erm, he was the youngest in his family and he was my, my grandma's baby by about 10 years

277. R Ok

278. P Erm, and so he was (laughs) all the time he was growing up that was his role and when he married my mum, my mum was from the sort of 50s generation where you just look after your man and he was that then and even now he lives with us now, erm, and if I call out (laughs) if I call out to anyone in the house 'would you like a cup of tea' doesn't matter what name preceded that statement my dad always says 'yes' (laughs) it's all about him, in a nice way but I doubt he'd, I don't think he was around, I've actually got to know him since my mum died

279. R Oh wow

280. P Really. I don't, I don't really feel like, sounds a bit sad but I don't really feel like there was much of a, I mean I loved him because he was my dad but there weren't much of a connection, I didn't know him as a person
281. R Mmm
282. P Before my mum died
283. R Mmm
284. P So yuh, I don't, I don't know if he'd know or have a clue about my experience of being bought up cause my mum did a lot of that
285. R Mmm
286. P So yeah
287. R Ok. Erm, so I was wondering if there any particular times that your erm, the critical element of your inner speech comes out, so you mentioned you know, driving in the car, or just feeling frustrated with an argument but more specific that general sort of menopause
288. P Ok, so I feel erm, my grandma used to say 'a woman's work is never done' and I used to think 'you silly old bat' (laughs) and now I know what she means so I get very frustrated being on the hamster wheel of life
289. R Ok
290. P Erm, of, and this sounds really sort of a middle-class problem but having to load the dishwasher all the time (laughs) do you know what I mean, really grates you know
291. R Because it's never ending, you empty it and then you have to fill it!
292. P And if, and also in between I have to cook, the dishes, the mess you know so, it really, really, **really** annoys me if somebody says 'I've loaded the dishwasher for you' FOR ME! FOR ME! (laughs) and sometimes I will actually say this 'ok so, which of those dishes were mine?' and sometimes I will just in my head start having a little rant like 'why would I, why would you think I'd' you know, this is all in my own head 'why would you think I'd want to do this, why would you think this would be a choice in life' you know and I'll go on and on like that 'I'm sure if you were doing it you'd **love** this for a life, this' I've actually, I've actually said to my daughter 'when you grow up don't have a family, don't get married and don't buy a house until you've done **everything** else you want to do' and I know that the first time she meets a bloke that she likes that will be it, end of, but I admit I'm at that stage where I'm like you know 'why would you think this is ok that I have to do, why would you think I want to do it, why would you' you know, even down to you know walking the dogs, we got another dog recently and I erm, I said to my husband 'we only have another dog if you walk it' because these other two dogs that we've got are mine, everyone else wanted them but their mine and so I think it's that feeling of being taken advantage of, being put upon
293. R Yup
294. P Erm, not being appreciated
295. R Yeah
296. P Erm, I did, I did have a little bit of a meltdown with (husband) one day when he was going on about (daughter) and how well she's done at school and he was having a moan about work and me dad weren't very well and it was all sort of going on and I just flipped and I went in the lounge and I went 'everybody's got their own problems, everybody blah, blah, blah but I'm going through the bloody

menopause, nobody gives a shit about me', he just sat there and was like 'I do, I do' you know but it was, it's that sort of thing I think that provoke it the most erm

297. R Ok

298. P And then I have those conversations where 'well I should eat more healthily cause I could do with losing a bit of weight and I am 50 and I could do with losing a bit of weight' and then I have all those, but I really like a bag of crisps and I have a chat with the bag of crisps, do you know what I mean, that sort of thing where, well, I know if I didn't buy it, it wouldn't be there and then I wouldn't be able to have a conversation with a packet of crisps but they call me and I go running, so those sorts of light hearted conversations where you know you shouldn't but you do and I'm reprimanding myself and it's a little bit similar to what my daughter described when she had her anxiety that she wanted to go into school, and she wanted to see her friends but she had a, a, she didn't describe it as a voice, but she had something that we in the end called 'the little person' erm, that was telling her if she went in, you know, basically the world's going to end, your life's going to be awful, you won't be able to cope with the day

299. R Mmm

300. P And it was whatever voice won

301. R Yeah

302. P You know, could, could she that day decide that her timetable was such that she could cope

303. R Yeah

304. P Or couldn't she and they're, they're similar things to that

305. R Mhm

306. P And I know I'm not being specific enough for you

307. R No, no, no, that's absolutely fine, it's great. Erm, I'm just thinking also that erm, a lot of the kind of, the conversations and the dialogues that you, you have that go on in your head erm, seem to be, there's an element of, of I wouldn't say, well the way that you're expressing them now is, is quite light-hearted and we're laughing

