ADULT SELF DEVELOPMENT DURING DIVORCE: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

By

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ABSTRACT

Although divorce research and theory has dramatically increased during the last 20 years, little is known about the self development adults experience during this major life transition. The nature of gender differences in this process is particularly unclear.

The purpose of this qualitative inquiry was to explore the process and nature of self development during men's and women's experience of divorce. Five men and five women, who had experienced an enduring marital separation during the past 6 years, participated in two unstructured interviews.

Through the use of the constant comparative method of analysis and narrative analysis, each respondent's unique story of personal change during divorce was summarized. The personal development which respondents had similarly experienced during divorce was identified in terms of the process themes and substantive themes of development.

The transition process was generally represented by the non-linear stages of (a) opening up, (b) challenges, and (c) maintenance of changes and the change process. The respondents utilized professional help, reading, courses, writing, social support, and reflection as resources in the transition process. Each individual became a changed person through a process of making improvements to his or her previous self, finding and naming one's self, and/or regaining parts of the self which had been lost.
Although the respondents commonly experienced an overall increase in self-esteem following separation, they also tended to have difficulty coping at times, which led to a temporary loss of self-esteem and negative self-definition. Those who had a weak sense of identity at the time of separation described having more trouble coping. All made changes in how they thought and behaved in interpersonal relationships and commonly experienced an increase in self-reliance.

Women tended to emphasize the challenge of becoming self-reliant following separation. Some of the women described a profound change in their knowledge of personal responsibility and confusion about the praxis of independence. Support was found for recent theories of women's epistemological and self-development. The women's difficulty with financial problems following the separation caused temporary setbacks in the developmental changes.

Men tended to emphasize the challenge of gaining intimacy in future relationships following the separation. The men in this study reported significant developmental changes during divorce, indicating that relationships were influential in these men's development.

The implications of these findings are discussed in terms of theory and research in the fields of divorce, adult development, and transitions. The implications for future research are also considered.
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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is not uncommon to hear someone say that they have "broken-up" with their spouse, or to describe children as coming from "a broken home". The meanings of the word "broken", which originates from the verb "to break", include being (a) "violently separated into parts"; (b) "disunited"; (c) "discontinuous, interrupted"; (d) "disconnected"; (e) "not complete or full" (p. 181, Merriam-Webster, 1987). Although these meanings may reflect society's negative valuation of divorce, they may also aptly represent the experiences of divorcing individuals who find themselves becoming the "parts" evolving to new wholes at the individual and family levels, after the sudden separation within the original couple and family.

Divorce is a major transition for spouses, involving multiple changes in community and familial roles, physical living arrangements, and identity from part of a couple to a single person. Within the psychological literature, divorce has been defined as "the emotional, legal and social processes through which the former spouses come to regard themselves and be regarded by others as single individuals" (Brown, 1976, p. 10). As people make this transition to singleness, major transformations are precipitated which can include the development of a new self-definition.

Divorce is experienced by many people, with a total of 86,985 divorces granted in 1987 in Canada (Dumas &
Grindstaff, 1990). In response to the recognition of the pervasive and often traumatic ramifications of divorce for individuals and families, divorce research and theory has burgeoned with increasingly complex investigations and explanations of variations in post-divorce adjustment. However, little is known about the process and nature of adults' self development during divorce, and further research is needed to increase the understanding of this phenomenon which may be pivotal in terms of the quality of functioning and adjustment of divorcing individuals.

The study of self development during divorce also adds to the relatively new field of adult psycho-social development, in that it will provide a better understanding of the general process and nature of self development which occurs during the adult years. Recent, innovative developmental theory and research is suggesting gender differences in self development, positing women's self development in intimate relationships characterized by caring and mutual empathy (Gilligan, 1982a, 1982b; Jordan & Surrey, 1986; Josselson, 1987). The study of divorce, which is the culmination of the deterioration of an intimate relationship, provides further insight into the nature of self development for both men and women.

This is a qualitative inquiry into the nature and process of self development during the divorce process. Five women and five men told their stories of the personal change which they experienced during divorce. Their experiences
elucidate and provide a rich understanding of this complex and often traumatic life transition.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Post-divorce adjustment is currently recognized as involving a complex interrelationship of a large number of individual, family and societal variables. The life cycle perspective of divorce conceptualizes divorce in terms of being "nested" in nature, because divorce adjustment is related to many levels of variables, and each level has impact upon the other levels (Ahrons & Rodgers, 1987; Kaslow & Schwartz, 1987; Rice & Rice, 1986). This model considers divorce adjustment in terms of: (a) particular types of individuals in divorce; (b) the stage of divorce process experienced by an individual; (c) the individual's life cycle; (d) the family stage of divorce (marriage separation stage and divorce transition); (e) family type; (f) the family life cycle; and (g) society. Divorce is currently considered to be a major transition which can affect both the individual's and the family's development.

Many models of the divorce transition conceptualize it as a process, rather than an event, occurring in a number of stages similar to the Kubler-Ross (1969) model of grief resolution (Goode, 1956; Kessler, 1975; Kraus, 1979; Kressel & Deutsch, 1977; Wiseman, 1975). An individual experiences grief after divorce due to the loss of the spouse to which he or she has been attached (Weiss, 1975). These models of divorce tend to incorporate Bohannon's (1970) stages which are descriptive of the issues and related tasks dealt with
during divorce. These stages include: (a) emotional divorce, during which the marriage deteriorates and there is grief over loss of the loved object; (b) legal divorce, involving the legal dissolution of the marriage; (c) economic divorce, which involves money and property settlements; (d) co-parental divorce, during which custody, single parenting and visitation are established; (e) community divorce, which concerns changes in the social network; and (f) psychic divorce, the task of attaining personal autonomy. Although many different stages of the divorce process have been proposed, there is support for the existence of three stages in the process: (a) the decision making stage; (b) the restructuring stage; and (c) the post-dissolution stage (Crosby, Lybarger, & Mason, 1987; Lyon, Silverman, Howe, Bishop, & Armstrong, 1985; Salts, 1979; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989). Progress through the divorce transition is recognized as occurring through a process which is not necessarily linear, but as involving a recycling through the tasks at various times throughout the divorce experience.

Self Development During Divorce Transition

One of the first attempts to understand the nature of adult self development during divorce was made by Weiss (1975). He based his work upon his studies of "Parents Without Partners" groups and "Seminars for the Separated". He suggests that with the loss of the marriage there is a loss of self-definition, and this process may begin prior to the separation. An individual loses his or her former self-
definition and will experience a "between selves" period (Weiss, p. 70) during which there is no new self. Weiss observes that some individuals consider that the major task during this time is to develop an autonomous self which is different from the married self. This period is followed by the individual's experience that his or her motives and behaviour seem alien before a new and stable self-image is formed. The development of a post-divorce identity can be postponed if the individual experiences prolonged self depreciation and guilt.

Weiss (1975) identifies two primary ways that the process of identity loss occurs. Within marriage, one spouse communicates implicitly the other spouse's self-image, and this stabilizes one's self-image. The loss of communication concomitant with the divorce involves the loss of this identity affirming process. Identity change also occurs with the loss of the many social definitions associated with being married. For traditional women, divorce involves the loss of marital roles, which Weiss suggests is similar to a major career change. It is to these changes in external definitions of identity that Weiss attributes the loss of self-definition which occurs during divorce.

Weiss (1975) notes that obsessive review seems to be a part of identity change, in that it allows the individual to make his or her identity and the current events consistent with each other and incorporate the divorce experience into a new self. Obsessive review takes the form of a preoccupation
with the former marriage, with what has happened or might have happened. This allows for the development of a new identity which: (a) incorporates events and behaviour from the past; (b) incorporates possible positive events and behaviours from the past; and (c) excludes those behaviours and events from the past which were considered negative. A new identity is also formed as divorcing individuals make and implement decisions about how they will reorganize their lives. Many will try out a number of different new identities before commitments are made and stable identities are established.

Rice and Rice (1986) propose a developmental perspective of divorce which "emphasizes the interaction of individual and interpersonal change, the conflicts and problems associated with such change, its working through and resolution, and the ultimate benefits that can accrue individually and interpersonally" (p.17). They suggest that the two tasks of communion and separation are essential to all human development. The task of communion refers to intimacy or getting close to another individual. The task of separation is necessary to achieve a sense of identity or individualization. These tasks are reworked at different times during the life span, and divorce provides one such opportunity to rework these tasks.

Paradoxically, in divorce it is the very breakdown of intimacy, of the task of communion, that may lead to a better defined individual identity. The
key developmental task of separation in divorce is utilized to achieve differentiation of self. Divorce is likely to be most beneficial when one does not seek immediately to replace another partner with whom to be intimate, but instead begins to understand and to define oneself alone.

(p. 85)

Rice and Rice suggest that self development occurs in divorce through the process of differentiation of self which happens during separation.

Resolution of the tasks of communion and separation during divorce can lead to greater self-esteem, although the individual will experience a short term loss of self-esteem initially (Rice & Rice, 1986). Loss of self-esteem is due to object loss, which produces narcissistic injury (one feels unlovable and incapable of intimacy). Role loss also leads to a temporary loss of self-esteem due to a sense of confusion about one's roles and identity.

Rice and Rice (1986) consider the effect of divorce on intimacy/communion and identity/separation tasks during various developmental periods in the lifespan. The tasks of intimacy and communion are reworked during divorce through the progressive redefinition of intimacy in terms of being reciprocal, involving commitment, involving sharing, and as meaning the love of all things. Divorce allows the achievement of the tasks of identity and separation through the increasing separation of self-definition from the family
and spouse, acceptance of one's ultimate aloneness, and eventual redefinition of identity in terms of a merging with the cosmos. Rice and Rice acknowledge that there are likely gender differences in the process of self development following divorce, in that women's identity is "often subsumed in intimacy, and defined through it" (p. 88), however, they do not reconcile how this relates to the reworking of the developmental tasks of differentiation through separation. They do suggest that women's achievement of the developmental goal of separation from the family of origin is often inappropriately delayed until the age of 40.

Both Weiss (1975) and Rice and Rice (1986) attempt to offer a general understanding of the nature of self development during divorce, which does not adequately represent the complexity of this transformation. Weiss suggests that divorce temporarily involves a loss of self or total anomie that does not represent the many well functioning divorcing adults observable at the work place or in the community, or the "perfect pals" described by Ahrons and Rodgers (1987). It is conceivable that identity in divorce may be partially affected in different ways, depending upon factors such as the nature of the previous and current marriage relationship and the individual entering divorce.

Although gender differences are noted to exist, the nature of these differences are not elaborated upon. Weiss (1975) and Rice and Rice (1986) suggest that the goal of self
development in divorce is commonly that of greater autonomy. This is representative of a male model of development according to the recent research and theory which links female self development to goals of interdependence through the processes of intimacy and connectiveness rather than separation (Gilligan, 1982a, 1982b; Jordan and Surrey, 1986). Women's self development may not necessarily be developmentally delayed due to their slower achievement of autonomy, as Rice and Rice suggest, but may be characterized by developmental goals which differ from that of increasing autonomy. The impact of divorce upon self development needs further specification in terms of both the process and nature of the transition, with consideration of how different factors, such as the gender of the divorce participants, affect this transition.

Gender and Post-divorce Development

The literature on divorce suggests that divorce may affect men and women in different ways. Research has generally indicated that for many women their overall psychological adjustment following divorce is poorer than that of men (Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1989; Doherty, Su, & Needle, 1989; Kaslow & Schwartz, 1987). Women's post-divorce adjustment has been related to the socio-cultural context of divorcing women. Although women's overall psychological adjustment may be poorer than men's, many women gradually improve their adjustment to divorce over time and experience personal growth following divorce. Women's difficulties in
divorce adjustment have been attributed to societal norms and inequities within (a) current divorce practices, and (b) sex-role socialization.

Current divorce practices and assumptions contribute to women commonly experiencing downward mobility following divorce. Recent research has indicated that divorced women tend to live at a much lower socioeconomic level than prior to divorce and often are disadvantaged economically (Arendell, 1986; Doherty, Su & Needle, 1989; Gerstel, Reissman & Rosenfeld, 1985; Kaslow & Schwartz, 1987). This has been related to the unfair assumptions held by law, that women can be immediately self-supporting following divorce, when in fact women tend to be disadvantaged in the labor market due to responsibilities for children (women usually gain child custody), unequal opportunities for higher paying jobs, and the lack of marketable job skills. Inequitable divorce settlements have been attributed to the difficulty women have with the negotiation processes utilized by lawyers or mediators (Grella, 1985; Kressel, 1985). Consequently, many women experience poverty after divorce and have difficulties raising their standard of living to the pre-divorce level.

The economic difficulties women tend to experience after divorce have been related to less personal growth. After in-depth interviews of 60 women who were in the middle class prior to the divorce, Arendell (1986) found that all but two women experienced a substantial loss of income following
their divorces. These women were pre-occupied with meeting basic needs for food and shelter. Women who experienced significant self-growth were able to experience freedom from dependency, which is difficult without economic self-sufficiency. L'Hommedieu (1984) found similar results in her research involving open-ended interviews of 12 women who were divorced for one and a half to two years. Half of these women were in the middle class and half were in the lower class. L'Hommedieu found that both groups experienced low self-esteem and a loss of identity. The women in the middle class continued to develop personally through the post-divorce period and tended to view professional achievement as growth. The lower-class women, however, were pre-occupied with attempting to achieve stability and consistency in their lives and emotional adjustment for their children following divorce. As many women do experience a severe drop in their standard of living following divorce, one could surmise from this research that the majority of divorced women experience little self development during divorce.

Women also tend to experience social disadvantages following divorce, which are related to the structure of the family and the generally held norms about divorced women (Brown, 1976; Rawlings & Graham, 1988). Women who have taken more traditional roles often find themselves unprepared for the roles of single parent and head of the household. Custody responsibilities limit them socially, which can narrow their support network and opportunities for remarriage. Although
society is becoming more accepting of divorce, many divorced women experience disapproval regarding their attempts to be independent. There still exists in society a bias for the traditional family and male headed households (Rawlings & Graham).

With divorce, many women tend to experience a greater transition in their basic identities due to major transformations in roles and their conceptualization of self. The experiences of widows suggests that greater stress will likely be experienced by women who: (a) are not involved in a large number of roles other than the wife role, (b) have non-marital roles but these roles are relatively unimportant in comparison to the wife roles, and (c) are involved in roles which are grounded in the marriage institution rather than a number of different institutions (Brown, 1976). Role transitions after divorce may be experienced as more difficult for women who are not accustomed to be self defining, due to their previous socialization which encourages women to be defined by external expectations. There is also a lack of clearly defined role expectations which provide guidelines for women in transition (Maury & Brandwein, 1984). Women also frequently experience role conflicts following divorce as they take on additional roles and responsibilities (Rawlings & Graham, 1988).

Research has suggested that women undergo profound changes during divorce. In a survey study involving a random sample of 300 women between the ages of 35 to 55 and
representing a range of socio-economic levels, Baruch, Barnett, and Rivers (1983) found that the majority of divorced women experienced divorce as a major turning point in their lives. During the aftermath of divorce, 80 percent described a sense of personal growth and increased competence. These changes involved feelings of being more in charge and free in their lives after divorce and a more general sense of personal growth and self-esteem.

Maury and Brandwein (1984) propose three stages of change experienced by women during divorce, which are based upon the results of their interviews with 30 divorced women. During the first pre-decision stage, women experience abandonment or rejection of the marital role. The ex-wife stage follows and is characterized by being seen as an ex-wife by others and oneself. There is a risk in this stage of being defined by others' expectations rather than being self defined. During the last, single-parent stage, women integrate old and new roles and draw from their own values to formulate a new and positive self-definition. Maury and Brandwein note that eight women in their sample of 30 did not achieve this final stage of new self-definition which they attributed to (a) a lack of adequate social support, (b) an inability to find satisfaction in either the roles as worker or mother, and/or (c) having a special family situation which created extra demands.

This study seems to be primarily descriptive of role changes in self-definition for married women who have greater
involvement in marital roles rather than roles in other institutions, such as work roles. Further understanding is needed about changes in self-definition which may be unrelated to role changes, and for women who have greater involvements in non-marital roles. Maury and Brandwein (1984) do suggest that social support is necessary for the achievement of a new and positive self-definition. This finding supports female developmental theory which relates women's self development to relationships and connection rather than separation and autonomy.

From a study which is notable for its longitudinal and in-depth design, observations have been offered about the gender differences in post-divorce self development (Wallerstein, 1986; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). The study was initiated in 1971 when 60 divorcing families were recruited from a preventive divorce counselling service and interviewed for one to one and one-half hours once a week for six weeks, at 18 months post-separation, 5 years after initial interviews, 10 years after, and again at 15 years. The assessment for evidence of psychological change or growth after divorce was based upon the following dimensions: (a) self-concept coherence and effectiveness, (b) quality and emotional depth of relationships, (c) capacity for sustained commitment to goals, (d) resolution of divorce issues, and (e) improved reality judgements (Wallerstein). The results of this study consistently indicated that men undergo much less
psychological change than do women following divorce. Many women were found to be "completely different people 10 years after the divorce" (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, p. 42).

Wallerstein and Blakeslee speculate that these differences may be attributed to a number of reasons: (a) because men primarily define themselves by their employment and this remains stable following divorce, their identities remain stable; (b) men tended to be less involved in raising their children, and raising children facilitates psychological growth; (c) men experience fewer pressures to change than women, because of the greater availability of women with whom they can become involved in new relationships. Wallerstein and Blakeslee also note that they found evidence to suggest that older women experience less psychological change following divorce.

Discussion

This overview of the literature clearly indicates the paucity of research which addresses men's self development during divorce, and reflects Chadwick's (1989) conclusion that the general post-divorce adjustment of men has been neglected by research. There is general support for the observation that women experience more profound self change during divorce than do men, which has been attributed to the radical role changes traditional women experience during divorce. There is also the observation that some women experience less personal growth which has been related to (a) economic hardship, (b) sex role socialization and
expectations, (c) lack of social support, (d) lack of satisfaction with roles, (e) excessive family demands, and (f) being old at the time of the divorce.