308. P Yeah

309. R About things, cause I share some of those as well, erm, and I'm wondering if they ever get nasty, get you know

310. P Erm, I can, I tend to internalise things like that

311. R Mm

312. P So things like 'I don't want to be here anymore, I don't want, I don't want to live if I'm going to be living like this'

313. R Right

314. P that sort of destructive type thing and that's not me, I'm not suicidal so don't go worrying (laughs)

315. R Ok

316. P About that, it is literally just absolute frustration and meltdown

317. R Yeah

318. P Erm, I have (exhales) I probably do have some unpleasant thoughts that I direct to other people at times

319. R And could you share that with me?

320. P Could I tell you them?

321. R Yeah

322. P Erm, yeah, I probably have said to myself 'I wish people were dead'
323. R Mhm
324. P Erm, probably (laughs) that's probably the common thread
325. R Ok so it's kind of like, I mean is that more lately or has that always been the case?
326. P Erm, I would say I've always been able to get to that point
327. R Ok
328. P But I get there a lot quicker and lot more often now (laughs)
329. R Ok, ok
330. P Yeah
331. R So it's more black and white, it's more immediate now, it's quite stark
332. P It can be yeah, I mean I can go for months with no ill feelings towards myself or anyone else
333. R Ok
334. P And then I could have a couple of little things like my son the other week erm, made himself and his girlfriend a cup of tea and was going to walk up the stairs and I said 'oh no cup of tea for me then' and he went 'no' and I was expecting him to go and make one and he didn't and I absolutely had a meltdown, **absolutely** had a meltdown
335. R Mmm
336. P So, I'm texting him, I'm moaning to my daughter about it because it's not the cup of tea
337. R Yeah
338. P It's the principle of the cup of tea and what that says to **me** you know
339. R Yeah
340. P So yeah, I had a meltdown, so little things like that **now**, it's almost like I'm going 'right now I think I'm worth this and if you don't agree then we have some conversations to have'
341. R Yeah
342. P And I am quite erm, direct with people, not rude or unpleasant but I will (pause) tell them if there's a problem because I don't see the point in skirting around it
343. R Ok and has that always been
344. P I've not always been like that
345. R I see, ok
346. P And I think there was um, the catalyst for me, have you, are you familiar with the feeling of erm, when you transit from being a child with your parents in a relationship to you acting like the parent and them assuming the child role?
347. R Yep
348. P And I actually, I **know** the time that happened was when my mum was diagnosed as being terminally ill
349. R Mhm
350. P And I went to see her and I suppose up until then I had been more inclined to pretty things up and put too many words in and make it palatable to people if it was unpleasant news and, and then I thought 'well we just need to cut through that now and just get on with it' and erm, she was worrying that my dad wouldn't be able to cope without her and asked me to go through a list with her of things that she needed to get in place for **her** because at the time I didn't know that she'd only been given two or three months then although she did live longer in the end (inhales) and I went in and said 'well' and this is how selfish my dad is, I

went in and I said to my dad 'she's out in the kitchen and she's worrying about blah de blah and she thinks you're not going to be able to cope because you can't use the dishwasher, the washing machine blah de blah and she's worried she don't think you can cope, come in tell her that you can cope' and he went 'no cause I can't' and I went 'wrong answer! Get out and tell her', 'but I can't', I said 'we'll deal with that later, you and I will deal with all of that later, **you** get your backside out there and tell her you can cope