Current descriptions of the nature of self development and divorce do not reflect a similar complexity to that of the conceptualizations of divorce adjustment which have been given by recent life cycle perspectives. Incidents or situations which are related to particular types of self development have not been identified, and how the process unfolds within the divorce process is unclear. Divorce has been described as involving the transition to greater personal autonomy (Weiss, 1975; Rice & Rice, 1986) involving changes in external roles and internal self-redefinitions. This outcome may reflect socially valued male developmental goals rather than other possible outcomes of the divorce transition which have not yet been been substantiated. The emphasis on a male developmental model and the impact of traditional women's role changes in divorce research and theory, presents a limited and less than complimentary view of women's self development during divorce. This view presents the divorcing woman as developmentally delayed in reaching the goal of autonomy, externally self defining, and limited in traditional role involvement. The relevant research and theory on adult psycho-social development will be considered as to how it contributes to a better insight into the nature of self development which occurs during the divorce transition and gender differences in this process.
Adult Psycho-social Development

Adult developmental theory has been recently recognized as being theory of male psycho-social development which was predominantly formulated by males and from research in which the samples usually consisted of male participants (Barnett & Baruch, 1978; Gilligan, 1982a, 1982b; Hodgson & Fischer, 1979; Miller, 1986). These concerns have led to research of the psycho-social development of adult women and the formulation of theory which increases the understanding of women's development. This section presents an overview of (a) the research and theory of the self development of adult males, and (b) the more recent research and theory of adult females' self development.

Theories and Research of Self Development of Adult Males

The following overview presents the research and theory as it was originally conceptualized as being descriptive of adult development in general. Although some of the research included women as well as men and the theories were intended to be descriptive of both men and women, men primarily participated in the research and theory development which is summarized in this section.

Erikson (1968, 1982) proposes an eight-stage model of individual identity development which identifies particular developmental goals which must be achieved at each stage before later stages can be negotiated. Identity formation occurs through a process
by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in the light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him. (Erikson, 1968, p.22)

Erikson employs an epigenetic model of development which conceptualizes development as following an internal plan from which parts differentiate and evolve to form a functioning whole. Individual development involves an interaction with biological and cultural processes. Although Erikson recognizes that there are developmental differences between males and females, the model of development is representative of both male and female development.

Erikson (1968, 1982) suggests that individuals experience a complete change in perspective at each stage of development. The four stages of childhood deal with the resolution of the issues of: (a) trust versus mistrust, in which the infant learns to trust self, environment and caregivers; (b) autonomy versus inferiority, in which the child is autonomous without feeling inadequate; (c) initiative versus guilt, in which the child takes initiative and begins to be self dependent; and (d) industry versus inferiority, in which the child learns to function in society.

During the fifth stage of identity versus identity confusion, which occurs at adolescence, the identity
components developed in childhood are integrated. At the end of this stage, the adolescent is able to form a firm sense of identity if he or she is able to avoid identity or role diffusion. Erikson (1968) notes that adolescent girls may not develop an identity, but will become intimate with a male who defines her sense of identity. The next stage of intimacy versus isolation, involves the intimacy with another which is possible if one has achieved a separate sense of identity in the previous stage. A firm sense of identity allows for intimacy (a fusion of identities) which would threaten one's sense of identity if it had not been well defined in the previous stage. The seventh stage of generativity versus stagnation, occurs in the adult years when adults primarily establish and guide the younger generation. During the final stage of integrity versus despair, the task is accepting one's own life for what it has been. Failure to reach this acceptance will result in despair and the fear of death.

Vaillant (1977), in the Grant Study, found support for the adult life patterns which were outlined by Erikson (1968). The Grant Study involved 94 college men who completed an open-ended questionnaire during the period between 1939 and 1944, and were interviewed again 30 years later to consider how these men had adapted to life. Vaillant found evidence to suggest that men's perceptions of the world changed through adulthood, and these changes were related to shifts in their defensive styles (the types of defense mechanisms they typically utilized). Along with support for
Erikson's stages of development, Vaillant identified a period of career consolidation between the stages of intimacy and generativity. There was also evidence which suggests that the quality of sustained relationships with important people during childhood influence adult development. A man's identity and adaptive styles were critically influenced by individuals who were closest to him throughout life.

Gould (1972) also identified three phases of adult development in his study of 524 normal men and women in the age range of 16-50. He administered a questionnaire consisting of statements which the individuals ranked according to personal applicability. Adult development involved "the release from arbitrary constraints" (p. 321), which represented childhood assumptions that needed to be challenged so that there is increasing self-definition, flexibility, and freedom in adulthood.

From research involving forty men (ages 35-40) who were intensively interviewed using a biographical interviewing method with a two year follow-up interview, Levinson (1978) offers a theory of adult development. This theory is concerned with the development of an individual's life structure. The life structure is "the underlying pattern or design of a person's life at a given time" (Levinson, p. 41). The life structure reflects the interrelationship of self and the sociocultural world and will consist of one to three components which have greater centrality or significance to the individual. These components represent a choice and a
Levinson (1978) suggests that one's life cycle follows a basic sequence of seasons or eras, which he defines as relatively stable segments, each of which lasts about 25 years. He notes that each era is associated with a particular age range and does not vary much among individuals. Levinson acknowledges that culture and time have effects upon the life cycle, but "eras are grounded in the nature of man as a biological, psychological and social organism, and in the nature of society as a complex enterprise extending over many generations" (p. 322). The primary task of each era is to build a stable life structure and enhance one's life within it. Transitions, which last about four or five years, occur between the eras. They are assessment periods during which the life structure is assessed, possibilities for change are considered, and commitments to choices are made which will define the next era. Marker events are circumstances which have an impact on an individual's life, such as divorce or illness. Marker events require adaptation and influence the nature of one's life, but they do not necessarily start or end a transition or era.

Levinson (1978) identifies three developmental periods, which consist of eras and transitions, of adulthood: (a) early adulthood, from ages 22-40; (b) middle adulthood, from ages 45-60; and (c) late adulthood, from age 65 and on. In
addition to the primary tasks of eras and transitions, which were outlined in the above discussion, certain developmental tasks must be completed during specific eras and transitions, and these will be reworked during future eras and transitions.

Entry to the early adulthood developmental period is accomplished through the early adult transition which occurs from ages 17-22. During early adulthood, the first task is to establish an initial, provisional life structure. This involves the sub-tasks of: (a) forming and living the dream, which is the sense of one's self in the adult world; (b) forming mentor relationships; (c) forming an occupation; (d) forming a marriage and a family; and (e) forming mutual friendships. A crisis occurs at age 30, when this life structure is evaluated and revised to form a second life structure. A settling down period follows, during which the individual becomes established within the revised life structure and strives to achieve aspirations and goals.

The mid-life transition, from ages 40-45, marks the entry to middle adulthood and a new life structure. During the mid-life transition, the individual individuates through consideration of four polarities. The young-old polarity is resolved through the giving up of one's youth and the acceptance of one's mortality. The destruction-creation polarity is resolved by allowing the development of personal creativity as a balance to the recognition of the destruction in the world. The masculine-feminine polarity is addressed
through the development of one's opposite-gender characteristics. The polarity of attachment-separation is addressed by forming a new balance between attachment and separateness. This involves a new balance of one's needs with the needs of society. The resolution of these polarities forms the basis for the life structure of middle adulthood.

Levinson (1978) speculates that there is a transition at the age of 50 that is similar to the age 30 transition, after which another life structure is established to complete the middle adulthood period. The late adult transition at ages 60-65 is the beginning of late adulthood.

Farrell and Rosenberg (1981) conducted research on the transition from young adulthood to middle age, with 500 young adult and middle-aged men. The research consisted of the administration of questionnaires to and interviews with all the research participants, with in-depth interviewing of 20 men. They suggest that the experience of middle age and the transition to middle age varies for men depending upon their personality, family situation, social class, and their residence. Men tend to differ in how much they have tried to conform to cultural stereotypes of masculinity, and self-estrangement can result from conformity to these stereotypes. Farrell and Rosenberg generally found that men tend to invest themselves in external definitions of success, their self concepts are connected to occupational achievement, and friendships are relatively unimportant.
Farrell and Rosenberg (1981) suggest that the mid-life transition is not always experienced as a crisis, and identified four pathways of development (each of which is influenced by cultural expectations) which are represented by the following types of men: (a) the transcendent-generative man, who is open to mid-life problems and can adapt, thereby avoiding self changes and the experience of a crisis; (b) the pseudo-developed male, who tries to cope with feelings of loss, desperation and confusion by adopting a persona of a successful man; (c) the mid-life crisis type of man, whose confusion and feelings of being overwhelmed originate in pre-existing conflicts; and (d) the punitive-disenchanted type, who has had upheaval and unhappiness all his life. Despite these differences, Farrell and Rosenberg describe the mid-life transition as a time when there is increased concern with identity and personal history issues, and self-definition is changed to include more identification with the family group.

Developmental research and theory, which has been primarily descriptive of men, generally agree that relationship transitions, such as divorce, will tend to have a limited affect upon men's lives. Many men base their self-definition upon their occupational achievements, which are pivotal in identity formation throughout their lives (Farrell & Rosenberg, 1981; Levinson, 1978). Stage models of development (Erikson, 1968, 1982; Levinson) suggest that the developmental changes and the lifestyle restructuring which
occur during stages may precipitate divorce, but
relationships are not influential enough to significantly
alter many men's self development. Although many men may find
that relationships become more important to their identity
after mid-life (Farrell & Rosenberg; Levinson), it is unclear
whether divorce after mid-life has more impact upon self-
definition.

Theories and Research of Self Development of Adult Females

With the recognition that previous developmental theory
had been a theory of male psycho-social development, there
has been an increased interest in research of the psycho-
social development of adult women. This has led to the
formulation of theory which represents the experiences of
women and increases the understanding of women's development.

Out of her research on women's moral development,
Gilligan (1982a, 1982b) concludes that women and men
experience moral development differently, which is related to
variations in the process of identity development. She builds
on Chodorow's (1978) work, which was critical of the
psychoanalytic formulation of women's identity development as
incomplete due to their failure to resolve the oedipal
conflict, that is, separation from mother. Chodorow argued
that girls' attachment to their mothers is the basis for
empathy by which identity is defined. Drawing from her
research, which involved three studies using semi-structured
interviews, with follow-up interviews one to five years
later, Gilligan reports that there is an emphasis in male
development on the processes of separation and individuation, while women are primarily self defined through attachment. She identifies women's self development to occur in a process of intimacy and interconnection in relationships. In recognition of the lack of language or voice to describe women's development, Gilligan uses the image of a web to depict women's sense of self as interconnected to others, secure in the middle, and stranded on the edge.

Gilligan (1982a) elaborates an interrelated model of women's moral and identity development. She describes women's moral decisions as occurring out of consideration of responsibility in relationships and an ethic of care. This differs from the male conception of morality as problems of rights, rules, and fairness. Gilligan suggests that women develop an ethic of care through a three-stage process of (a) initially caring for self to ensure survival, (b) the criticism of selfishness triggers a transition to an exclusion of self-care for the caring of others, and (c) a new understanding of self and other in which self and other are interdependent. These transitions occur in a society which values self-sacrifice in women. Therefore, development only to the second stage is valued and typically attained by women in today's society. Gilligan suggests that women need to overcome this opposition to further self development, and the concept of women's rights allows women to consider their own needs in addition to others' needs.
Gilligan (1982a) suggests that women experience developmental transitions during life crises, such as the moral crisis of unwanted pregnancies, and studied these crises to reveal the process of developmental transitions. She found that the crisis signalled a chance to return to a previously missed opportunity for growth. If the woman has the experience of being abandoned by significant others during the crisis, such as by her partner, then the woman will retreat to the stage of survival in which she will cut off feelings and not care for anyone but herself. If she does not have the experience of abandonment, then the crisis has the potential for self development. Through this process women experience self development within relationships.

Peck (1986) offers a dialectical model of women's adult self-definition which is sensitive to the interaction of the person and the environment. Women's self-definition is conceptualized as knowledge of an individual in society; knowledge achieved through self reflection. The process of self-definition is a "spiraling motion" (p.281) which is a constant self-monitoring process done in terms of the relationships in which the woman is involved. It is a dialectical process between external events and internal experience. Women's self-definition is conceptualized as taking place within the context of the social-historical time dimension and the sphere of influence. The social-historical time dimension is the 'social, emotional, and political context within which a woman is allowed to define herself at
any given point in time" (p.278). The sphere of influence refers to all the relationships in which a woman is involved and which influence her sense of self. The sphere of influence is flexible in that it expands and contracts. It is also elastic in that relationships are responsive to the woman's self-definition. Self-definition emerges from the social-historical forces and the sphere of influence, in that the clarity of self-definition increases with the passage of time.

The theory of self-in-relation also emphasizes the centrality of relationships in women's self development (Jordan & Surrey, 1986; Surrey, 1983). For women, the self is a relational self that is developed in the context of significant relationships. In this theory self is defined as "a myriad of memory experiences that provide us with a sense of organization, coherence, and meaning" (p.92). Jordan and Surrey maintain that the capacity for relatedness is fundamental to women's development, and begins within mother-daughter interaction. They suggest that a mother is likely to be influenced by her perceived similarities with her daughter, and this will affect their interaction. The mother-daughter relationship is described as likely involving mutual empathy and connectedness, which empowers both with mutual self-esteem, and "leads to the daughter's development of a sense of self that is anchored in relationship and self connection" (Jordan & Surrey, p. 88).
Jordan and Surrey (1986) identify empathy as "the process through which one's experienced sense of basic connection and similarity to other humans is established" (p. 85). They emphasize that empathy is a two-way process of dialogue and communication. With empathy, intimacy in relationships is possible and with mutual empathy growth in the self is possible. There is a paradox within this process "in that in the joining process, one develops a more articulated and differentiated image of the other and hence responds in a more accurate way" (p. 85). Within relationships, there is an "oscillation of images of self and other" (p. 92) within relationships, which defines self through a dynamic process. Jordan and Surrey refer to this as the "oscillating self structure" (p. 7). The process of self-definition is conceptualized as a continual differentiation of self from other, within empathic relationships.

Jordan and Surrey (1986) suggest that women's self development may also occur through a process of "self empathy" (p. 100). This occurs when the observing and judging self makes an understanding contact with objective aspects of the self (recognized characteristics of self), and thereby modifies the self. This process of self empathy implies that the oscillating self structure oscillates between objective self in relationship with experiencing self, as well as, the self in relationship with other.

Jordan and Surrey (1986) note that mutual empathy is difficult to establish in a society that values separateness
and fails to value connection. This, they suggest, produces fragmentation and conflict in women in a number of ways. Women tend to adopt the two roles of behaving like a man outside the home and adopting the role of caregiver elsewhere, which produces a compartmentalization of functioning. With the loss or absence of close interpersonal relationships, women also "experience difficulty in delineating, articulating, and acting directly on their own needs and perceptions" (p. 99). For women, the absence of mutual empathy in relationships can result in a loss of self-esteem because women value the mutual empathy in relationships and feel guilt and shame if they cannot participate in these types of relationships. The difficulty of establishing and maintaining close interpersonal relationships in this society has consequences for both women's process and nature of self-definition, and their related self-esteem.

Miller (1988) suggests that, when women participate in a relationship which is not mutually empowering and mutually empathic, women develop restricted and distorted images of themselves in future interpersonal relationships. Previous experiences shape their self-esteem and expectations for future relationships.

The implications of self-in-relation theory for women in divorce is that the loss or absence of mutual empathy in the deteriorating marriage prior to divorce may precipitate low self-esteem and the lack of a sense of self. Expectations for
images of self in future relationships may be limited and distorted. Relationship crises, such as divorce, may be crucial to women's self development. Divorce may not provide an opportunity to achieve the task of separation to better define oneself alone, as suggested by Rice and Rice (1986), but may provide an opportunity to increase self-esteem and better self knowledge through new close relationships with people other than the ex-spouse. This explanation of women's self development may account for the research which has suggested that women undergo more profound psychological change following divorce (Baruch, Barnett, & Rivers, 1983; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989).

Research has generally supported the hypothesis that women's identity is primarily developed in the context of relationships. Studies comparing both men and women were done by Lyons (1983) and Wood (1986). Lyons interviewed 36 males and females from the age of 8 to 60 to ascertain modes of self-definition and moral choice. She reported that the results supported Gilligan's (1982a) conclusions that women tend to define self using characterizations of a connected self while men use characterizations of a separate, objective self, and that patterns of decision making in moral choices were related to self-definition. Wood asked 20 men and 14 women to write brief accounts of their experiences of a crisis in a serious romantic relationship to determine how they defined relationship crises. She reported that the differences in the men's and women's accounts reflected
distinct conceptions of relationships, in that women described relationships as primary while men tended to depict themselves as separate from relationships. Women also found the relationship crises to be threats to their identities, while men considered relationship crises to be related to outside factors rather than as personal responsibility.

Other research has reported support for the primary importance relationships hold for women's development and has suggested that it is related to the kinds of life decisions women make. Roberts and Newton (1987) reviewed four doctoral dissertations which used Levinson's (1978) developmental theory to study women's development. The researchers conducted in-depth, biographical interviews with a total of 39 women. They reported that the women's dreams (their sense of self in the world) contained images consistent with self-in-relation theory. The women's dreams tended to consist of a self in an environment or a community. This relational emphasis in their sense of self influenced the nature of their career decisions and plans, unlike the male dream which tends to emphasize an occupational role (Levinson).

Research has also indicated that women's development of self-definition and epistemological perspectives are related. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) conducted retrospective interviews with 135 women who represented a variety of ages, classes, and ethnic backgrounds, to determine if women's development of identity is related to their intellectual development. They reported five categories
of women's perspectives which range from the perspective of no voice or self-definition to the perspective of being creators of knowledge involving the integration of knowledge from others and self, and the elaboration of connected knowing. Self development and intellectual development were interrelated, with connected knowing involving the use of empathy in caring relationships to know, and "use the self as an instrument of understanding" (p.141). Their study supports the centrality of connectiveness and relationships in women's intellectual development.

Josselson (1987) found support for the process of women's identity development described in the self-in-relation model. Her research consisted of a longitudinal study of 60 senior college and university women (20-22 years of age), who were intensively interviewed from 1971-1973, and 34 were re-interviewed in 1983. Josselson described the process of identity formation she observed as "anchoring" (p.174), which is the attachment to the world that, for women, takes the form of connection to other people. This is similar to the process of empathy which was previously discussed. She views a woman's identity as "the product of anchors and webs - is a multifaceted synthesis of multiple investments, each important in its own way, each in a certain balance with the others" (p.178).

Josselson (1987) utilized Marcia's Identity Status Interview in this study to classify four types of identities which are: (a) foreclosure, commitment to an identity without
a searching phase; (b) identity achievement, the choice of
identity was made after testing options; (c) moratorium,
maintaining the crisis of the exploratory stage; and (d)
identity diffusion, the identity formation task is avoided.
Josselson reported that one half of the women had achieved
identities, at the time of the first interviews.

The women who were classified as foreclosures made
identity commitments without experiencing a crisis, and chose
the values and goals which came from assumptions based in
childhood. They tended to have high self-esteem and could
resist the pressures to conform to the influences of peers.
At follow-up, these women continued to live out their
original identity decisions (with the exception of one
divorced woman who experienced the greatest psychological
change) and were characterized by their effort to feel cared
for and loved. They had a strong sense of family, tradition,
and moral values.

The women who were classified as identity achievers had
chosen their own identities after considering many options.
They were more flexible, had a firm sense of self, and had an
internal source of self-esteem. Independence for these women
involved "a renunciation of some of the narcissistic
gratifications of childhood, a liberation of those ties so
new ties may be formed" (Josselson, 1987,p. 95). The most
common way for identity to be achieved was to form a
relationship with a man who supported the woman's
accomplishments and helped her become less dependent upon her
parents. Work was found to be central to these women, but they did not tend to define themselves by their work. Josselson notes that "the need to combine self-in-relation appears to be a deep and early aspect of identity achievement in women" (p.102-103).

Women classified as being moratoriums were initially testing and searching for identities; some of these went on to achieve identities while others went back to a foreclosure status. They tended to experience lower self-esteem and anxiety in the moratorium status, and needed relationships rather than achievements for support in building their identities.

The identity diffusion category of women did not experience either crisis or identity commitment and were lowest in the ratings of psychological functioning. This group consisted of women who tended to experience a trauma during childhood and had not formed an identity at the time of the first interview. Some eventually did achieve an identity, but Josselson (1987) describes this group as generally pathological.

Josselson (1987) notes that the women in her sample who experienced the most growth and change were those whose first committed relationships had ended. Relationship breakups caused the women to nurture themselves and structure their own time more. Growth for these women also included increased internalization, greater ability to stand alone, set goals, and have better knowledge of oneself. Although Josselson does
not specify how relationship crises may affect women with different types of identity, it seems likely that relationship crises would differentially affect women depending upon whether they have adopted an identity, achieved an identity, or are still searching for an identity prior to divorce.

Mercer, Nicholls, and Doyle (1989), in a study using the life history method with 80 women who were over the age of 60, found support for the types of identity development reported by Josselson (1987). They also found that women's identity was influenced more by some relationships than others. The relationships with their children did not have as much impact on women's identity as did relationships with their mates.

Future Directions for Research

Although there is growing support of the centrality of relationships in women's development of identity, little is known yet about the exact nature of this process (Josselson, 1987). There is a need to verify and elaborate upon the work done in this area, particularly to increase understanding of: (a) the dialectical processes of development; (b) how identity development interrelates with moral, intellectual, career and any other aspects of development; and (c) how identity development is enhanced or impeded. Comparative studies are needed to consider self development differences between men and women.
Drawing from personal and clinical experience, Bergman (1991) has attempted to apply a relational approach to men's psychological development. He suggests that when men disconnect from their mothers early in their lives, the disconnection represents a break from a mutually empathic relationship and a turning away from the process of connection. He argues that because of this break and socialization in western culture which promotes the development of boys "self-out-of-relation" (p. 3), many men never learn how to listen to their own or others' feeling states. Men still yearn for connection in relationships, but are unable to achieve it. Bergman has found that at times of crisis, such as the mid-life crisis, men are more susceptible to learning to participate in mutual relationships. This application of self-in-relation theory to men's development represents initial steps to focus specifically on men's development in relationships, which has been an area neglected in previous theory and research.

Adult Transition Theory

Adult transition theory has evolved out of developmental theories which conceptualized adult transitions as changes which occurred within or between stages of development (Rodgers, 1984; Schlossberg, 1981, 1984). A transition is "any event or non-event that results in change in relationships, routines, assumptions, and/or roles within settings of self, work, family, health and/or economics" (Schlossberg, 1984, p. 43).
One of the first attempts to develop a theory of adult transitions outside the consideration of developmental theory was the phenomenological framework of the transition experience proposed by Hopson and Adams (1976). They suggested that transitions trigger a cycle of reactions and feelings that is predictable and consists of seven stages. Initially people experience the immobilization stage, during which they have the sense of being overwhelmed or frozen. Then comes the experience of a minimization of change, with a denial of change and euphoria. A depression stage is next, with the development of an awareness of the realities of change and the related stresses. The fourth stage is the acceptance of reality, during which the attachment to the past is let go and optimism is experienced. A testing stage follows with the active trying out of new behaviour, life styles or ways of coping. Individuals search for meaning in the sixth stage, as they seek to understand how and why things are different. The process ends with the internalization of meanings and the incorporation of these meanings into behaviour. As individuals move through these stages they often will recycle back to earlier stages, so that progress is not linear.

In a later revision of the transition process model (Hopson, 1981), phases one, two and three were altered. Phases one and two change to either an elation-minimization sequence or a despair-minimization sequence, depending upon whether the transition is a correspondingly positive or
negative transition. Phase three has also been changed from just depression to include the feelings of anger and sadness as well.

Another phenomenological model of transitions was proposed by Bridges (1980). He proposed a three-stage model descriptive of the common experiences of transitions. The first stage "ending" is characterized by disengagement (separation from one's familiar place in the social order), disidentification (loss of ways of self-definition), disenchantment (change in one's reality), and disorientation in space and time. The "neutral zone" follows the ending and is felt as emptiness with the need to find meaning. The final stage is making a new beginning, which involves becoming motivated to make plans and take action.

A model of the transition process which was based upon a problem solving approach was proposed by Golan (1981). This model suggests that there are two parallel and complementary sequences of tasks which need to be accomplished before a person can pass through the transition successfully. The first are "material-arrangemental tasks" that are instrumental and action-oriented in nature. The second are "psycho-social tasks" which include feeling and thinking responses to the irrational behaviour arising from heightened stress.

Schlossberg (1981, 1984) offers a model of adult transitions which combines aspects of previous research and theory. She identifies the transition process as consisting
of three phases. During the initial introduction phase, an adult is pervaded by the transition. This is followed by the disruption phase during which the adult is between old and new norms for behaviour and relationships. The final phase of integration can be experienced as either renewal, acceptance or deterioration.

Schlossberg (1984) identifies the ultimate results of the transition as "the achievement, increase, or maintenance of the capacity to love, work, and play in adults (p.39). Transitions have these results within the development of maturity. They also are characterized by one of six general themes. Identity is one theme of adult transitions which has to do with answering the questions of "Who am I?" in one's career, goals and roles. Another general theme is that of intimacy or the ability to form mutual relationships. Autonomy and satisfaction is the theme related to an overall sense of control. Generativity is the fourth general theme which refers to the process of renewal as opposed to stagnation in work and relationships. The competence theme is the awareness of one's strengths and abilities. Belonging is the last theme of adult transitions and refers to the sense of belonging instead of being marginal. Schlossberg suggests that adult transitions tend to be characterized by one of these themes within the course of development.

From research in the areas of stress, crises, and loss, Parkes (1971) attempts to define and elaborate the nature of the process of change which individuals experience internally
during major life changes or transitions. He suggests that major life changes influence one's assumptive world which "includes everything we know or think we know. It includes our interpretation of the past and our expectations of the future, our plans and prejudices." (Parkes, p.103). People can be aware of and relate their assumptive world to others, but there are parts which remain inaccessible to the individual. Psycho-social transitions are major life changes "which are lasting in their effects, which take place over a relatively short period of time and which affect large areas of the assumptive world" (Parkes, p. 103). Certain parts of the assumptive world are affected by some major life changes more than others, and the effects may be more pervasive in certain circumstances. Parkes indicates that separation and divorce is one type of major life change that engenders the establishment of new assumptions about the world.

Wortley and Amatea (1982) propose a "mapping life span changes" model of adult transitions, which integrates previous research and theory. They organize adult transitions in terms of the two dimensions of (a) specific time periods or age/stage developmental periods, and (b) life arenas which are spheres of interests or activity that are related to specific sets of needs.

The specific time periods referred to in the first dimension of transitions consist of six life span segments, each of which is ten years long. The first period starts at age 20 when adults typically leave home and enter the adult
world. At age 30 is the period of rooting and extending, which is followed by a mid-life period starting at age 40. A stabilization period starts at age 50 and a period of late maturity and retirement extends from ages 60 to 70. Life review and termination issues are the focus of the last period from age seventy until death.

Transitions occur within the interaction of the dimensions of a life span segment and a particular arena. Wortley and Amatea (1982) specify four life arenas: career, family, intimacy, and inner life. Transitions involve both internal processes and external roles and occur within specific stages and life arenas.

Four major assumptions about transitions are identified in this theory. The first assumption is that there is an identifiable set of changes which characterize certain stages of an adult's life course. Secondly, adult changes and processes of development are not discrete, but are systematically related to each other. The third assumption refers to the cumulative, sequential nature of transitions. Each life change is influenced by how well previous developmental changes were managed. The last assumption is that adult transitions are the result of multiple environmental, interpersonal, and intrapsychic factors. Changes are the result of both inner and outer factors. This model acknowledges that although inner and outer transitions are specified during particular life periods and are characterized by a particular life arena, these transitions
are influenced by individual differences and will vary in timing. Wortley and Amatea (1982) note that this theory is limited to a representation of the transitions of white, middle-class, male adults, because this is the group which has primarily participated in previous research.

Discussion

Theory which is primarily descriptive of male development (Erikson, 1968, 1982; Gould, 1972; Levinson, 1978; Vaillant, 1977) has implications for how divorce may affect self development which differ from those of female developmental theory (Gilligan, 1982a, 1982b; Jordan & Surrey, 1986; Josselson, 1987). Men's self development is primarily influenced by occupational experiences, whereas relationships are important to women's self development. Relationship crises such as divorce may significantly alter women's identities to a greater extent than men's.

With the growing support from research for this conceptualization of women's self development (Belenky et al., 1986; Josselson, 1987; Lyons, 1983; Roberts & Newton, 1987), the loss of a close relationship in divorce has particular implications for women's self-definition and esteem. Relationship crises tend to threaten women's identities (Wood, 1986). Divorce, as the culmination of a relationship deteriorating in empathy, intimacy, and connectiveness, would likely engender low self-esteem and difficulties in self-definition, unless the woman has intimate relationships with people outside the marriage. This
may partially account for the gender differences in the extent of personal self-development following divorce, but has not yet been adequately supported by research.

The effect of divorce upon women's self-esteem and self-definition is further complicated by the societal emphasis and valuation of independence, autonomy, and self-sufficiency with the related devaluation of connectedness, interdependency, and mutual caring (Miller, 1986; Gilligan, 1982a). Stressing separation and individuation for women may lead to the formation of inappropriate and debilitating goals (Conarton and Silverman, 1988). This also creates the potential for people to invalidate women's experiences and needs for close relationships by misinterpreting them to be dependency needs. Socially accepted goals of autonomy and independence following divorce may not facilitate the participation in intimate relationships necessary for improving self-esteem and self-development, and may partially account for the post-divorce adjustment difficulties women tend to experience.

Transition theory describes a similar phenomenological process of transition to that which was observed to occur during the divorce transition. The transition stages of change, disruption and integration (Schlossberg, 1984) are similar to the stages of decision, post-dissolution and restructuring described in divorce theory (Crosby et al., 1987; Lyon et al., 1985; Salts, 1979; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989). Both transition theory and divorce theory,
however, tend to emphasize the emotional and role transitions which occur, without an elaboration of the related changes in self-definition.

Transition theory recognizes that different themes or parts of self or identity may be influenced during a major transition. Divorce transitions may highlight the different themes suggested by Schlossberg (1984), such as an individual's sense of competency in relationships or sense of control over life events. Certain parts of an individual's assumptive world (Parkes, 1971) may be affected by divorce at certain times during his or her life (Wortley & Amatea, 1982), and may conceivably depend upon the nature of the divorce itself. Divorce theory does not consider how there may be differential effects of divorce on the process and nature of self development.

Although there has been little, thorough research on the topic of self development during divorce, the literature review of divorce and adult development leads to the formulation of a number of speculations about the nature and process of self development during divorce which include: (a) the process of self development is a recursive dialectical process; (b) the process involves a loss of self-definition at the time of separation and the subsequent development of self-definition, which incorporates parts of the old self-definition with the new definition (c) more women will tend to experience greater changes in self-definition than will men; (d) more women will experience greater conflict than men
about how to redefine their selves, which represents a conflict between the public goal of autonomy versus the private goal of connectedness; (e) fewer women than men will achieve a satisfactory self-definition; and (f) the process of self-definition for women will likely involve participation in intimate relationships to a greater extent than that of men. There are also a number of questions one is left with such as: (a) is the extent of self-definition limited by economic problems, age, and situational stresses; (b) does divorce affect some aspects of self-definition more than others; and (c) does the loss of self-definition start prior to the actual marital separation?
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the process and nature of self development during men's and women's experience of divorce. Although divorce research and theory has dramatically increased during the last 20 years, there remain a number of questions about the nature and process of self development during this major life transition, particularly with regard to the nature of gender differences in this process. This research utilized a qualitative methodology, with the emphasis on the discovery of the experienced meaning of this phenomenon for the participants.

Research Design

A qualitative methodology was deemed appropriate for this research due to the nature of the phenomenon which was being studied and the context in which the phenomenon occurs. The process of self development is a phenomenon which is well suited to a qualitative approach. As a transition process, which is defined as a person's perception of change, it is more adequately studied through an assessment of an individual's own perceptions and appraisals (Schlossberg, 1984). The multiplicity of variables and complexity of human change is more aptly apprehended with a qualitative approach which is retrospective, holistic, and committed to the goal of understanding rather than prediction (Freeman, 1984). The use of holistic description in qualitative inquiry allows for
interrelation of a broad range of variables and a consequent process focus (Stainback & Stainback, 1988).

Qualitative inquiry uses an evolving or open-ended methodology, which allows the phenomenon to guide the nature of the inquiry and facilitate discovery rather than confirmation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Stainback & Stainback, 1988). These considerations are particularly salient for research on the self, because of the tendency to structure and delimit the phenomenon of self when structured research instruments are used (Peck, 1986). The more open ended methodology is also appropriate for the relatively new field of adult development in general, and women's development in particular.

Divorce is the context within which the phenomenon of self development process was studied. Because high levels of emotion are experienced during this major transition, the utilization of a retrospective, qualitative methodology minimizes potential harm for the respondents and encourages the respondent to relate his or her experiences openly (Sutton & Schurman, 1985). A retrospective approach, in which the respondents reflect back upon and disclose their previous experiences, does not impose extra demands upon the respondents in the midst of an already demanding time. A qualitative approach also provides a reciprocal relationship between researcher and respondent, as co-researchers, and a limited structure which are particularly needed when the topic is highly emotional.
The research relationship in qualitative inquiry is characterized as one involving mutual trust (Massarik, 1981), caring and connectedness (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), and rapport (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This type of relationship enables the respondent to participate fully in the research, in that the respondent can be more open and honest. The relationship allows the respondent to feel he or she has a voice. This concept of voice utilizes Britzman’s (1989) meaning of voice as having the right to speak to and being heard by the researcher, which occurs only in a collaborative relationship with the researcher. Any difficulties the respondent may experience as he or she reviews the divorce can be more easily broached by the respondent within this research relationship, so that potential harm to the respondent may be avoided.

Qualitative Methodology

Although the term 'qualitative' has been used inconsistently to typify many types of research, qualitative research or inquiry is increasingly considered as an "umbrella term" (Van Maanen, 1979, p. 9) or a general "perspective" (Ruckdeschel, 1985, p.17) which incorporates many diverse research methods (Atkinson, Delamont & Hammersly, 1988; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Hoshmand, 1989; Jacob, 1987). A research design which utilizes a qualitative methodology is characterized as an evolving design, in that the data guides the data collection and interpretive methods during the course of the research itself (Stainback &
Stainback, 1988). Qualitative inquiry is not distinguished by a particular technique, but by its "central interest in human meaning in social life and in its elucidation and exposition by the researcher" (Erickson, 1986, p.119).

The active process by which meaning is made in the research relationship is reviewed by Erickson (1986) and can be summarized as follows. Individuals take action toward physical and behavioural objects in the environment on the basis of their interpretations and meanings of the objects, which are considered reality. Shared systems of defined meaning are learned through culture; however, actions which appear to have similar meanings may have different meanings for different people. In qualitative research, one needs to consider that action consists of the behaviour plus the meaning interpretations held by the actor. The research relationship is concerned with the origin of knowledge from action; the action of choosing particular meaning interpretations by both the researcher and researched. It is also concerned with inter-action, which is the process of meaning "co-constitution" (Schrag, 1986, p.138).