351. R Mmm
352. P Because that's what she needs to hear and it ain't about you now'
353. R Mmm
354. P And that was the point at which I think things changed for me because my mum had always been the matriarch, my mum had always been erm, for, for now she'd, or at that time she was showing vulnerability that I'd not seen
355. R Yeah
356. P In her and my dad had always shown his vulnerability through his illness, in you know us making allowances for him but my mum had **never** shown vulnerability erm,
357. R It's a real switchover at that point
358. P And I felt fiercely protective of her then, and I was like 'no! She needs this, **you**, you and me we've got years to sort us out, get and tell her what she needs to know'
359. R Mmm
360. P And from that point on I think I've taken that approach both in my own head and outwardly
361. R Yeah
362. P You know to say to people, you know, in a, in the most pleasant way possible and it its unpalatable you still need to hear it
363. R Mmm
364. P I'm not happy with how you're behaving
365. R Yuh, and I think there's something about death that kind of, or the imminence of death that brings out that 'actually you know what, let's stop messing around now, let's get out there and do this, lets live our life the way we want to'
366. P Yuh, and I think menopause to a degree is you know, it's an ending of the productive period of your life as far as you know being able to have children goes
367. R Mmm
368. P And in some ways that's erm, it's a death of one period but is the birth of another period
369. R Mmm
370. P And I think that's why there's a lot of internal conflict, personally I think that's a lot of, why a lot of women around my age get that conflict of 'why do you think it's ok that you come in and sit on the sofa all afternoon and don't cook your own food and wait for **me** to come in three hours later and stand cooking for everyone, why is that **ok** for you?' well from their point of view its ok cause that's always been how it's been
371. R Yeah
372. P You know and I'm not going round with a label on going it's not that way anymore
373. R Yeah

374. P So I have these chats in my head going 'it's not, it's not fine, this is not fine' and I'm saying to myself 'it's not fine, I'm not going mad this is not fine, nobody would find this reasonable, if they were in my shoes they wouldn't be finding this reasonable'
375. R Mmm
376. P But they're not in my shoes so its fine because they like that because it suits them
377. R Mmm, mmm
378. P You know, it suits them because, and, and it's that sort of thing
379. R So what does it take for you actually to speak those words out loud?
380. P It depends on erm, it depends on I suppose how relaxed I feel in other areas of my life at the time so if I, say I'm trying to get an assignment ready to submit and everyone's expecting **me** to still do the housework and do the cooking and everything and I'm trying to meet a deadline
381. R Mmm
382. P You know
383. R Mm
384. P Then how's that reasonable
385. R Yeah
386. P So then I might verbalise that and say 'that, that's not reasonable' but I'm a firm believer that if you moan too much people shut their ears (laughs) so I pick my moments
387. R So that's interesting, so you've got like erm, an internal mechanism to work out actually it's not appropriate to say something right now
388. P Yeah
389. R Or kind of to hold yourself back, that, yeah
390. P Well not necessarily not appropriate, I can't, I, I can't maximise the effect of what I'm saying if I say it now
391. R Ok, ok, right, so it's about impact
392. P (pause) Yeah, so I, I want, I want to achieve a certain outcome
393. R Yup
394. P So, I'm going to do it at the time when I think people are most receptive to what I'm going to say
395. R Right, and that takes a lot of perception about you know, working out what's going on in the situation right now in the environment as well as what's in your head
396. P But I have the benefit of the, the people I'm talking about mostly with these scenarios are my husband and my children and my dad who I've had the, you know, I've been fortunate enough to have known for an awful lot of years so
397. R Right, yeah
398. P I'm quite, I'm quite good at reading people
399. R Right ok, mm (pause) ok so what about erm
400. P There's times where we've been out, sorry go on
401. R No, no, no erm, did you want to add to that
402. P Well, there's times where we've been out, my husband's not as erm, intuitive as, as me in reading other people's body language (laughs) and erm, there's times where I've said you know, I think it's time we went, or I think you know, and, and he's not picked up on different things that I've picked up on that have proven to be right

403. R Yeah
404. P Much that he don't like to agree (laughs) so yeah, I'm, I'm, so I do feel that I can read people quite well
405. R Ok
406. P So I'll, I'll know **most** of the time what buttons to press and when to press them, now you think I'm very cynical as well as mad don't you (laughs)
407. R No! Not at all. Not at all.
408. P Yeah
409. R Erm, I was just thinking about one of the questions was 'are there any feelings associated with, you mentioned frustration which elicits your sort of Mutley moment, erm
410. P Mm
411. R But are there any other feelings that happen when the critical voice is activated?
412. P I can hate
413. R Hate, ok
414. P I can hate, I can **really** hate, and my face will show you how much
415. R Ok
416. P I **really** hate somebody, **really** hate them erm, yeah I think the majority of my critical voice probably is problem solving or negative emotions (laughs)
417. R Yeah
418. P Mmm
419. R Right
420. P Yeah
421. R So just, yeah, frustration, hate, wanting to sort of get rid of either that person or yourself from a situation
422. P Yeah, yeah
423. R Ok
424. P I, I can remember actually, this is awful, erm, I was married before and erm, long story but I found out that he was seeing somebody else and he came round to see me one night to see the boys and said that he was going on holiday with this person and I don't know why but you know when you sort of think about somebody and then you see them, I thought about you know, what if he said he was going to go away and how would I manage that and then just by sheer coincidence he comes and says he's going away and for two weeks and just assumed that I was going to pick up looking after the boys all on my own and managing all the childcare cause I was still working and because as he'd left he felt that that was his prerogative to just live his life how he wanted and I needed to teach him that that wasn't the case
425. R Mm
426. P But on that particular day I was **so**, so cross with him, so **unbelievably** out of my head cross with him that I was, in my head, I can remember ironing and looking at him and thinking 'I'm going to kill you, I am actually, I'm going to kill you' erm, you know like people say that in a sort of 'oh I could kill you'
427. R Mm
428. P I, I was scared, I thought I could, I could kill you now, I dislike you that much, I could kill you
429. R Yeah