The process of meaning making is the concern of hermeneutics and the consideration of the hermeneutic approach provides insight into the specific processes in the researcher/researched relationship. Hermeneutics recognizes that all understanding is influenced by the entire context of that understanding (Packer, 1985). The context of understanding includes the shared context as well as the
context unique to each participant. The context consists of a number of horizons defined by Keen (1975) as "a network of already existing meanings" (p.20) which exist with each experience. Keen suggests a number of horizon types which may coexist with experience. These include temporal, spatial, sociocultural, interpersonal, bodily and ideational horizons.

Erikson (1986) identifies two aspects of the participants' interpersonal horizons. The participants share the context of the history of their interaction, with its previous understandings and traditions. They also share the present social action which is new and unique during each moment. Each participant also brings a unique context of his or her self to the understanding. The knower's own present situation is involved in any understanding (Gadamer, 1976). Elbow (1973) elaborates this idea in the following:

Though the listener's knowledge seems new, it is also not new: the meaning may be thought of as structures he never had in his head before, but he had to build these new structures out of the ingredients he already had. The speaker's words were a set of directions for assembling the already present material. (p.152)

Knowing reflects the perspective of the knower as well as the perspective of the known. Interpreting the actions in terms of the actor's perspectives or horizons allows for better understanding (Keen, 1975).
How understanding actually occurs has been referred to as the "hermeneutic circle"; a movement from the parts to the whole, which increases the depth of understanding (Polkinghorne, 1983, p.227). Rowan (1981) expands the definition to include both circular and spiral relationships between: (a) wholes and parts, (b) what is known and unknown, and (c) phenomenon and context. Understanding consists of a dialectical process in which there is emergent meaning from the merging of different aspects in the knower's field. For Elbow (1973), this dialectic involves the balancing of the cognitive and affective styles he refers to as the believing and doubting games. The doubting game involves seeking error, self-extrication, and logic, whereas the believing game involves seeking understanding, involvement, and self-insertion. For Schon (1983) the dialectic of understanding involves the self and the situation, whereby there is a transaction between the understanding or perspective brought to the situation and new information in the situation.

There is a reciprocity of roles in the research relationship, as the researcher fully participates in the co-creation of knowledge, and the researcher and respondent become co-researchers. This means that the knowledge resulting from research cannot be completely objective, that is, knowledge completely separate from the researcher. Peshkin (1985, 1988) defines subjectivity as "the quality of an investigator that affects the results of observational investigation" (1988, p.17). He suggests that the lack of
objectivity may contribute both positively and negatively to research. He considers subjectivity to be beneficial to the research process because it results in the creativity and distinctiveness of the outcome that results when the researcher's "unique configuration of their personal qualities are joined to the data they have collected" (1988, p.18). Colaizzi (1978) also considers subjectivity to be positive as it indicates "fidelity to the phenomenon" (p.52), in that the researcher has been actively involved in understanding the respondent.

Subjectivism, however, is the extreme form of subjectivity in which the researcher's perspectives dominate the research process (Peshkin, 1985). In the latter case, the data is unverifiable by the respondent's perceptions and interpretations. Peshkin advocates the need for the researcher to adopt a mid-point on this continuum, at which his or her subjectivity is present, but not overpoweringly present. Giorgi (1985), in a similar vein, refers to this mid-point as the researcher's set or "circumscribed indeterminism attitude" in which a "certain circumscription, a certain expectation is established, but a certain open-endedness is also maintained so genuine discoveries can ensue" (p.11).

Recognition of the presence of subjectivity in research has led to the suggestion that researchers need to address how they influence their subjects. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) note that all research is affected by the researcher's bias,
but qualitative researchers attempt to acknowledge and take their biases into account. Subjectivity can be addressed by the researcher at every stage of the research, in an attempt to monitor and shape its presence. Peshkin (1988) identified this process during his research by stating:

By monitoring myself, I can create an illuminating, empowering personal statement that attunes me to where self and subject are intertwined. I do not thereby exorcise my subjectivity. I do, rather, enable myself to manage it — to preclude it from being unwittingly burdensome — as I progress through collecting, analyzing and writing up my data. (p.20)

The process a researcher can use at all phases of research to deal with his or her subjectivity is bracketing (phenomenological reduction). This refers to the process whereby the researcher strives "to suspend, or to bracket, preconceptions and presuppositions and does this by making them explicit" (Stones, 1985). Having explicitly identified them allows for the intentional putting aside of accustomed perceptual sets and interpretive frameworks during the research (Denton, 1981). Of course this is never completely achieved (Stones), however, awareness of some of them allows the researcher some feeling of how they are involved in the data. This allows the researcher to recognize the variety of perspectives from which the phenomenon can be understood, so
that the meaning of the phenomenon can be understood from the perspective closest to that of the phenomenon (Denton).

A researcher can become aware of the different perspectives by different means. Peshkin (1988) suggests that researchers should try to identify the perspectives systematically, which he refers to as "subjective I's" (p.18), in operation during the research process by looking for positive and negative feelings within themselves. He indicates that although a researcher brings many different subjective I's to any research situation, only some of these subjective I's will be elicited, depending upon the situation. He suggests that the reflective process can be facilitated through the use of a personal diary or journal, in which the researcher can record any feelings or reactions elicited by the research process. This record can be reflected upon to reveal any subjective I's which are activated during the research.

Cognizance of the participation of the qualitative researcher in the process of understanding and the emerging knowledge or research results, means that the data of the present study are the intersubjective meaning of the researcher's and the respondents' understanding of the process of self change during divorce. As the researcher and each respondent seek an understanding of the process of self change, their individual perspectives become involved in a shared perspective of the phenomenon being studied.
This research attempted to apply these concepts through the researcher's documentation of personal perspectives which were identified as being involved during the course of the research. A description of how the research relationship developed also will provide an understanding of how the relationship shapes the data (Berg & Smith, 1985). Consequently, the data and research results reflect the researcher, the respondents, and the shared perspectives comprised of all participants, involving multiple interpretive levels which are "temporally continuous and socially interactive" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990). These levels are represented in terms of data representing the voices of the researcher and the respondents, which depict how the interpretations evolved over the time of the study.

The Researcher as Research Instrument

Due to the role of the researcher in qualitative research, the researcher can be seen as the primary research instrument used in the gathering of data (Lowman, 1985; Stainback & Stainback, 1988). Stainback and Stainback note that the human person is the best instrument for understanding the meaning of the respondent. The researcher, as instrument, can provide the best research relationship necessary for the context of research of humans by humans. As with any research instrument, there is a need for any researcher to develop personally to produce an instrument which is capable of participating in the research process (Peshkin, 1988).
The opportunity to develop the researcher as instrument for the proposed research project occurred when the researcher participated in a two hour pilot study interview with a separated woman in May, 1989. The researcher interviewed a 33 year old woman, without children, who had been separated for 10 months from her spouse of eight years. This served to clarify a number of methodological issues for the proposed research, which include some of the researcher's operating personal perspectives, the interview process, the interpretive process, and data analysis. These issues will be considered in further depth in terms of their implications for the current research.

The Researcher's Perspectives

Identification of the multiple perspectives brought to the research by the researcher is a continually evolving process during which certain perspectives come into focus as others blur within dimensions of time and context. Present reflections, as well as the records of previous self-reflections provide a view of the researcher's perspectives which appear relevant to the interpretive process at the present time in the research process. The researcher's perspectives presently include the ideas and questions generated from the literature review, as well as personal perspectives which are elaborated in the following summary of the researcher's biographical experience which relates to this study.
My questions about the process of divorce have evolved from my work as a feminist counsellor for 15 years and my status as a married woman who has not experienced divorce. Both realms of experience have piqued my admiration and curiosity about adults who cope, adjust, and continue to grow during the divorce experience which can be so painful. My counselling experience led me to observe that divorcing women often struggle with how they can achieve the kind of independence defined by society, when their own needs include a close interconnection with others. These women often have experienced a total loss of self-definition following a relationship dissolution, and struggle to redefine themselves.

Researcher perspectives as a counsellor, a woman, married but never divorced, a feminist, and a researcher all bring a framework that needs to be monitored as the interpretive context of the phenomena being studied.

While interviewing during the pilot study, the researcher became aware of how her perspectives were potentially influencing the interpretative process as indicated in the following journal record.

Upon reflection, I believe that both the "counsellor I" and the "feminist I" which were present during this research both had the effect of minimizing her experience, because of my effort to
support her and not to impose my views on her. This tends to weaken my interpretations of her self derogatory views and her experiences as a woman, as I tend to normalize her experience rather than accept it for what it is. Realization of the influence my "subjective I's" seem to have on the interpretations allows me to accept her words for what they are and try to limit this minimizing tendency. (Lalande, 1989)

During the present study, the researcher attempted to monitor these perspectives to facilitate the validity of the interpretive process.

Method of Data Collection

The data were collected from 5 men and 5 women who had experienced a marital separation, and who agreed to participate in two unstructured interviews with the researcher. The interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 2 1/2 hours in length, with the second interviews generally being much shorter than the first. The interviews took place from December, 1990 to June, 1991.

The design of this study evolved somewhat over the course of the research. Initially, the respondents were eligible to participate in this study if they had experienced an enduring marital separation during the previous 5 years. This period of time was chosen because it was assumed that the respondents would have a clear recollection of their experiences within this time frame. However, one person who
had been separated 6 years and 2 months volunteered and was accepted into the study because she assured the researcher that she had a very clear memory of her experiences because she had done extensive journal writing throughout the divorce process. The other criterion for eligibility was that the participants would not have been previously married to each other. The sample was not limited by any other criteria because of the exploratory nature of this inquiry.

Notices advertising the research were posted at the University of Calgary, the Calgary Singles Council, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association, and the Grace Hospital. The researcher also distributed letters of introduction to the Adult Student Adviser at the University of Calgary. Six participants were referred to the researcher by people who knew of the research, 1 was referred by another participant in the study, and 3 responded to the posted notices. The respondents contacted the researcher by telephone to indicate their interest in participating in the research, and a time was set for the interview. The interviews took place either in the researcher's office or the respondent's home. The respondents were requested to fill out an information sheet prior to the first interview (see Appendix A).

The Interview

The respondents participated in two unstructured interviews. The unstructured interview was chosen as the most suitable method for this study because it: (a) facilitates
cooperative participation for an emotional topic which increases the validity of the results, (b) allows for a hermeneutic process of understanding, (c) permits a discovery approach suitable to the study of self development, and (d) enables the women respondents' voices to be heard. These reasons and the exact nature of the unstructured interview will be elaborated upon during the following discussion.

An unstructured interview allows the respondent to be open and honest about their divorce experiences. Reason and Rowan (1981) suggest that an enabling relationship between the researcher and respondent begins at the start of research, with the topic being one which represents the respondents' real interests. This means that the respondents should be fully informed of the purpose of the research in order to volunteer freely to participate. Throughout the research the researcher should try to be authentic or self revealing, and not create situations in which the respondent will assume limited roles, such as saying only what seems to be desirable to the researcher as expert (Polkinghorne, 1983). It is also important for the researcher to establish and maintain rapport with the respondents (Stones, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the entire credibility of the research rests upon the extent to which rapport is established in the research relationship. This involves a sense of caring and connectedness, which evolves out of the "caring community" formed by the relationship (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p.6). Although both the researcher and
respondent participate in the creation of rapport, the researcher can systematically attend to its development through the research process.

The unstructured interview also provides the context for a hermeneutic process of understanding. The interview format provides the opportunity for repeated reformulations of questions and answers, to achieve meanings which both the participants can understand (Mishler, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1983). Mishler defines two criteria for effective and productive interviews. The first is a focus on the affective, cognitive, and evaluative meanings of a situation, and the level of involvement in the situation. Secondly, the interview should focus on the personal context of the respondent which allows additional insight into the meaning.

The participation of women in the proposed study also guided the decision to utilize an unstructured interview and the nature of the interview. Recognition that women are members of an oppressed group in society, brings attention to power differentials which inhibit women's ability to participate fully in research (Hunnisett, 1986; Kirby & McKenna, 1988). An unstructured interview allows the interviewer to create a relationship of equality so that the respondent can feel she has a voice and can be heard by the researcher (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Hoshmand, 1989). This can be facilitated by the researcher attempting to value, affirm, and believe the respondent (Connelly & Clandinin). Paget (1983) provides an example of an interview.
which was intended to encourage the respondent's speech and give her as much control as possible over (a) the pacing of the interview, (b) the introduction of content, and (c) development of content. Paget adapted her speech style to that of the respondent and used silence to encourage further self disclosure. This study attempted to model this example of a co-researcher relationship which is enabling of the respondent's voice.

Mishler (1986) suggested that interview questions be composed of a general overview of the research focus and a more specific open-ended question. To allow the respondent to take control over the pacing and development of the content of the interview, a two part question was utilized to open the pilot interview: (a) I am interested in understanding how you may have experienced any change in your perception of yourself or in the way you think of yourself as a result of the separation or divorce, (b) What was your experience of the separation? The first part of the question was given to the interviewee during the initial phone contact as an overview of the purpose of the interview. The entire question was then repeated at the beginning of the interview, with subsequent comments and questions made to clarify the meaning of the response. This procedure was utilized during this research.

Excerpts from the transcripts of the interviews will be given in chapter 4 with the presentation of the results. These quotes have been edited to provide ease of readership,
but to preclude, as much as possible, changes in meaning. An example of a quote prior to being edited is the following,

Well, you know, when you, when you look back, there's less and less. They seem greater at first, yah that's right. And they were all strictly ah, ah, ah, self umm, umm, what's the word I'm looking for, they, they, they were, you were feeling sorry for yourself, but you find out that yeh, you're not helpless and you can do these things. (1, 215)

This quote after editing looks like this: "When you look back, there's less and less. They seem greater at first, and they were strictly feeling sorry for yourself, but you find out you are not helpless and you can do these things." (1, 215). Each quote has been referenced to indicate the transcript number and line or lines of text, from which it was taken (an example is 1, 215), with the exception of quotes taken from the second interviews, which are referenced to the transcript number and a dash two (an example is 10-2).

The research design evolved with regard to the timing of the interviews. Originally, each respondent was to have been interviewed twice before the next respondent was interviewed, so that the insights and hypotheses from the earlier interviews could guide the later interviews (Stainback and Stainback, 1988). This was not possible because (a) interviews were postponed for various reasons such as illness or the respondents' time schedules, and (b) the length of time for respondents who were waiting for their first
interviews was too long, and there was the concern that they would drop out of the research. Each respondent had been interviewed at least once and the interview had been analyzed before the next respondent was interviewed.

**Interpretive Accounts**

Interpretive accounts were used in this study as a supplement to the interview. Clandinin (1986) defines interpretive accounts as letters written for and shared with the respondents. These letters provide feedback to the respondents on the researcher's tentative interpretations of the interview and serve a number of functions both within the researcher/respondent interaction and the interaction between the researcher and the readers of the research reports.

Within the interaction between the researcher and the respondent, the interpretive account allows the respondent to reflect upon the researcher's understanding and interpretation of the previous interaction, and facilitate further clarification or discussion of related issues. It is also facilitative of the further involvement of the respondent in a collaborative research relationship upon which the credibility of the research rests (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The respondents in this study generally agreed with most of the interpretive accounts and offered only a few clarifications and elaborations.

The interpretive accounts are also part of the data offered to readers of this research report and represent part of the shared perspective of the researcher and the
respondent which has developed during their relationship (Clandinin, 1986). Information is provided to the reader about the method which was utilized and how the interpretations were formulated. These accounts allow the reader to establish the trustworthiness of the interpretations and the validity of the research.

Data Analysis

The interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, and then analyzed using both a constant comparative method of qualitative analysis and narrative analysis. The rationale for selecting these methods of analysis and a summary of each approach will be given in this section.

The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987) is an inductive method in which parts of the data are compared to other parts of the data (noting the similarities and differences), allowing the researcher to develop categories, properties, hypotheses, and theory from the data. There are four stages to this method, involving: (a) coding the data into as many categories of analysis as possible, continually comparing the data between categories; (b) integration of the categories and their properties after comparing the incidents and categories; (c) theory delimitation in which the number of categories are reduced after underlying uniformities in the original categories are discovered; (d) the theory is written.
This method of analysis was conducted with a computer and the software program, HyperQual (Padilla, 1990). Hyperqual is a data base manager (Tesch, 1990), which was specifically designed to facilitate the qualitative analysis of research data. With Hyperqual, the interview text was entered into the computer, with related observations and research memos. It facilitated the processes of coding, sorting and comparison of segments of the text.

The data were also analyzed using a narrative analysis which is guided by the assumption that the interview responses are narrative accounts or stories. The narrative is "a scheme by means of which humans give meaning to their experiences of temporality and personal actions" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 11) and "is a cognitive process that organizes human experiences into temporally meaningful episodes" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 1). The account of one's self is in the form of a self narrative (Gergen & Gergen, 1988; Polkinghorne, 1988; Scheibe, 1985; Shafer, 1980). Each interview represents the respondent's story of his or her self and the researcher's retelling of this story, resulting in the "interweaving of texts" or an account which consists of the researcher's and respondents' stories (Shafer).

A narrative analysis of the data is also a means to validate the interpretive process utilized in the method of constant comparative analysis. The interpretation of the data from the pilot interview led the researcher to conclude that
the narrative analysis would be useful for the following reason:

I began to realize that this process (constant comparative method) is a reductionistic process in which I was breaking down the data into parts and reassembling it into meaningful wholes (the themes). I began to wonder if I was losing some of the meaning of the whole during this type of analysis and decided that I would focus on a narrative type of interpretation to understand the meaning of the story or stories in the interview.

(Lalande, 1989)

The narrative analysis and the constant comparative method of analysis allow for interpretations to reflect the meanings of the data from both reductionistic and wholistic approaches.

The method of narrative analysis involved the use of hermeneutic understanding, as previously discussed, to identify the underlying themes, plots, and patterns across the stories (Polkinghorne, 1988). Mishler (1986) defines a narrative as a story or a natural psychological unit which can be analyzed in essentially three ways: (a) textually, which focuses on how parts of the text are connected syntactically and semantically; (b) ideationally, which focuses on the meaning of what is said; and (c) interpersonally, which considers the relationship between the speakers. Each type of analysis contributes to an overall hermeneutic interpretation of the narratives, and adds an
analysis which can be used to validate the interpretations generated from the method of constant comparative analysis.

After the analysis was completed, the stories were viewed from a perspective which considered the gender of the story-teller. This view involved looking for similarities in the experiences of change of the women, as contrasted with similarities in the experiences of change of the men. This view of the data permitted a comparative analysis of men's and women's experiences of personal development during divorce.

Ethical Considerations

The intrinsic nature of qualitative research as well as the use of certain precautions ensured that the research participants were well informed about the research and were protected from any risks. This study utilized a qualitative methodology which allowed the participants to be involved as co-researchers in a collaborative, sustained relationship with the researcher which is characterized by openness and caring throughout the entire study (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988; Rowan, 1981). The possibility of misrepresenting the respondents' experiences and viewpoints was minimized by validation of the researcher's interpretations through the use of the interpretive accounts. The topic of study is emotional and the interview could have raised issues for the respondents which they might not have felt capable of resolving. Although the research relationship was supportive of the respondent, the researcher, as a chartered
psychologist, attempted to remain focused on the research and suggested referrals for counselling as appropriate. Two respondents were referred for counselling during the course of the research.

The respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and were informed of their role as participant prior to the interviews through the use of a signed consent form (see Appendix B). To ensure the confidentiality of the participants, codes were used to identify who was talking in the transcripts of the interviews and the information sheets were coded as well. No identifying information was left in the transcripts. The tapes and transcripts were kept in locked storage and were accessible only to the researcher and the supervisory team.

Reflections on the Research Process

The stories of personal development during the divorce process presented a journey which was not unlike that of the research process. From a starting point, the participants are set on a journey which has an unknown course and destination. The journey has unknown turns and obstacles which are negotiated as they become visible. What is learned from the journey becomes clearer as it progresses, and the effects of that experience continue to be understood long after the journey is complete. This section will present some of the decision points, difficulties, and smooth progress which occurred during the research journey. Hopefully this research story will provide a context from which the respondents'
stories can be better understood and will provide a trail which will contribute to the establishment of the trustworthiness of this research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The researcher participated in a qualitative research group at the university and continued to meet with members of the supervisory team, throughout the course of the research. This provided the opportunity to participate in discussions which helped to clarify questions raised during the research process. The researcher also wrote in journal form, any thoughts, feelings, impressions, hypotheses, and questions related to the research. This process of writing assisted the process of reflection.

After the request for research participants was discussed with different organizations, a waiting period for respondents commenced. As time passed and only one person volunteered to participate in the research, the researcher was reminded of the difficulties that were also experienced during the pilot study. "I experienced frustration and felt precious time slip away as I tried to contact and return phone calls with the "gatekeepers" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) who were attempting to recruit interviewees for this project." (Lalande, 1989). In light of these concerns, a notice was developed and posted in public places, with the hope that respondents could be recruited.

Once the respondents began volunteering for the research a paradoxical difficulty was encountered of having too many respondents at one time. It became apparent with a waiting
list of two or three respondents, there was the danger of attrition. After extensive discussion and reflection about possible solutions for this problem, the researcher decided to change the research design. Rather than interviewing each person twice and completing the interpretation for each respondent before the next respondent was interviewed, a new respondent was interviewed after the preceding respondent's first interview was interpreted. This compromise decreased the time before a new respondent was interviewed and also allowed the interpretations of earlier interviews to guide the subsequent interviews and interpretations.

The research design also changed again when a respondent volunteered who had been separated longer than the 5 years which had originally been set as a criteria for the selection of research participants. This criterion had been chosen as a length of time after the separation that respondents would likely have a good memory of their experiences. The respondent indicated that she had done extensive journalling during the 6 years since her separation, and, as a consequence, had excellent recall of her experiences. As she spoke, the researcher was reminded that,

the emphasis is not on how best to apply a pre-established and acceptable method or procedure, but rather on how best to clarify and illuminate the phenomenon as it is perceived. In other words, the phenomenon is considered to precede the method.

(p.68, Stones, 1985)
With this in mind, the respondent was interviewed because the most important criterion for participation was identified clearly as her ability to remember the experiences rather than being separated for 5 years.

Another question of whether to include a respondent in the research was raised when a respondent indicated that he had had a brain injury since his separation for which he was currently receiving rehabilitation. The researcher immediately identified an internal sense of unease, that signalled the presence of a "subjective I" (p. 18, Peshkin, 1988). The mention of the brain injury activated the researcher's 'psychologist self', which raised the, "question of whether he is able to express self appropriately" (research journal, March 13, 1991), with a brain injury that may affect his memory, his perceptions and his ability to convey his experiences. After reflection and discussion, it was decided that because the respondent's story was clear and lucid, his experiences were as relevant as other respondents who also experienced many other events and transitions during divorce.

The researcher initially intended to interview the respondents in the place of their choice, such as their home or the researchers' office, with the intention of facilitating their comfort and to establish a more collaborative research relationship (Paget, 1983). The researcher realized during the telephone contact, however, that it was not safe for a female researcher to agree to go
to the residence of an unknown man, and could not give male
respondents the choice of setting for the interview. It is
unfortunate that the realities of society today compromise
the ideals of research practise.

The interviews were accomplished without incident. All
of the respondents were open and seemed relaxed and
comfortable during the interviews. The researcher attempted
to facilitate rapport and attend to the process of the
relationship between interviewer and interviewee during the
interviews. If a respondent alluded to any discomfort with
the interviews, the researcher attempted to assess whether
there was any problem which may have affected the interview
and dealt with it directly.

The interpretation process proved to be long and
arduous. Each interview was transcribed by a typist. The
transcript was then down-loaded onto computer and the data
was cleaned while the researcher listened to the tape of the
interview. Each text was then read and coded. The data were
managed with a new software program, HyperQual 3.0 (Padilla,
1990). The researcher learned to use this program at the same
time as the data were being analyzed. During a conversation
about the process of the research, the researcher realized
that, "the guiding question in my mind as I interpret data is
whether he or she immediately say, 'yes, that is what I
meant', without qualifications" (research journal, March 12,
1991). The codes were re-examined in the context of other
codes and categorized when appropriate. The transcripts were
examined for discrepant data and the coding was adjusted accordingly. Each transcript was re-read to identify stories and the meanings of these stories. These meanings were then considered in relation to the previous codes. This narrative analysis tended to expand the meanings of some of the codes and add new codes to those already developed from the constant comparative analysis. The codes were then summarized in the form of the interpretive account. This interpretive process took approximately 20 hours for each interview.

An appointment was made for the second interview, during which the respondent was given the interpretive account and told to take as much time as needed to read it before discussing it with the researcher. The respondents generally agreed that the interpretive accounts represented what they had said during the first interview, with only a few changes or additions. The second interview was then transcribed and interpreted, as was the first, and a revised interpretive account was prepared.

After describing the study to one of the respondents, the realization came to the researcher that themes were starting to appear in the data.

I described it as the data seeming to indicate that people resolve different issues in divorce. The issues seem to depend upon what they bring to the present experience from unresolved issues in the past, for example, relationship issues, self-esteem issues. (research journal, January 31, 1991)
This was the beginning of identifying some of the process themes from the data collected to that date. It was gratifying to realize that the interpretive process was productive in terms of the emerging similarities in some of the respondents' experiences. Although it was an interesting process and the results were gratifying, working with the transcripts was also tedious and exacting work. This is reflected in the following comment, which was made during the midst of interpreting the fourth interview, "This is hard work. I should have done a quantitative study!" (research journal, February 26, 1991).

The researcher continually monitored any "subjective I's" (p.18, Peshkin, 1988) which were elicited during the research. In the previous section, titled "The Researcher's Perspectives", the researcher's 'feminist self' had been identified during the pilot study. This represented a researcher perspective that influenced the interpretation of the interview by minimizing the respondent's experiences as a woman. This feminist self was present during the interview with one respondent in the present research, when the researcher asked the respondent to clarify if she had meant that her socialization as a woman had influenced her present experience of divorce,

I was aware as I asked that question that my discomfort with the question came from my not wanting to foist my ideas on her. I also realized by not giving her a chance to respond, that I might
minimize her own feminist self, so I asked.


This is an example of how the researcher utilized the knowledge of her perspectives to facilitate the validity of the research process.

As the final interview had been completed and the final interpretive account had been revised, the researcher began to take a step back from the data, as she prepared to write. Stepping back from the data meant leaving the specifics of each respondent's experiences and moving to an overview of the similarities and differences within all of the stories. This is a difficult step to take, as indicated in the following journal excerpt. "Talk about being overwhelmed with data! I sit here with paper a foot high, and know that I have to summarize it into a few pages" (research journal, June 27, 1991). As the writing progressed, the interpretations continued to be refined and the understandings of the phenomenon were deepened. Van Manen (1990) describes this process as,

writing distances us from lived experience but by doing so it allows us to discover the existential structures of experience. Writing creates a distance between ourselves and the world whereby the subjectivities of daily experience become the object of our reflective awareness. (p.127)

Throughout this research journey, the researcher has attempted to understand, interpret, and convey the
respondents' stories to the reader. The richness of detail and depth of understanding will hopefully allow the reader to "transfer" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 217) some of this knowledge to their own situation or the situations of others who may be going through the divorce transition, or self development in general.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS

This chapter consists of two parts. First, a general overview will be given of the people who participated in this research. Each person will then be introduced to the reader, and a summary will be given of his or her story of the personal change experienced during the divorce process.

Part two will present the themes which were identified, after the respondents' unique stories were compared for similarities and differences. Three categories of themes were identified: (a) process themes of development, (b) substantive themes of development, and (c) themes of gender differences in development.

Part 1: The Research Participants

Information about the people who volunteered to participate in the research is presented in Table 1. The people come from a variety of educational backgrounds and have a wide range of occupations. Their age range is from 31 to somewhere between 51 and 60 years of age. Combining the years of living common-law with the years of marriage, the length of the relationship with the former spouse ranged from 3.5 years to 25 years. The shortest length of time since separation was 1 year, and the longest was 6 years and 2 months. All but 2 of the participants had children. The group of participants were fairly heterogeneous, and each group of males and females were fairly similar in composition for these factors, with one exception. Four of the males had been
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Common-law</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Separated</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>grade 12 sales mngr.</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>4 (11-28 yrs.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trevor</td>
<td>university deg. engineer</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1 (3 yrs.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rae Ann</td>
<td>grade 12 secretary</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2 years 1 mon.</td>
<td>2 (18-20 yrs.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy</td>
<td>post-sec. dip. administrator</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4 years 3 mon.</td>
<td>1 (6 yrs.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>grade 12 musician</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3 years 8 mon.</td>
<td>2 (7-9 yrs.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>post-grad. deg. geophysicist</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1 year 2 mon.</td>
<td>2 (11-13 yrs.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>university deg. manager</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>2 (4-9 yrs.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toni</td>
<td>university deg. nurse/student</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6 years 2 mon.</td>
<td>3 (10-15 yrs.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>grade 12 secretary</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>3 years 5 mon.</td>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>post-grad. deg. banking</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 year 3 mon.</td>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Meanings of abbreviations are: deg.: degree; post-sec. dip.: post secondary diploma; post-grad.: post graduate; mngt.: management; mon.: month; yrs.: years.

Table 1: The Participants
separated for less than 2 years, whereas all of the women were separated for more than 2 years.

**Introductions**

Each participant will be introduced to provide a personal context from which the themes of personal change during divorce are developed. They are introduced in the order that they were first met by the researcher. The names have been changed to maintain confidentiality. The respondents will be quoted, to allow the reader to hear their voices and to convey the fullest meaning in their own words.

After an introduction to the participant, the revised interpretive account, which was written after the second interview, will be given as a summary of each person's story of their experience of change. As was previously discussed in Chapter Three, the revised interpretive account was written after the participant read, clarified, and added to the researcher's interpretation of the first interview. All of the interpretive accounts were generally written within one to two weeks after each interview. The interpretive account is written in the form of a personal letter to the respondent.

**Participant One**

**Scott: Regaining self-esteem**

Scott first separated for a few months in 1978, but reconciled and was married for 25 years. When he was first interviewed on December 18, 1990, it had been 1 year and 11 months since he had separated from his wife. Scott is in his
fifties, completed a high school education, and works as a sales manager. He described his wife as being very critical of his family, his friends, and himself for many years. This left him with very little self-esteem at the time of the separation. Scott relates how he did not make decisions prior to the separation in the following excerpt.

there were a multitude of ways and I would not, I did not like confrontation, and I would avoid it like the plague, with her and with other people.

(1, 234-235)

After deciding to leave his wife, Scott became better at making decisions and carrying through with them, even if it meant confrontation with another person. Scott experienced many positive changes after he was on his own, which were essentially related to feeling an increase in self-confidence. He describes his building confidence in the following passage.

And I think then it builds back, upward, fairly shallow at first, perhaps a little more room there [uses hands for graph] a little bit, and then it slowly starts to climb; I think once you realize that you are quite capable of learning by yourself. I think the main thing is, and I was very fortunate, and I don't know whether this applies to other people, but it certainly did to me, that I found out that my friends before are still my friends.(1, 10-11)
As Scott solved problems related to his new single life and received support from his friends, he regained his self-confidence with increasing speed.

For Scott, the separation and divorce have been highly conflictual. At the time of the second interview on March 7, 1991, he still was unable to interact comfortably with all of his four children, whose ages range from 11 to 28. He is not allowed to see the youngest child, who still lives with Scott's ex-wife, and is gradually reconciling the problems with his other children, who live independently. He manages to cope with these problems.

Well, it put a lot of pressure on you, you tend to ignore it, and the best way is to keep busy. Well, if you stop you let them worry you. I think I've talked them [feelings] out with enough people. (1, 325-327)

He is confident, however, that with time he will be able to regain his role as a father, and hopes to have a more positive relationship in the future with another woman.

Revised interpretive account: Scott (March 21, 1991)

It seems that you primarily have experienced positive changes since the separation, which are essentially related to feeling an increase in your self-confidence. Because your ex-wife was so critical of your family, friends and yourself, you began to question your own judgement during the marriage, and had very little self-esteem at the time of the separation. After the separation, you described a period in
which you "felt sorry for yourself" due to having to take on new responsibilities such as cooking and laundry. It seems that as you solved these problems, you began to feel more self-reliant and independent, which contributed to an increase in your self-esteem. Your decision to stop smoking also contributed to a greater feeling of independence and well-being.

You seemed to emphasize that the help given by friends and family was very important for the changes you experienced after the separation. You identified three kinds of input from your friends and relatives which improved your confidence: (a) their affirmation of your decision to divorce, (b) reassurances about the future, and (c) letting you know that you were okay by being so positive towards you. Your friends also kept you busy so that you would not feel so bad. Some friends shared their own stories of divorce with you, which made you feel better as well. Your self-confidence gradually increased over time; slowly at first, then with increasing speed.

After the separation, you tended to question who was to blame and what you could have done differently. You seemed to develop personally in a number of ways although your basic self, such as dress and tastes, remained the same. You mentioned that you realized you had a sense of humour which was lost during your marriage. You also felt that you were better at making decisions, in that you could decide on a plan of action and carry through with it even if it meant
confrontation with another person. This began when you made the decision to separate and did not back down even though there was extreme conflict at the time. With separation you also developed household skills such as cooking, and recognized how capable you were at maintaining a clean, comfortable home.

I understand that it was quite difficult after the separation and I think you coped by keeping busy to ignore the difficulties, or by talking with other people. It seems that you continue to feel the loss of being in a relationship with a woman and miss being able to have a father relationship with your youngest son. However, you seem to accept this and realize that in time you will be able to regain these roles. You have decided that a future relationship with a woman may be more successful if both you and her were from a similar cultural background.

Participant Two

Trevor: The last breath before drowning

In his thirties, Trevor describes himself as having had a number of failed relationships, the most recent of which is the relationship with his wife, with whom he lived common-law for 1 year before being married for 2 1/2 years. Trevor has an university degree and works as an engineer. At the time of the first interview on January 16, 1991, he had been separated for 1 year. After feeling "trapped in a big box" (2, 155), which represented his marriage, Trevor told his
wife that he did not love her any more. He describes this incident as follows.

I told her I didn't love her any more. Now, I still find it difficult to talk about that, almost as if, it's the same feeling as, well, I was in shock when I did this. The adrenalin was pumping, heart was going, but it was true, and it was like getting in touch with the way I was really feeling about this; that this wasn't working. (2, 126-127)

When he told her, it felt like the first time he had stood up for himself and expressed his negative feelings. When she responded with the angry demand to get out of the house, Trevor moved out. Shortly after, his wife and his daughter, who is now 3 years old, moved to the other end of the country, where they remained at the time of the second interview, on February 14, 1991. The divorce still had not been finalized, and they continued to negotiate the terms of the settlement long distance. Trevor had only seen his daughter for two brief visits since the separation.

At the time of separation, Trevor realized that he should be open to the possibility that he could need help figuring out what had gone wrong in his failed relationships.

The end of the marriage was definitely a, like a drowning in its last breath, but we've got to do something here. And it was the, the marriage brought on the admission that I needed some help in this area. The separation afterwards gave me more
determination, to do it, just simply to be able to cope with the failures and what had happened before. (2, 462)

Trevor has experienced a lot of positive changes since the separation, as he describes in the following excerpt:

And, what I'm doing consciously and subconsciously now, I don't know. But I like the way things have become and I can gain some strength through it. I plan to continue the way it is. Started addressing a lot of these issues and I'm trying to derive an inner strength to do what I want to do in life, cause I know what I can do. (2, 425-427)

Although there have been many changes, Trevor still feels that he is on a "slippery surface" (2, 513), which he talks about in the following transcript.