430. P And I just stood there, I put the iron down and I went 'you need to go' and he, he just carried on talking to me and I said 'please will you go, you need to go' and he said 'no, no don't' and I 'just be quiet and just leave, you need to go because if I was in the kitchen and I was near a knife' and he went 'what would you do, stab me' and I went 'at the moment I don't know, I can't say no honestly, so you need to leave' and that really scared me but I'd had in my head before I said it to him I'd had this thing like 'I'm not really sure that this is make believe anymore, I'm not really sure that this is just an expression of hate, a way of expl…, I really think I would like you to not be around anymore and you need to go'
431. R Mm
432. P And that's the only time that I've actually felt
433. R Yeah
434. P I **hated** somebody **so** much
435. R Yeah
436. P You know
437. R Yeah
438. P That I can see where crimes of passion (laughs) come into play, I really, really hated him
439. R Yeah
440. P Erm, and, and so yeah that was a negative chat that I had 'do you think you would? Yep I think I would, tell him to go, ok he needs to go' (laughs)
441. R Well what's really interesting is that you actually had that conversation in your head as opposed to just acting out
442. P Yeah, I don't think to be honest, I mean I'm not a physically violent person, I can be quite scathing verbally to people if I'm in, you know if I'm provoked enough
443. R Mmm
444. P But I've never had a physical erm, I've never had a fight with anybody
445. R Yeah
446. P Erm, and I've never slapped my children, I don't, it's not my first reaction to harm somebody else
447. R Yeah, yeah
448. P Erm, so I don't think that I would have but there was **definitely** an acknowledgement that it was a risk
449. R Yup, yup
450. P So I needed, like you were saying, to remove him and or me
451. R Yuh
452. P Because we can't both be here (laughs) this ain't going to work
453. R Step away from the iron! (we both laugh)
454. P Step away from the ex-wife! (laughs) yeah
455. R Oh dear. It sounds like a really fascinating head you've got
456. P (laughs) Or worrying! (laughs)
457. R Yeah, I don't think there's anything too abnormal about it to be honest (both laugh) or maybe I just share that kind of thought process (laughing) erm, ok what else have I got here? So one of the questions I was looking at really is 'do you think the critical voice serves a function or a purpose?' And it might be a difficult question to answer but if you think about it in terms of like what it does for you
458. P Its my pressure cooker valve
459. R Ok. Pressure cooker valve

460. P So, at times when erm, I think I could lose the plot
461. R Yup
462. P I'm able to not lose the plot
463. R Right
464. P So erm, like the case on the plane with feeling claustrophobic I could have given in to that
465. R Yup
466. P And I could have just, I don't know, what would have happened if I'd had a bit of a panic attack on the plane because a man had his head in my lap erm, it's erm, it's a pressure cooker valve, it allows me to erm, debate the situation and come up with the pro's and con's or do a cost benefit analysis of what's the risk (laughs) I do a little risk assessment in my head
467. R And in the meantime time is passing and it diffuses those feelings
468. P Yes
469. R And diffuses that argument
470. P Yeah
471. R Wow. That's so
472. P I try to teach my daughter similar strategies, erm, she's on holiday with a friend at the moment in Greece and it's the first time she's been away since all of this panic attack, anxiety stuff
473. R Mmm
474. P And there's been a few times where she you know, gets herself in a pickle and I tell here to just tell herself 'its fine' you know, tell herself she's doing really well, and I think that's the little head inside that you, you say to yourself 'yeah I'm doing really well actually'
475. R Mmm
476. P You know and she was worried she couldn't sleep and I said 'well it's not surprising because you're two hours ahead over there, it would only be half nine here'
477. R Mmm
478. P 'just tell yourself that's fine, if you're going to be you know, sit and read a book on your phone or whatever'
479. R Mmm
480. P Erm, but I'm not sure if birth order erm, you know I was the oldest of two children and she's the youngest of three whether you develop different coping mechanisms as the older child because you have a younger one that allowances are made for 'you're the big girl now, you've got a baby brother, well I never asked for him' you know
481. R Mmm
482. P So, yeah perhaps but it's, it's definitely it is a way of like you say either, either diffusing or letting off steam
483. R Yeah
484. P Or you know
485. R Managing it
486. P It's a way of managing it without actually doing something that might not be socially or criminally acceptable
487. R Yup, so it sounds like its serves you a really good function that works well for you