I still feel that I could slip back to the way it was. I've noticed, I have slipped back sometimes. I've noticed I see things like I've done, like I know [what] I used to do before and behaviour patterns I've tried to break. (2, 516)

Revised interpretive account: Trevor (February 21, 1991)

During the separation you seem to have come to understand how you entered your marriage with low self-confidence. You also came to realize how your earlier life experiences left you unknowable about intimate relationships, particularly intimate relationships with women.
You seemed to recognize that personal development started within your marriage, when you gained confidence from both the (a) realization that you could have a relationship with a woman, and (b) the support your wife gave you. You became aware that you deserved and could have a better relationship with a woman other than your wife. The separation made you realize that you should be open to the possibility that you could need help with relationships and figure out what had gone wrong in your previous failed relationships.

A communications course was helpful in starting the process of learning some new relationship skills. A close relationship with a woman you dated after the separation also seemed to show you how to express your feelings and become more intimate in relationships. This was also affirmed by the psychologist you were seeing throughout the separation. Another communication skill which you learned, was how to resolve the many conflicts you had with friends and family. After each conflict you tended to withdraw and become increasingly isolated. It seemed that being able to discuss your negative feelings with your wife was the first time you stood up for yourself. It was the beginning of being able to discuss negative feelings with your family and close friends. The discussion with your family was especially helpful in that it brought a sense of relief, closeness and understanding.
These changes seem to have coincided with the greatest change of all, which is a greater feeling of self worth and self acceptance. You think that you have lacked motivation in the past due to your low self-confidence. You describe yourself as being stronger and more optimistic about future achievements. Although you feared personal failure at first, you now realize that you can rely upon yourself in the future. Other changes which you mentioned include (a) being more assertive, (b) more open and spontaneous, (c) the development of a sense of humour, (d) greater emotional stability, and (e) less defensiveness and irritability. You also started smoking, which came out of the realization that you could make your own decisions without being influenced by your wife any longer. Thinking about how your colleagues have recently been reacting to you has confirmed that you really have made major changes.

You described changing your behaviour patterns by first consciously thinking before you acted. Now, the changes are much more spontaneous and automatic. The changes are still new, however, and you try not to focus on any negative changes so that you won't feel worse and slip back to your old self.

Although you feel the changes have been positive, I understand that it was very difficult to cope at first with fears you experienced, such as being single again and worries about your daughter. Initially you coped with all the upsetting feelings by focusing on work to avoid thinking. You
also sought support from a professional counsellor, your colleagues, and your family. You went into a depression and completely isolated yourself, after coming back from a holiday to face the problems at work and in your relationships. This depression ended when you decided that something had to change, and made an effort to resolve the relationship conflicts.

There are still some areas about which you would like to learn. You still have some questions about (a) finding the right woman, (b) how to develop a close relationship with a woman, and (c) sexuality in relationships. You seem to feel generally positive that you will find the answers to these questions, and you have a readiness to take on new challenges.

Participant Three

Rae Ann: Free from pain

Rae Ann's husband, Frank, walked out on her to move in with her best friend, after they had been married for 23 years and had dated for 5 years before the marriage. At the time, she had 2 children, ages 20 and 18 years, and had a high profile secretarial job in the small town in which they lived. She is in her forties and has a post-secondary diploma or certificate. She had been separated for 2 years and 1 month at the time of the first interview on February 7, 1991.

After the separation, she realized that she needed to move out of the town to preserve what was left of her dignity. Although she had difficulty coping after Frank
walked out, she needed to continue to work for the income and
she describes how difficult this period in her life was in
the following transcript.

I had to put a big face on, a smile on my face
everyday, act as if things were normal. I was
breaking inside, I'd have to turn around and hide
those tears going down my cheeks while I'm doing my
work, okay, cause it never went away. It was right
there, right in my face when I went [to work]. I
didn't sleep, I didn't eat. (3, 153)

She described her husband as an alcoholic and remembers the
years of her marriage as full of pain, both emotional and
physical pain. She had suffered from a chronic disease
throughout her marriage, and, as she said, "my health is not
important. I would never put my health before his lifestyle
and I never did." (3, 481). Rae Ann describes how the disease
went into remission, "when Frank walked out I started to be a
person again" (3, 114).

A year and a half after the separation, Rae Ann moved to
the city to be with her children. She started the process of
developing confidence and becoming more self-reliant, which
led her to say,

I'm a whole new person. I'm no longer in that
little mouse box of a shell. I'm doing things like
I've never dreamed before and never do, like riding
a city bus, working in downtown Calgary. You'd have
never seen me do that kind of thing. (3, 469)
These changes signify tremendous accomplishment for Rae Ann who describes herself before the separation as,

I would go down to the bank and sign on the dotted line, and, it's none of my business, "You don't understand this kind of thing". I was treated like an idiot, and because I was treated like one, I felt like one, and I didn't ask any questions, okay? I wish more women would take hold and say, "Listen I've got brains", you know. (3, 435-439)

Unfortunately, although the disease has not come out of remission, Rae Ann has found out since the first interview that she has serious health problems caused by the disease. At the beginning of her new life, which she has been shaping with pleasure and not pain, she has been told by the doctors that she may not have much more time to live. During the second interview on May 22, 1991, which was a week after she came out of hospital, she described her present approach to life as, "I'm not sure how much time I have left, so I want to do as much as I possibly can." (3-2).

Revised interpretive account: Rae Ann (May 31, 1991)

It seems your marriage caused you to lose your self-confidence and become a different person in some ways from who you really are. This was primarily caused by your husband treating you as though you were not intelligent, and also being so critical and unsupportive. You seem to think that during the marriage you did not even realize that you should or could ask questions about certain matters such as banking.
The marriage was also a time of disease and pain, which almost seems to be linked with the great personal stress and your unhappiness of that time. Although the marriage was very difficult, the separation seemed to shatter your life because it affected your perception of your husband and your self; it changed your work, residence and lifestyle.

Since the separation, you have described a great increase in self-confidence and the development of many personal capabilities. After being in a relationship with one man for 28 years and always being in his shadow, you are being noticed for who you are. This change was initially started through receiving so much emotional support and practical help from family, friends and colleagues at work. Participating in a group for separated people also helped you to gain confidence. You also seemed to force yourself to learn to become more self-reliant in order to keep a roof over your head and survive. Becoming self-reliant seemed to involve making more decisions without having to consult with anyone, and developing a lifestyle that is satisfying to you. As you felt more confident, you were able to take a very big risk in giving up your job and house, with a move to the city.

The move to Calgary has given you a sense of accomplishment through developing a better social life, getting employment, getting closer to your children again, finding your own transportation in the city, developing new interests, and learning how to run a household as a single
person. You describe feeling totally independent for the first time in your life, in that you do not rely on your family or husband and have made your own life. You also describe becoming more open-minded about moral issues such as common-law relationships. Although there have been some big changes in yourself, in some ways you seem to feel that the marital separation has allowed you primarily to regain parts of your self which were lost during the marriage, such as your self-confidence, assertiveness, and happiness. With the end of the marriage, you have also experienced greater health with less emotional and physical pain.

You have realised that you are deserving of better treatment from a partner in a relationship and that you were not to blame for your husband's problems. Being involved with men in relationships since the separation has given you confidence that you are still attractive as a woman. You have some distrust of your feelings about wanting to get married again, in that you are unsure if it is a really good relationship or if you are just wanting marriage to fill a void and not be alone any more.

You also seem to have realized the importance of being able to give and receive in a relationship instead of only giving all the time. You have described how you used to be too much of a "giver", to the extent of putting your husband's needs before your own health. It seemed easier for you to be assertive when it involved others' needs than being assertive for your own needs. Since the separation you have
been giving to yourself more and have enjoyed this, but seem to be aware that you have not found a comfortable balance between giving to others and giving to yourself. You think that finding a job in which you can have a helping role with the public may help to attain this balance.

Although there have been many positive changes for you since the separation, it has been a difficult struggle at times (particularly right after separation when it was hard not to break down at work) and you seem to have some issues that you still want to work out. You still describe having difficulty working through the resentment you feel toward your husband and how to deal with his involvement as a parent. When you are reminded of your husband through the children, it seems that you lose some of the gains you have made since the separation. You also are confused about your feelings about marriage and the meaning of your feelings in a current romantic relationship. You are also struggling with how to live on a reduced income and save for the future. I also sense that many of the changes which you described are still very new and uncertain, due to your separation being so recent and difficult.

Participant Four

Sandy: Putting my money where my mouth is.

After a 10 year relationship (5 years common-law and 5 years of marriage), Sandy decided to separate because of her unhappiness with the ongoing problems in her marriage. At that time she had a 1 year old daughter and many doubts about
her ability to be self sufficient. It has been 4 years and 3 months since the separation. At the time of the first interview (February 21, 1991), Sandy was in her forties, had a post-secondary diploma or certificate, and worked as an administrator.

Sandy has experienced many positive changes since the separation. For Sandy, the separation became a test of whether she could be self-reliant:

One thing that does come clear to me about myself is that all the time that I was an adult, I always have thought of myself as being modern and feminist and perfectly able to take care of myself and all those kinds of things. I think that, in fact, almost all of that time I wasn't doing that and that I finally found myself in that situation where I kind of had to put my money where my mouth was, you know, and really do it, REALLY do it. Really face that there just wasn't going to be support if I didn't do it. Period. (very hesitant and thoughtful while speaking) (4, 10-11)

As she indicates in the following interview excerpt, she lacked the internalized knowledge that she could do the things representing self-reliance:

I just wanted the carpet torn out before the furniture went in and, and he and the kids that I hired tore it out. Now, I would go get somebody to do it with me and just do it myself. I just didn't
have a mental process or a really internalized knowledge that I can just do it, it's just not a big deal. (4, 202)

Although Sandy has acquired a better sense of her capabilities to be self-reliant, at the time of the follow-up interview (March 28, 1991) she again had doubts due to suddenly finding herself facing the reality of the sharp edges of her financial limits. She was reminded of how her upbringing had not adequately prepared her for the realities of her situation:

I think that I'm of the kind, and strangely to me, from the way I was brought up, of an outlook that I really do think that until the divorce, and the time I was really on my own, that really somewhere inside I really thought that my life would be made okay, safe, by a man. I never would have said that out loud at the time. I was just disgusted by women that act like that, you know. But I really do think that that was very much part of me and I think that if it wasn't part of me that I would've been a lot more together about university education, and about career paths, and about goal setting and all kinds of things like that, if I didn't somehow didn't have some belief that somebody was going to take care of me. If I was truly seeing that as I will be taking care of myself, then I would've been doing things about that. So I think that that's the first
time that I really went, I am taking care of myself. Yeah, and while I may get a little excessive about it, sometimes, I think that in a lot of ways that's really only realistic because I think that that really, truly will be the situation. (4-2)

Along with her increasing confidence as an adult woman, Sandy felt more knowledgeable about herself and capable in relationships. She developed the ability to be more assertive in relationships which came out of realizing:

I think that I got it really clear that that's not losing the whole thing. That really is valuing yourself and being discriminating, but it's not losing, you know. If you want to behave like an asshole, fine, you're not going to do it to me and I am not losing by not having you behaving that way to me. (4, 402-406)

Revised interpretive account: Sandy (March 7, 1991)

During the years following the separation, you seem to have experienced a major increase in self-confidence. Initially your self-confidence was low, due to having doubts about whether you had ever been or could be self-sufficient. These doubts seemed to arise out of (a) realizing you had relied on your husband for financial support, (b) his comments that you could not be self-sufficient, and (c) the competitive relationship you had had with him. Your confidence seemed to increase as you experienced success
during the first 2 years with managing the practical, day-to-day aspects of separated life, such as parenting, buying and fixing up your house, and work. You began to feel increasingly self-reliant as you achieved an independent lifestyle, and are more confident as an adult and a woman.

As part of your self-definition as a feminist, you highly valued the goal of total self-reliance (for both practical and emotional problems) after the separation. However, you did not have the internalized knowledge that you could do the things which represent self-reliance. During your upbringing, you were not prepared to take care of yourself. The separation became a test period to become a woman who is financially successful and totally independent. You initially seemed to define independence as not asking for or receiving emotional support. You have come to accept that it is helpful to talk more to others, and it is not a weakness to accept their emotional support. It seems, however, that some of your friends are now unaccepting of how much you talk about personal problems, and this is an issue with which you are struggling still.

You also began to feel more confident in relationships. You became open to self-examination and sought counselling after experiencing depression during the time of the marital problems and the separation. You became aware during counselling of how your father's departure from your childhood family was influencing your assumptions and behaviour in current, intimate relationships. You have become
more attentive to your feelings in relationships and can trust that these feelings may signal problems about which you need to talk. You are also open to hearing negative feedback about yourself, and this is related to being able to acknowledge weaknesses in the context of feeling stronger.

You have also described how you are more trusting in relationships, and this comes from having the confidence that you have the skills to deal with possible relationship problems. You have also indicated that, after almost 5 years, you are now ready to develop an intimate relationship with a man and to try new relationship skills in this relationship.

You see yourself as being able to be yourself and generally be more assertive. Prior to the separation, you seemed to put other people's needs before your own needs, standards and preferences. You realized that by being assertive and asking for things for yourself, you could lose a relationship with someone, but it is worthwhile to preserve your own integrity and who you are as a person. This seems to be a change from being totally giving to others, to finding a balance of giving and receiving. You seem still to be struggling to find this balance.

This increase in assertiveness seems to have started out of a sense of valuing yourself more, along with the necessity to be assertive to keep your job. You are willing to be who you are even if it causes others discomfort. This seems to be reflected in your increased comfort to wear less make-up and wear different types of clothing. You are more comfortable
with your own sexuality, in that you define it rather than letting others define it with their expectations. You still have difficulty, however, accepting the self-image represented by your house. You seem to interpret the house as representing your inadequacy in achieving financially.

You also seem to have developed a greater feeling of responsibility in many aspects of life, yet at the same time you express the realization and acceptance of the lack of control you have over life events. You are recognizing more clearly the limits for what you can and cannot be responsible.

I understand that you are uncertain if the changes you have experienced since the separation are attributable to the separation or are the result of other life transitions which you have experienced. Becoming 40 years old has caused you to be more accepting of the realization that you have less control over your life. Becoming the parent of a girl has caused you to be more accepting of your female identity.

Although the changes have primarily been positive, I understand that it has been a difficult struggle and you still think that things will not be easy in the future. Your vision of your self and your future lifestyle is less attractive, and you are attempting to make long term career goals to provide financial security. You have made some very positive changes, but you still feel "wobbly", and it is very hard at times. You were more determined to prove your capability to others after the separation; however, it is
harder to handle problems now that you are no longer trying to prove yourself to anyone and you have a greater awareness of the risks which you face. When a problem recurs, such as financial limitations, it becomes another of the never-ending tests you have had to face. At these times you tend to get discouraged, lose confidence, and feel less secure in the positive changes which you have achieved.

Participant Five

John: A liberation of self

John is one of the more fortunate, in that the decision to separate was a mutual decision made by both himself and his wife of 13 years. John had separated twice prior to the final separation. After the first 6 month separation, John moved back for another 6 months, only to separate again for a year. After the second reconciliation, they had the first of their 2 children (currently 9 and 7 years old). They then stayed together, until they made the final separation, which was 3 years and 8 months before the first interview on March 13, 1991.

With the separation, John felt a great relief and, "when I think back on my progression of things, it was just very liberating to let go of it" (5, 361-362). In letting go of the marriage, John was able to have the freedom to be who he wanted to be, because, as he said, "I had a real feeling I just wanted to get on with my life. I felt like I'd almost put my life on hold for my marriage in a sense." (5, 80).
Shortly after his separation he left his business to pursue his job as a professional musician full time and also experienced a motorcycle accident which left him with a head injury. With these multiple events, John has done a reassessment of his values, priorities, and how he functions in relationships with women. He describes the positive changes he is experiencing as, "It's almost like a re-birth or something, these great changes happening". (5-2).

Right after the separation, John became involved in a number of relationships with women to compensate for a sense of inadequacy and loneliness. He has become more open to evaluating himself in relationships with women and has cautiously begun to explore different ways of relating to them. He describes this in the following transcript.

I have a number of female friends that I socialize with who are single, divorced, but we don't have the pressure of the romantic kind. We have a real intimacy that I didn't really enjoy in a lot of ways in my marriage in terms of being able to be very, very honest, without having your relationship on the line. The romantic mask or filters that sometimes [make you] seem to want to try to hurt one another. (5, 58-64)

At the time of the second interview (April 18, 1991), John no longer felt any urgency to be in a committed relationship with a woman. This seems to be the result of the desire to be
more discriminating about who he dates, a lack of trust to be intimate in case he gets hurt again, and, as he says, Even now I'm very, very cautious about becoming involved because I've just found I don't need that external kind of support in that I've found some inner strength in myself right now, being able to be happy. (5, 24-25)

Revised interpretive account: John (April 26, 1991)

It seems that during the separation from your wife you experienced a great sense of relief and liberation, which involved freedom from the pressures of an unhappy marriage. It also involved the freedom to be who you wanted to be, as you were feeling that your life and your self were on hold during the marriage.

Prior to the separation you described your self as tending to give too much in an intimate relationship without being assertive, honest and open about your own needs and desires. This seemed to come out of a feeling of responsibility for the other person's feelings, in that you were reluctant to be assertive in case this upset your partner. This was related to lacking self-confidence, in that you tended to blame yourself for others' feelings. You began to realize that it was all right to be more assertive and let the other person take some responsibility for his or her reaction and the relationship. Some of the liberation you have experienced is this freedom from responsibility and the feeling that you can reclaim your self instead of giving it
away in intimate relationships. When you left the marriage, you began to feel free of the responsibility others expected of you, and now you are letting go of the responsibility you expect of yourself in intimate relationships.

This recognition seemed to come out of the thinking and introspection you had done about books you had read and relationships you were in after the separation. Although you sometimes feel that it is too much work and may take the spontaneity out of relationships, you still spend a lot of time analyzing relationships and how you could improve your own relationships.