488. P (laughs) yeah, I do think I'm going mad sometimes though with you know, I do, I do think this can't be normal
489. R Really?
490. P Yeah you sort of go 'RRRRRRR' I have this feeling, ah that's another one I have where I want to get away from me
491. R Ok
492. P Erm, one time that I can remember actually physically doing it was when I was having my first child and I can remember trying, I was trying to leave the bed, I was trying to, I didn't wanna be **there** doing **that**
493. R Yeah
494. P And I get that sometimes where I feel trapped or cornered in either physically but mostly mentally if you know, if I feel trapped I feel like 'mmmm' I wanna escape, I want an ejector seat
495. R Yeah
496. P And that's another time where I'm trying to 'ok, so we can like EEEEE or we can calm it down'
497. R Yeah, have you ever erm, used any other ways of sort of getting out of your head, or I guess it's getting off your head isn't it I suppose
498. P On what, sort of chemical ones?
499. R I guess, well anything cause I'm thinking you know if that's a thing for you, you know, if feeling trapped is like on of your kind of things
500. P Yeah
501. R That is a, you know like erm, light the blue touch paper type thing
502. P Yeah, erm, never, never drugs, oh actually I had gas and air when I was having my first child and d'you know what I said to the midwife (laughs) I said 'd'ya know, I've never done drugs and I don't think I ever will but I know why people do' (laughs) I think I loved it, no that was my only experience of mind altering drugs but alcohol, yeah I've, I've got drunk when I was younger probably erm, more times than I should have, erm, but that again I, I think for most people either accentuates erm, I don't think it helps
503. R No, so it didn't help like for the period of being drunk or there wasn't that motivation to get off your head
504. P No, I don't think you know, no
505. R Yeah ok
506. P I think I have a bit of an addictive personality I think I could get addicted to things quite easily
507. R What makes you say that?
508. P Erm, because erm, I used to smoke and I'm a bit of an all or nothing …
509. R Ok
510. P person so if I'm gonna erm, stop smoking I have to stop, I can't cut down I have to stop because I can't do one or two, one or two means twenty or forty I can't
511. R Ok
512. P You know so if erm, if I'm gonna drink then if say I bought say four bottles of cider to watch the football for people to have and they didn't go I could have one every night for four nights or two one night and two the next until they were gone and then if I bought more I could carry on drinking them every night and I know I could
513. R Mmm
514. P So, I don't, I don't buy them because I can't do moderation

515. R Right
516. P Erm, and it's the same if I'm, erm, trying to lose weight I can't say 'oh well I can have eight Maltesers cause they come out of a big bag so I have to eat the whole bag, you know it's that sort of, I don't have very good will power
517. R Ok
518. P I know I don't and another time where I have lots of conversations in my head (laughs) are if I decide to go running and I used to have to run first thing in the morning so I fall out of bed, I fall into my running kit and I fall out the door because otherwise it just don't happen, it don't happen because there are far too many things in my head tells me are much more important
519. R Yeah
520. P Than doing running, like painting the ceiling or cutting the grass, things that I would not normally want to engage in erm, but because it's that or run
521. R Yeah
522. P And I can come up with lots of very creative excuses to not do things that I don't want to do
523. R Mmm
524. P That even I don't believe so why should everyone else (laughs)
525. R So that's really interesting when you said about you haven't got any will power yet you're able to control your you know, externalising or verbalising your frustration so that kind of, and I just wondered if it was, if there was a connection there like, the
526. P I know!
527. R What?
528. P I know
529. R What?
530. P So, making excuses not to run, being an addictive personality, that's self-destruction
531. R ok
532. P Verbalising, being horrible and aggressive to other people outwardly that's destructing **you** and I don't do that
533. R Right
534. P So I internalise so I'll destruct, I'll destroy me
535. R Right
536. P And I'll, I'll have internal conflicts for **me**
537. R Yuh, ok
538. P So I don't want to upset you, offend you
539. R Right
540. P I don't want to engage with you
541. R Yuh
542. P I don't like confrontation, I, when I was younger I'd go out of my way to not have confrontation and then I would you now, say you'd had an argument with somebody or something had happened in a shop then I'd go home and I would rehearse numbers of different scenarios on how I would have liked to have behaved but couldn't
543. R Yeah
544. P For whatever reason
545. R Yeah