Initially you seemed to date women out of a need to be involved, to make up for some sense of internal inadequacy and to end the intense bouts of loneliness you experienced. After a number of failed relationships you began to be more open to evaluating your self in these relationships to find out if you could improve future relationships. An example of this is asking yourself, "Why am I attracted to these women?" You have begun to think that you may be initially emotionally attracted to women and may need to balance emotional attraction with rational reasons for a better relationship. You have started to explore, cautiously, different ways of relating to women. Since the separation you have developed better friendships with women and have begun to think that shared values and concerns are some of the rational reasons or basis of a good intimate relationship. Although you desire another long term relationship with a woman, you do not feel
any urgency to be in such a relationship. This seems to be the result of (a) the desire to be more discriminating in who you date, (b) a lack of trust to be intimate in case you get hurt again, and (c) an inner strength to feel more content on your own.

You seem to have had a number of major changes in your life, each of which has contributed to major transitions in your self and your lifestyle. You have been divorced, left your business, and had a motorcycle accident which has left you with some physical limitations. You have experienced many losses which have made you realize that there is no ultimate security and caused you to re-assess your values and priorities. You also think that you have reached a stage in your life in which you are less willing to compromise your self. You seem to have made changes in your lifestyle to reflect your changing values, such as spending more time with your children and not spending so much time working. You still feel very unsettled about your future plans for work, as you may not be able to pursue your interests due to your physical limitations. With the multiple changes, you have the uncomfortable feeling of dissociation or being "out of sync" with others' lives. You are having difficulty figuring out what needs and values fit for you, now that so much has changed within and around you.

Although you think that the changes you have experienced since the separation have been primarily positive, you have had some difficulty coping with the pressure from your
friends to get into another 'couple relationship'. You also found it stressful when your business colleagues refused to discuss the separation openly. You seem to have developed more positive friendships since the separation, in which you can share more intimacy and interests. Although you value these friendships for their openness and honesty, you seem to prefer not to go to these friends for help but prefer to be more self-reliant. There has also been some difficulty adjusting to less time with your children, whom you miss a lot.

**Participant Six**

**William: His own gladiator**

William spent 5 to 6 years being very unhappy. He drank too much, found he was falling in love with other women, and did not know what was the real problem. He then began to realize that the problem involved both his job and his marriage and that he needed to give to himself and make changes to be more happy. He told his wife of 20 years that he did not love her any more. He had been separated for 1 year and 2 months at the time of the first interview (March 25, 1991). William has two children, 11 and 13 years of age, is in his forties, has a masters degree, and is a geophysicist.

For William, his feelings of unhappiness started, "this whole process with getting in touch with the real me" (6, 19). He realized how he was always "someone who sweeps it all under the carpet" (6, 257), rather than being aware of his
honest feelings and informing others of his opinions, needs, and feelings. He describes this insight when he says this involves this whole process with getting in touch with the real me, which is still going on. You know, I'm still not a happy person by any means, but I face things a lot more honestly now. This is one of the other things that I learned, is you sit down and listen to your insides and be honest with yourself, and you can't fool your feelings. (6, 19-23)

William has recognized that he needs to take action to solve problems, being a "gladiator" for himself as he describes in the following passage:

And this friend of mine said, 'Look, now hire a lawyer. You pretend they're a gladiator, and they'll go in and do all your fighting for you'. So I thought and I said, yeah, that is really interesting. I never have won an argument with her and maybe we could've saved the marriage if I hadn't had let go. Learned to learn how to get my damn side out of it, and let it fall where it may.

(6, 246-252)

William has come to have a better understanding of interpersonal relationships and describes some of the changes he has made in this area when he says, "I was very much a closed shop. Now I'm sure people think I'm cuckoo because I let things out more. I mean, I'm far more honest and a far
more straight forward person." (6, 201-203). Although he still had problems with his employment situation at the time of the second interview (May 23, 1991), William is making changes and gaining self-confidence which helps him to better manage work.

Revised interpretive account: William (June 3, 1991)

It seems that you have become a much different man from who you were 7 or 8 years ago, when you first started to figure out why you were so unhappy. During the last 18 months you have started to make observable changes in your life to solve ongoing problems. On the outside you have lost 30 pounds, reduced your alcohol consumption, verbalize more, and have a more relaxed lifestyle with less emphasis on work.

Internally, you describe yourself as thinking very differently. It seems that you now are more knowledgeable of the "real" you, for the first time ever. This involves being aware of your honest feelings and having the confidence that you can utilize this knowledge of feelings as part of your decisions and judgements. This is new for you because you have previously done what was expected of you rather than what you wanted to do. During the marriage you were unable to be the real you, and this contributed to great unhappiness.

It seems that, as you recognized how unhappy you were and the sources of that unhappiness, you realized that you needed to give to yourself to gain happiness. You began to be more assertive by informing others of your opinions, your needs, and feelings, rather than continuing to be quiet or to
give in to others' wishes to avoid conflict. I am not sure if you became more assertive because you began to realize that your needs and feelings were important or because you were so unhappy at the time that you had no choice. I think that informing your wife that you didn't love her was the first time you were able to be assertive in a close relationship. You still seem to surprise yourself and feel accomplishment when you are assertive in other relationships. I think that a summary of the changes you experienced may be: (a) increasing your awareness of your feelings; (b) becoming knowledgeable of the origins of these feelings; (c) recognition of the importance of listening to your feelings; (d) acting upon the feelings, for example, being assertive; (e) feeling a sense of accomplishment. Lately, you are more concerned with taking action to solve problems and spending less time trying to understand the source of the problems. Although you are pleased with these changes, you are still wanting to develop a better balance between being honest and assertive with others yet not being offensive or too blunt.

It seems that your confidence has increased greatly since the separation, although you have not experienced a sudden sense of empowerment. You seem to think more positively, have more confidence in your self knowledge, and have recognized that you have value even if you are different from others in some respects. You still find that you tend to feel like a total failure at times because your marriage failed, and try consciously to think more positively to feel
confident. You have recently set a goal to develop a relationship with a woman, because you have recognized how important being a part of a family is to you.

You also seemed to indicate that you have a better understanding of interpersonal relationships and find them more satisfying. After being a very quiet person, you now are outgoing and honest in relationships, and value the importance of having friends in whom you can confide. You are also more in charge of who you would like to be friends with and how much intimacy you will develop in these relationships. For the first time you have friends who are female, without sexual involvement. This still causes you some confusion as to how they fit into your life. You are also questioning what a good relationship with a woman is, and how emotional intimacy and sexual attraction can be combined in these types of relationships.

The changes you have experienced seemed to have been precipitated by a great sense of unhappiness and confusion about your feelings for another woman, which opened you up to a process of self-analysis in order to discover what the problem was. You learned about yourself through talking with a psychologist (which made you realize the value of confiding in others), reading, and talking to friends. You discovered that your unhappiness arose from your marriage and your place of employment. You also seemed to understand better how your upbringing had contributed to your lack of assertiveness, expression of feelings, and difficulty in managing conflict.
Although you are still learning a lot about your real self, you think that you may be doing too much self analysis. You would like to find a better balance between analyzing yourself and just being spontaneous.

Although there have been many positive changes, you have had difficulty coping with the separation and still experience unhappiness. It has been difficult to leave the children, and you still miss them at times. You also have been unhappy because you feel you have failed at the marriage. Part of this unhappiness and sense of failure is due to the fact that your employment situation is still unresolved. You have indicated, however that some of the confidence you have gained since the separation seems to be helping you to better manage work. You are also realizing that there are limits for what you can and cannot be responsible for, and this helps you to cope with the work problems.

Participant Seven

Ellen: The director of her own show

At the time of the first interview (April 17, 1991), Ellen was a woman who, in her forties, had been separated for 3 years from her spouse of 11 years. She has a university degree and a managerial job. She also has custody of two children who were only 6 years and 1 year old at the time of the separation. The separation came after her husband refused to end an extra-marital relationship and she requested him to
leave. Ellen continues to struggle with the pressures of financial limitations and single parenting.

For Ellen, the separation was the beginning of profound personal change, as indicated in the following passage, "Certainly there have been changes in myself, certainly, in the perception of myself. Probably the best way to describe it is, is that I finally have a perception of myself" (8, 1). For the first time in her life, Ellen has a sense of herself, what her strengths, weaknesses, interests, needs, and values are. With the separation she felt a deep sense of personal responsibility for who she is, which she describes as, "like this is my show, and I have nobody else to blame anything on other than the director. That's me. So I better, you know, do the best I can here." (8, 61-63). As "director of her own show", Ellen is referring to a deep sense of personal agency which is better understood when she describes how she was prior to the separation:

It certainly wasn't as though I didn't have the potential to be on my own. You know, I've been on my own since I was 18 and I put myself through university, after 6 years of working. [I was] totally capable, but I don't even think you can really say I lopped off being responsible for myself. I don't know if I even knew what personal responsibility was; never having been taught any of that, about taking responsibility yourself, about setting goals, being yourself. Actually {being}
With these personal insights, Ellen has a greater sense of control over her life and her happiness. At the time of the second interview (June 6, 1991), she was still working at developing a satisfactory identity and lifestyle.

Revised interpretive account: Ellen (June 18, 1991)

Since the separation, it seems that you have experienced profound personal development, in that you have a sense of yourself for the first time in your life. You are also proud that you are starting to feel like a whole person and are more able to organize your life so that it is compatible with who you are. These changes seem to have originated out of getting in touch with your true feelings, and acting to change any problems which were signalled by these feelings. Along with a greater knowledge of your interests, weaknesses and strengths, you also like yourself now and have a greater self-acceptance. This may have helped you to become more self-nurturing, in that you now give more to yourself by allowing small personal pleasures and not driving yourself to work so hard.

The separation provided the opportunity to enter a period of self-assessment and personal change. It seems that your tremendous unhappiness after the separation caused you to question why it had happened. You began to challenge everything you thought, felt and had done throughout your life. You saw a counsellor, did a lot of reading and also
received feedback from friends and family. You seem to have come to understand how your upbringing as a child contributed to the repression of feelings and also did not teach you to have a deep sense of personal responsibility. You have recognized how this continued in your relationship with your ex-spouse, in which you do not think you had a sense of a separate identity. You have set a goal for yourself to do something different or less comfortable each day as a way to try out new ways of being. Then you decide whether to integrate or discard these new behaviours, depending upon how the experience has been. You are now feeling the confidence to take risks to further your career. When first separated, you were not comfortable with who you were, but now with all the changes you have made, you can say, "I'm okay".

Since the separation, you seem to have a better understanding of what personal responsibility means and are taking more responsibility for your self. You are trying to be more purposeful and planful in your life, rather than blaming others for problems. Part of taking more responsibility has been your ability to assess problems and make decisions. Although you feel and act more responsible, I think you are also recognizing the limits for what you can and and cannot be responsible. You indicated that it has been helpful to accept how things are, change what you can change, and accept what cannot be changed. I think you are finding a balance between knowing when to act on problems and when to
let problems go. Overall, you have a greater sense of control over your own life and happiness.

You have also given up some of the responsibility for making relationships successful. As you have come to know and accept your self more, it seems that you can be your self in relationships and let the other person have responsibility to be his or her self. You have realized that people are different and the differences are valid. This has come out of conscious effort to be less judgemental, and seems to have resulted in feeling more acceptance of your self and others. You have also become more assertive in relationships, but you are uncertain whether you will be able to maintain this assertiveness in a romantic, male/female relationship. You seem to attribute this difficulty to your prior tendency to give up your own needs for the other. You have not had the knowledge about how to communicate in relationships so that you can be heard and yet hear the other person. It is more difficult to make decisions for yourself when there are two people involved.

Although you are worried whether you may lose your self in another intimate relationship with a man, you would like to have another relationship of this kind in your life. You seem content now and do not need this relationship, however would like a partner who would complement you and provide support. You are currently trying to find ways of meeting more people through trying different group activities. This seems to be difficult because you do not feel that you have
had a lot in common with the people in these groups, and think that you may be basically uncomfortable in group situations.

I understand that, although the changes have been very positive, you have had difficulty coping with the separation and still feel unhappy at times. Right after the marriage you felt devastated, which was partially due to not having a strong sense of identity without your husband. You have also an ongoing sense of loss of being a part of a family, and it has been very difficult to cope with the financial limitations. You seem to have coped with the grief and unhappiness with support from your friends. You also try to think positively and accept that there are problems which cannot be solved. The encouragement from your friends was very supportive, along with the positive role model provided by your sister.

Participant Eight

Toni: Changing her own tire

In her forties, Toni now finds herself separated from her husband of 14 years and with three children, between the ages of 10 and 15. During the 6 years since her separation she returned to university, and at the time of the first interview (May 7, 1991) she was attending her graduation ceremony for her B.A. degree. She has just been accepted into graduate school. She worked part-time as a nurse while she went to school.
Toni had experienced much unhappiness in the last few years of her marriage, which peaked when she discovered that her husband was having an affair. Six months after this revelation her husband decided to move out, and Toni found that,

The minute he was gone, wonderful. It was just such a relief. All of a sudden I've got a new competence, I didn't feel constrained any more. And I thought I could really be who I wanted to be instead of being someone for him all the time.

(8,60)

With the separation, Toni felt the freedom to make decisions for herself and be herself rather than who she was expected to be. For the first time, she began to have a stable identity, which was freely chosen and congruent with her self.

Toni describes the process by which she began to develop her confidence, a sense of self-reliance, and identity:

When I started making the big decisions for myself and seeing that I could affect my life, that made me feel even better. Those are the things that really built my confidence. I mean, in the beginning, say, if I had a flat tire I would've gone, "Oh my God, what will I do?" I don't think twice about it any more. I think one should let the past go and I certainly wasn't going to let it burden me. You have to make that break completely,
I think, because while she's still got one foot in this world and one foot in that world, [for example] if you're going to call on your ex-husband to say "We're locked out of the house, dear" or "Could you come and change this tire on my car?" I know people who do this and I did that in the beginning. Then I realized you can't do that any more. You can't do that, you've got to take responsibility of yourself and be thoroughly independent. It's scary because, number one, you're socialized to believe that this person's going to look after you. It's really hard to see all the skills you had before you were married, because I was perfectly capable. You've lost them along the way by this being cared for business which is a lot of nonsense. Then you have to build them up again. I thought there's nothing to it, I'm just going to do it, that's all. I'd never changed a tire before, but I thought, well, there's always the first time. I'm just gonna do it. Those are the kinds of experiences, just each one helps. (8, 173-178)

With support from her friends and a process of self-reflection, Toni now finds that she made many changes which had persisted to the time of the second interview (June 4, 1991). She describes how she has changed the way she interacts with other people when she says,
I'm pretty accurate about my perceptions of people but I keep my mouth shut for a lot of things and I'll reserve my judgement. And in that way your whole world can open up. This is what keeps happening to me is my world keeps expanding because I'm being more accepting and more tolerant. My world's getting bigger and bigger. (8, 208-209)

Revised interpretive account: Toni (June 18, 1991)

It seems that since the separation from your husband, you have become an entirely different person, and have a stable sense of identity for the first time in your life. With the separation you experienced a great sense of relief and freedom; a freedom to make decisions for yourself and be yourself rather than who you are expected to be.

You have come to realize that throughout your life you knew very little about yourself, except that you were outgoing. You described yourself as being quite superficial and unknowledgeable about your feelings, tending to assume different identities in different relationships. You also did not engage in much self-reflection and tended to react without a sense of 'planfulness'. It seems that you had been socialized to adopt a traditional housewife role similar to that of your mother, which caused you much unhappiness and guilt about not being satisfied with this role. While married, you also seemed to lose the confidence and skills for self-reliance out of your expectations that he would do certain things; expectations which he did not fulfil. You
also attribute your growing lack of confidence to the way your husband did not validate you and his implied criticisms. His subtle expectations of you tended to stifle the expression of your identity. You accepted an identity which did not "fit" with who you are, rather than developing an identity congruent with your self.

The personal changes you have experienced started with your move to Canada and a release from the social expectations of British society. The unhappiness you experienced at the end of the marriage and the separation seemed to open you up to look at your self and ask whether there was something wrong with you in relationships. Initially you felt great unhappiness and tended to blame external things for the unhappiness, but then realized that part of the problem was in yourself. You have done a tremendous amount of self-assessment and personal change and have come to value the process of self-growth in and of itself. As memories continue to be triggered and new crises arise, you believe that you will continue this process of reflection and learning about yourself.

It seems that you have utilized a number of different resources along the way to your new identity. You attended counselling, took courses, have done reading, and also did a lot of journalling. You have also had friends who were supportive and informative about how they saw you and who you could be.
Although your friends were very helpful, you also had a strong sense of autonomy and independence. Talking to your friends helped to build your confidence. However, you felt very overwhelmed by the practical responsibility for the children and the household. Initially, your sense of total personal responsibility was frightening, but it was helpful to realize that you had been self-reliant before marriage and could be self-reliant once again. It seems that not having a strong sense of identity contributed to your suffering at the time of the separation. Without a sense of identity, you tended to attribute your feelings of unhappiness and fear to personal problems rather than recognizing that the feelings were due to the current crisis. This added guilt to the grief you were already experiencing.

At the time of separation you had no self-confidence but have come to be more and more confident. The realization that your husband was partially responsible for the problems greatly improved your confidence initially. Developing your running skills and new friendships also helped. Although you did not feel capable at the time, it seems that the separation forced you to solve day to day problems. You realized that you were responsible for your own happiness and by making decisions you could successfully solve problems which gave you confidence to take on greater problems. You are now finding that there are limits for what you can and cannot be responsible. Although you are developing more effective strategies to solve co-parenting problems, you seem
to recognize that this is one area in which you have limited power. You try not to get discouraged or set back with these continuing problems.

You have made many changes in how you think about and behave in interpersonal relationships. It seems that you are trying to be more open-minded about people and less judgemental. You are trying to be a better listener and say less of your own perceptions. This has helped to make your world bigger, in that you have a large number of friends and now understand many different perspectives. It seems that you have also become more assertive in relationships and continue to improve your assertiveness skills. New relationships with men have helped you to feel more confident as a single person. These relationships, in particular, stimulate further self-assessment and self development. You have come to realize the value of having friendships with men as a basis for more intimate relationships.