546. P And then in some ways that's helped me going forward because then as I've got older and sometimes those situations or kinds of situations re-occur
547. R Mmm
548. P I've rehearsed
549. R Right
550. P What I'm going to say so then I'll just come back at people like that
551. R Ok
552. P And my daughter said to me 'you have so many put downs' and I go 'yeah I know but I've had a lot of years to develop them and so I have a little stash in my head of things that I will say to unpleasant people if they're being rude to me and I give them to her so in this scenario next time that happens say this' you know and then, erm, and then I have things like I have a filing cabinet so (laughs) if you said to me 'oh who's that singer on the telly' and I don't remember but I know I know them I'll go through my filing cabinet in my head of a's, b's, c's, d's until I find the person who it is
553. R Wow!
554. P And equally I do erm, I do things like recalling, me and my husband play this game where if we hear an old song we guess what year it is and I have different things in my filing cabinet for remembering
555. R Wow
556. P But it is a filing cabinet and it has draws
557. R Wow! Golly
558. P Yeah (laughs) nutty woman
559. R Fascinating! Really. Ok, so erm, has I was just wondering if you've answered this question before so my final question really is around what do you make of your critical voice, you know has your feelings changed over time? So I guess this would be **feelings** and what you understand of it not the experience of it.
560. P Mkay (pause) erm, say that question again
561. R So yeah, so it's what do you make of your critical voice, do your feelings towards it change, or have they changed over time?
562. P I think, I think so, I think erm, I suppose I'd liken it to sort of friendship so erm, when you're young you have quite intense friendships but not for very long periods so you don't really get to know little friends at infant and junior school very well
563. R Yup
564. P But it's quite intense at the time
565. R Yup
566. P And then I think as I've matured I've sort of learnt how my head works so I've learnt how to control erm, manage these feelings erm, sort of anger really, a lot erm, and so I think the, the critical voice has become more of erm, an acknowledged part of me managing things
567. R Yuh
568. P Erm, something I can tap into
569. R Ok
570. P Something that is a resource available to me
571. R Yeah
572. P So that I can manage a situation and feel that I've behaved appropriately (laughs) rather than inappropriately so it's my filter, I have a filter

573. R Ok
574. P On things that I can look at and say 'is this an appropriate way to behave' because I think we all have a filter because you know people behave a lot more sort of casually and will be a lot more aggressive or erm, or loving to family members that they would to somebody out on the street but I think if you are able to control it in any environment then you can control it in all environments
575. R Yeah
576. P It's just whether you chose to or not
577. R Yeah, yeah
578. P So erm, yeah I don't know if that's answered your question
579. R Yeah
580. P Can try again
581. R Yeah I think erm, so you're saying its sort of grown over time with you
582. P Yeah
583. R Your feelings towards it
584. P Yeah
585. R And you mentioned also that its erm, kind of there's a friendship there as it were, like a longevity sort of process of friendship
586. P Yeah
587. R And acceptance
588. P It's a bit like a long-term relationship like a long-term marriage or friendship that you feel comfortable with someone, you can finish their sentences, I sort of know with my internal voice where things are going
589. R Yup
590. P Erm, and then I also know sometimes I'm going to give into that because I absolutely have had enough of all of you today
591. R Yup
592. P Erm, and I'm going to let, and this I suppose really the word I've not used yet that at its worst is a tantrum
593. R Yup, mhm
594. P It's a tantrum
595. R Ok
596. P I have tantrums
597. R Yup, so can you explain what that means to you?
598. P Erm, I (exhales) I can stamp my feet, I can feel like pulling my hair out, I grit my teeth, I'm just like out of control physically as well as mentally
599. R Yeah
600. P And then erm, when I've done that 'RRRRR' sort of feeling I can just sink onto the floor and like cry
601. R Right
602. P Erm
603. R So what goes on for you in those moments when you're crying?
604. P Erm, well then when I'm having the discussion usually about how I'm not wanting to be living here any more
605. R Ok, so it turns into despair or er, 'I've had enough, I want out' type thing
606. P Yeah (crying) sorry
607. R That's ok
608. P Sorry, the laughing a lot of the time keeps it at bay (crying) sorry

609. R You don't need to apologise
610. P (pause) I feel very much like this is always very near to the surface
611. R Mmm
612. P And a lot of sort of being jovial and a lot of the aggression I think is managing feeling sad
613. R Yeah
614. P And I don't know where this comes from
615. R The sadness?
616. P Mmm, yeah (pause) yeah, there was a couple of times when we were talking (exhales) where it nearly got me
617. R Mmm
618. P But then I laugh
619. R Mmm
620. P And then it hijacks me
621. R Hijacks you?
622. P Mmm, like I couldn't stop it if I wanted to, I can't choke it back, I can't suppress
623. R Yuh, sometimes it's just too overwhelming
624. P And can come from nowhere
625. R Mmm
626. P Just can come from nowhere
627. R Mmm
628. P (pause) Anyway, that's done
629. R Are you ok?
630. P Yeah
631. R How are you feeling now?
632. P Ok, mmm, yeah
633. R It is a you know, it is a really, it can be a really tough subject to talk about
634. P Yeah
635. R Cause it can be really erm, cruel at times and you know really harsh, erm
636. P Yeah, and it's obviously for me particularly related to a lot of erm, emotionally challenging times
637. R Mmm
638. P So you know, that's erm, yeah
639. R Mmm
640. P It was probably not talking about this subject in general it was just things it brought up in particular that just erm,
641. R Mmm
642. P Yeah
643. R So, I've got erm, a debriefing sheet that I'll email over
644. P Yup
645. R To you
646. P Ok
647. R So that you know, if you, you want to talk to erm, to someone in a more supporting erm, environment, if you feel that you know you do need to kind of to talk to somebody about this
648. P Ok
649. R And you haven't got your normal support mechanisms then it just lists a few people

650. P Ok, alright thank you
651. R Or agencies that might help
652. P Yeah ok
653. R I mean I don't want to, I don't want to leave you now and kind of, with you feeling
654. P Oh no I'm fine
655. R Are you sure?
656. P Honestly, oh absolutely yeah, I'll message you if not, promise
657. R And erm, if you've got any questions about the research please get in touch
658. P Yup
659. R Let me now
660. P I will. Ok
661. R You know, erm, and that, but erm, honestly how are you feeling?
662. P I'm, I'm good honestly that's fine. I, I get these little, little bursts of that and then it goes and then I'm fine
663. R Ok
664. P And it's another pressure valve release
665. R Yeah
666. P So, it's good
667. R Well I really appreciate you coming forward and contributing to the interviewing process
668. P That's ok
669. R It's been a really fascinating interview, I've really enjoyed getting to know, you know, what goes on in your head
670. P Yeah
671. R It's really interesting
672. P Thank you
673. R And you know, as I say if, if you kind of later on you think 'oh god that was too much' or whatever you just let me know, it's not a problem
674. P That's alright as long as you're not putting me on YouTube you can use it, it's fine (laughs)
675. R Absolutely not! Absolutely not. So what I will do is erm, any, any names that you've mentioned erm, I will change or what I usually do is just do asterisks and then in brackets like (son) or (daughter)
676. P Ok
677. R Or whatever you know
678. P Yeah
679. R Erm and I know I've taken your geographical location but I won't be using that in the study erm
680. P Ok
681. R I, the reason I get the demographics is, is erm, for my research supervisors you know, the university want to know that I'm doing things properly
682. P Ok
683. R Erm, and if I do use anything erm, specific it will be, what I mean is I will change it to be very generalised
684. P Ok
685. R So you know, erm, yup, so to try and anonymise, well as best I can, anonymise
686. P Ok
687. R Things that you've said and things about you

688. P Ok, alright that's fine
689. R Alright
690. P Yep ok, it was nice to meet you anyway
691. R Yeah, thank you so much and good luck with your studies
692. P Thank you and good luck with yours (laughs)
693. R Thank you, I appreciate everything that you've given today
694. P Ok, ok no worries, by then
695. R Bye, take care
696. P And you, bye

Matrix

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
1	**Themes across Transcripts**																	
2																		
3	**Theme**	**T1**	**T2**	**T3**	**T4**	**T5**	**T6**	**T7**	**Sco**	**Op**		**Related Themes**	**Related Themes**	**Related Themes**	**Related Themes**	**Related Ther**	**Related Ther**	**Related Themes**
25	Harsh Judgement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	**All**			Emotional Outburst	Break	Self-Blame	Safe Criticism	Values	Destructive	Fuel
26	I want to be more ...		✓			✓			2			Strive to be Better	Not Good Enough	Not All Bad				
27	Impact of being Interviewed	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	4.5			Teaching	Learning					
28	Interconnection	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	**All**			Isolating	Harsh Judgement	To Others	Safe Criticism	Social Media		
29	Isolating				✓		✓		2			Not Good Enough	Alone	Harsh Judgement				
30	It is Wrong	✓	✓	✓	и	и	✓	и	3.5	-3		Change it	Learning	и Ashamed	и Blame			
31	Lack of Confidence	✓	✓						2			Worthless	Self-Doubt					
32	Learning / Teaching	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	5.5			Modelling	Helping Others	Not All Bad				
33	Liking Myself			✓					1			Little Friend	Love	Learning				
34	Little Friend			✓				✓	2			Self-Care						
35	Love / Faith	✓	и	✓	✓				3	-1		Self-Care?						
36	Menopause			✓	✓	✓		✓	4			Changed Over Time						
37	Modelling / Teaching Others	✓	✓	✓		✓	и	✓	4	-1		Care for Others	Parental Style	Strive to be Better				
38	Not All Bad	✓	✓	✓		✓	и	✓	4.5	-1		Little Friend	Coping Mechanism	Strive to be Better	Redressing a Balance	Learning	Rehearsal	Safe Criticism
39	Not Appreciated / Nobody gives a shit							✓	1			Values	и Worthless	Meltdown				
40	Not Good Enough		✓		✓	✓	✓		4			Ashamed	Harsh Judgement					
41	Observing Others			✓			✓		2			Social Media	Harsh Judgement					
42	Parenting Style	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	6			Upbringing	Started When	Modelling				
43	Part of Me/ Always There	✓	✓					✓	3			Ever Present	Started When					
44	Perfection		✓			✓	✓		3			Rehearsal?	Strive to be Better	Getting Things Right?	Costs Me			
45	Positivity Not Enough	✓	✓		✓				3			Learning	Impact of being Interviewed					
46	Redressing a Balance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5			Dialogue	Pressure Valve	Self-Care	Not all Bad			
47	Rehearsal						✓	✓	2			Dialogue	Talk myself out of it	Perfection				
48	Resillience	✓	✓	✓					5			Redressing a Balance	Dialogue	Not All Bad	Costs Me	Strive to be Better		
49	Safe Critisim			✓		✓		✓	3			Social Media	Observing Others	Ashamed / Guilty	Protecting Others	Control it	Pressure Cooker	
50	Self-Blame		✓	✓		✓	✓		4			Perfection?	Shame / Ashamed	Harsh Judgement				
51	Self-Care	✓	✓	✓	и	✓	✓	✓	5.5	-1		Not All Bad	и Harsh					
52	Self-Conscious					✓			1			Halts Me						
53	Self-Doubt		✓				✓	✓	3			Not all Bad	Self-Conscious?	Lack of Confidence?				
54	Sensitivity	✓	✓	✓					3			Interconnection	Learning					
55	Social Media		✓	✓		✓			3			Safe Criticism	Learning	Harsh Judgement	(No Exit?)			
56	Started When ...	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6.5			Comes From	Upbringing					
57	Strive to be Better		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	5			Perfection	Resillience?					
58	Tonne of Bricks						✓		1			Very Harsh	Cyclical / Spiral	Fuel				
59	Viscious Circle / Spiral	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	5			Ever Present	Tonne of Bricks					
60	Vulnerability						✓		1			Halts Me	Context	Sensitivity?				
61	Want to be rid of it / Damper Down					✓	✓		2			Change it	Not All Bad					
62	When it Occurs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	**All**			Alone / Winter	**Examples**	Context				
63	Worthless / Self-Worth	✓	и					и	1	-2		Ever Present	Not Appreciated	Futility				
64																		
65	**Key for Scoring:**																	
66	One point allocated to a positive 'hit'																	
67	One point removed for an opposite 'hit'																	
68	Half a point allocated for almost a positive 'hit'																	
69	Half a point removed for almost an opposite 'hit'																	