With the recognition that you needed to look after yourself to look after the children, you started to be self-nurturing for the first time. It seems that you were given the opportunity to look after your own needs on weekends when the children were gone, and running was one of the first activities you started for your own pleasure. Development of assertiveness skills also helped you to say "no" to demands on your time. Although your career change was partially due to financial and time pressures, it also seemed to be a way you could give to your needs and interests.
You think you have been able to combine the person who you were before your marriage with a number of new qualities. You still are outgoing and have regained your sense of humour. You have also became more thoughtful, and planful. You think you are a less rigid, judgemental and inflexible person, and have the increasing confidence to take more risks. In relationships, you have become a better communicator and try to be more optimistic. You have also learned that you have a good intellect which you value in yourself and others.

Participant Nine

Jane: Moving to a new country

During the first interview (May 13, 1991), Jane described herself as unhappy for all of her life, and as dependent on her alcoholic husband with whom she lived common law for 2 years prior to their marriage of 6 1/2 years. She does not have any children. After losing a lot of weight and taking a trip on her own, she realized that "there was a world out there" (9, 14) and suddenly she could not put up with her husband any longer. Seven months later, during which she had an affair and moved out twice, she finally left for good. This began a process of self development which she describes as, "It's been really incredible for self-growth and I don't often acknowledge it, but when I really think about it it's been really incredible." (9, 36).

Since the separation, Jane continually pushed herself to take new risks to test her capabilities. Each test of herself
seemed to give her more confidence, which allowed her to take on a greater test the next time and gradually develop an entirely new life. She talks of this in the following transcript.

I've learned that I have a lot more strength than I think I do and I'm actually starting to think that I'm a neat person in spite of the fact that I'm overweight. That doesn't mean I'm so bad, you know. I can do the things I want to do. (9, 66)

Jane is in her thirties, has her grade 12, and works in the secretarial field. She had been hired for a job overseas and planned to depart shortly after the second interview on June 4, 1991. She describes the meaning of this move in the following excerpt:

And I feel the test. I don't know why I picked [new country] as a testing ground. Sometimes when I think of the reasons why I'm going, the first thing that pops into my mind is that is where I will come into my own. I don't know why I think that, but that's the first thing that comes into my mind, because I'm there to depend on me, and to be my own best friend. (Spoken with hesitancy, 9-2)

This move seems to represent this process of trying to meet her personal interests and needs through trying new challenges, so that Jane can continue to get closer to the "real me" (9-2).
Revised interpretive account: Jane (June 18, 1991)

It seems that you have experienced a lot of self-growth, primarily in your self-confidence. You described yourself as lacking in confidence prior to the separation, in that you felt inferior in your own and others' eyes due to being overweight, as well as feeling incapable of achieving personal goals and happiness. Having lost weight and having taken a trip by yourself seemed to increase your awareness of your capability to be self-reliant and decreased your patience with your husband's drinking behaviour. You were then able to take the first big risk in your life, which was to leave your husband as an attempt to end the great unhappiness you were feeling. It seems your confidence really grew as you survived the separation and realized that you could attempt to solve other problems and try new ways of being. Although you still feel fearful and lack confidence at times, you are starting to feel more deserving of happiness, more competent, and are starting to believe that you are essentially a "neat" person even if you do have some faults.

Since the separation, you have continually attempted to push yourself to take new risks and test your capabilities. Your plan to move to a foreign country seems to represent this process of trying to meet your personal interests and needs through trying new challenges. Each test of yourself seems to give you more confidence that allows you to take on a greater test the next time. Your emigration has become the ultimate test of whether you can totally rely on yourself and
"come into my own". With this approach you seem to have been developing an entirely new life, particularly during the last eight months, a life which is better suited to you and can provide some happiness. For the first time, you are getting closer to the "real me". Although it is tiring to continually test yourself, you can see yourself as continuing this process of personal development for the rest of your life.

Through psychotherapy, joining a twelve-step program, reading and journal writing you have started to become much more knowledgeable about yourself. You have come to realize that (a) your family of origin was dysfunctional, and (b) you were too dependent on your husband. You are trying to find a balance of accepting support from people without becoming too dependent upon them, and this is difficult because you still lack the confidence in your insights about relationships. You have also begun to recognize the value of listening to your "gut feelings". You seem to be trying to identify and listen to your deeper feelings or instinctive knowledge of what is right or wrong for you and to give yourself more time before making major decisions.

You have also experienced changes in interpersonal relationships. You are working on trying to be more self-accepting during those times that others are being critical of you. You are also trying to include yourself in conversations with new people, instead of withdrawing. You seem to be trying out assertiveness skills, in that you make an effort to talk calmly about problems with others, such as
your boss. Although you are aware that you need to examine how you relate to men in intimate relationships, you have not been ready to tackle this issue yet. You plan to explore it more in the future.

It seems that, although you feel that you are more in charge of your own life, you also have a sense that you can let go of some of the responsibility at the same time. Your trust in a higher power, along with a better knowledge of your personal capabilities, seems to help you to recognize and accept the limits of what you can and cannot be responsible. You also find that you will now carry out any plans you have made to achieve personal goals. It seems that this may be due to your decision not to put your life on hold any longer because of your weight, but to get going and do the things you want to do.

I understand that, although you have experienced an incredible amount of self-growth, it has been very difficult at times. Quite often you feel frightened about all the changes and feel uncertain of yourself. Immediately after the separation you felt very unhappy and guilty for problems which your husband blamed on you. You have come to realize that you should be less critical of yourself and reduce your expectations for yourself. Knowing that you have to take care of yourself more seems have helped you cope.
Participant Ten

Tim: Everything is on the table

At the age of 35, Tim has been separated from his wife of 10 years for one year and 3 months. He does not have any children. The legal divorce was to be finalized 3 to 4 weeks from the time of the first interview (May 30, 1991). Tim has started to accept the finality of the separation in the past 5 months. Two years ago, Tim's wife informed him of her unhappiness with the marriage and, although they went for marriage counselling, it seemed to Tim she had already made the decision that the relationship was over. About 6 months after he realized there were serious marriage problems, he felt he had no choice but to move out. Tim described himself as being "blindsided" (10, 2) by the fact that there were problems in the marriage, and frustrated by not having been given a chance to solve these problems. The past 2 years have been devastating for Tim, and he describes the experience as,

It was like I was in a trench and every time I put my head above the trench somebody kicked me in the head. That's what I felt like. I guess that's the only way I could put it into words was whichever way I turned, every time I put my head above to see what would happen, something else knocked me back in the trench. I'd stagger up, and I'd get in, and bang, something else would happen. (10, 18-22)

Tim had experienced a number of set-backs or delays in the achievement of his goal of a family lifestyle. He had a
sports injury, had been laid off work, and still had to finish post-graduate training when the separation occurred. He finished his degree and now works in the banking field.

For Tim, the separation has opened him up to self-assessment as a way to learn from his past mistakes in order to improve future relationships. He describes this as, "Everything's on the table, everything is open for interrogation in my own mind." (10, 1). Tim is assessing all parts of himself, including his values, needs, and life plans. In particular, Tim has focused attention upon his relationship skills so that his next relationship will be better, through a process he describes as, "I've also looked back at other relationships before I was married and said, 'okay, well, is there a pattern there? What happened and why?'" (10, 94-96). He is beginning to wonder about "how close I let people get" (10, 269) and is experimenting with new ways of relating to people, which he describes in the following transcript.

To talk about that relationship, to talk about her relationship, to talk about my relationships before, that's something I would never have done, or I would have to know the person a lot longer. In one day, we covered more ground than I thought I would probably cover in months and months and months. (10, 233-235)

This represents one of the many tentative, but positive changes Tim is beginning to experience as he becomes more
accepting of the finality of the separation and certitude of divorce. At the time of the second interview (June 18, 1991), Tim had continued this process of self-assessment but had not taken many risks to experiment with more positive changes.

Revised interpretive account: Tim (June 25, 1991)

It seems that you have started a process of self-assessment and change during the time of your growing realization that there were problems in your marriage. You have had the feeling that your life has been on hold for the past 2 years, leaving you in limbo about your life plans. After a period of unhappiness and feeling overwhelmed, you began to accept that the marriage relationship was over and decided that you would try to take a more positive approach. Having new friendships with women seems to have made it easier to deal with the loss and move toward the future, in that they give you some confidence and hope for future happiness. The separation seems to have opened you up to self-assessment as a way to learn from your past mistakes in order to improve future relationships. You described this as, "everything is on the table"; a process of assessing all parts of yourself (values, needs, life plans, relationship skills) to see what can be improved for the future. During the past two months you have started to experiment with some new ways of being and have found this an enlightening and good way to push yourself to keep growing and changing.

One area you have focused a lot of attention on is that of relationships. You have decided you would like another
close relationship with a woman in the future, and you want to develop relationship skills so that the next relationship will be better. Because you were "blindsided" by the severity of the problems in your marriage, you have questioned why you had not perceived this earlier. This has led you to doubt your own feelings and perceptions in relationships, and question how much intimacy a normal relationship has. Participating in new relationships allows you to sort out your strengths and weaknesses, as you compare them to your marriage relationship.

You have been learning about how you used to function in relationships and have been trying out new behaviour. You seem to realize that you tend to take people too literally and need to discuss issues on a more thorough, deeper level. You also think that you may have put up barriers with people, which have kept them at a distance so that you could not be hurt by them. You are able to try different ways of being in relationships because your confidence is starting to build, and you try to choose safe situations for experimentation. Becoming more open in your relationships with your brothers has helped to increase your confidence to try this openness in other situations. Although it feels scary because of your fear of rejection, you are trying to reveal more personal information earlier in new relationships. It seems that you are also able to talk about your feelings more and seem to achieve a greater intimacy. These changes are not automatic,
however, as you tend to slip back into your old patterns of communication.

Once the divorce proceedings started and you began to accept the reality of the divorce, you started to think about dating. You are starting to wonder how you can meet new people with whom you have something in common. New relationships with women seem to cause you some fear because you do not want to make any mistakes, and you do not yet trust others, or trust your own feelings and judgements about others in relationships. You find it helpful first to find out what is important to you, and then ask what qualities you would want in a woman. You would also feel rejected if someone did not want to go out with you. For these reasons, it seems that it is difficult for you to decide whether this is the right time to date and get involved with someone.

When you were feeling overwhelmed during the separation, you seemed to realize you had to set boundaries for yourself. You described yourself as tending to take a helper role, in that you usually try to solve others' problems. You would do things for others even if you did not really want to. You would feel guilty if you said no. Although you find it difficult to have the confidence in your ability to judge what is best in situations, you now are trying to consider how you feel and make decisions based upon those feelings regarding the limits of your helpfulness. It is especially difficult to make these changes with family members, and you are continuing to work to improve in this area.
With assistance from a psychologist, reading self-help materials, and talking with your brothers, you have been able to cope with the separation and to develop personally. Taking psychology-related courses at university first opened you up to a better understanding of your self, others and relationships. You have also tried to increase your self-knowledge by analyzing your previous relationships and observing how others relate to each other. It has been helpful to talk with your family to assess how your childhood experiences have influenced who you are today, but it also raises many confusing issues which you are now trying to clarify.

Although you have made a lot of positive changes during the last 2 months, I understand that it has not been easy for you during the past 2 years. You have felt great frustration at not being given a chance to save the marriage. At first you felt totally rejected. Not only was your marriage rejected, but there was a rejection of all your life plans and valued goals, such as owning a house and having children. You have also felt that just as you get out of a "trench" and begin to achieve these goals, that you have been knocked back in; certainly a helpless feeling. Because you have been overwhelmed with the turmoil and negatives during the last two years, it is hard for you to see the positive side of your experience. It is also easy to lose hope and a sense of positive growth when you do not take any risks and nothing positive happens for a few weeks. You seem to be feeling more
hopeful of a positive future, but still feel uncertain and afraid at times.

Part 2: Themes of Personal Development During Divorce

Each respondent spoke of an unique story involving the personal changes which had been experienced during the divorce process. Hearing the different voices allows one to distinguish the similarities and differences across the individual stories. Themes of transition processes, as well as themes of substantive types of change have appeared in the stories. These themes will be described in this section.

As previously discussed in the "data analysis" section, the respondents' stories were viewed from a perspective which considered the gender of the story-teller. The following themes appeared to the researcher when viewed from this perspective: (a) themes representing similarities in the experiences of women's development, and (b) themes representing similarities in the experiences of men's development. These themes will be described and compared in this section.

Descriptions will be presented of some of the insights offered by a few of the respondents, or only certain individuals who have been able to put into words some of the complexities of their change experiences. This increases the understanding of the nature of this intricate experience.

Themes are "meaning units" or "structures of meaning" (p. 78, Van Manen, 1990). Themes represent interpretations of both (a) the understanding of a few words or a few sentences
which were spoken during the interview, and/or (b) the understanding of the meaning of a story or stories told during the interview. In the following descriptions of the themes, the proportion of people who clearly identified the theme can be counted and represented to the reader. For some sections, however, the themes represent impressions of meanings, which cannot be quantified for presentation.

These shared understandings will be considered in terms of relevant research and theory, as, "what is shared in the text begins to find expression in the interpreter's own language" (Gadamer, 1976). The following sections will provide, where possible, an interpretation of this understanding within the language and perspectives of the psychology of divorce, adult development theory and transition theory.

**Process Themes of Development During Divorce**

All of the respondents indicated that they had primarily experienced positive personal changes since the separation, and 6 of them described these changes as being profound, in that the separation had dramatically changed their perceptions of themselves. William's story is an example of the overall process themes. He describes some of the external and internal changes he perceived in the following passage.

I lost 20 pounds jogging and the other 10 was not drinking. My children say, "Daddy, why do you do this?" I say, "well, I'm not the same man I was 7 or 8 years ago. I'm a different person. You know, I
don't love Mommy any more. I still love you guys."

I think of things differently (6, 223- 229)

William became an entirely different person from the time he experienced great unhappiness until after the separation. He also describes himself as having knowledge of his real self, for the first time ever. Ellen also echoes this discovery when she says, "Certainly there have been changes in myself. Probably the best way to describe it is that I finally have a perception of myself." (7, 1). All described personal growth in themselves which they valued. Each one told a story of the many things they had learned and achieved since the separation, and the hard work they had done along this journey.

Four major process themes appeared from the analysis of the interviews. One of these is a theme descriptive of a general transition process, which represents the respondents' experiences of how the development occurred over time. This transition process is characterized by the three stages of (a) opening up, (b) challenges, and (c) maintenance of changes and change process. The three other major process themes which were identified include (a) mechanisms of change, (b) transition outcomes, and (c) timing of transitions. The respondents' descriptions of how self development occurs during the divorce process elaborate a process which has not been adequately specified in previous divorce and transition theory.
Theme I: Transition Process

Although the process of change is complex and was not identical or linear for all the respondents, it seems to be generally represented by the stages of (a) opening up, (b) challenges, and (c) maintenance of changes and change process.

Stage 1: Opening up.

All of the respondents except one described the separation as providing the opportunity for self-assessment and change. Tim's story is an example of how he began questioning himself.

'It really is amazing how I've sort of turned on myself and sort of say, "well okay, well what's going on here." You know, what should I change and maybe things aren't 100%, and you just sort of tootle along, you know, happily, and then all of a sudden the whole world caves in, particularly in my case where, you know, this comes out of the blue.'

The sudden realization that there were problems in the marriage caused Tim to reflect on his life, instead of his usual process of living without reflection. This process of self-assessment is helpful, in that it seems to provide an approach which is hopeful in terms of the formulation of positive changes which can be made in the future.

Five of the respondents said that they were motivated to assess themselves because of the great unhappiness and
depression they experienced after the separation. Toni, an illustrative case, describes this process, "Wondering, why am I like this, why am I the way I am? I was very unhappy, very unhappy." (8, 30). She later said, "I guess reflecting on the failure of that marriage made me see my weaknesses." (8, 110). For many, the unhappiness which was experienced after the separation started a questioning process to discover the source of unhappiness. Toni describes how she initially tended to blame other things and people for her unhappiness but gradually began to look inside herself for problems.

I think at the time I couldn't really take the time to search it thoroughly. It was much easier to blame externally. That's how I see myself at that point, was perhaps trivializing the whole thing in these series of little things that I blamed, when really the problem was largely within me. (8, 31–34)

It seems that it was useful for her to consider how she was responsible for previous problems and unhappiness, as it provided a pathway to constructive changes.

Four of the respondents indicated that they were motivated to assess themselves because they wanted to identify any mistakes they had made in their marriage, and any other failed relationships, so that future relationships would be better. Tim talks of one way he did this. "I've also looked back at other relationships before I was married and said, 'okay, well, is there a pattern there? Well, what
happened and why?" (10, 94-96). It seems that the separation may provide the chance to step back and reflect on what happened and assess who was to blame for the problems so that constructive changes could be made in future relationships. This is what John described when he responded to the interviewer's question of when he had realized that he had gotten married for the wrong reasons. He answered,

Since we've been divorced I think, that I really looked at the whole picture. It's difficult when I was in the midst of it all, to make sense of that part of it. I was busy trying to kind of communicate; trying to keep that part of things working. It was difficult at that time to have a perspective on the whole picture. (5, 161-166)

Even the one respondent, Rae Ann, who did not identify the process of opening up to self assessment, may have had this experience without the metacognitive awareness, because she also talked of figuring out who was to blame for the marriage problems. She said, "Seeing that I was not the cause of my husband's alcoholism helped me immensely, because I really thought I was." (3, 189-190).

Analysis of and reflection about the failed relationship enables the attribution of responsibility for the problems in that relationship. The respondents saw that this can be helpful in that it is reassuring, but it also provides information which can be used to identify areas of personal strengths and weakness. This knowledge could then be utilized
in the development of goals for personal improvement in future interpersonal relationships. Tim describes how this will be helpful in his next marriage.

I don't want to make the same mistake. Matter of fact, I may make other mistakes, but, I won't say I'll have the the perfect marriage, but I'm not going to allow the same things to go on that I allowed in this one. (10, 87-89)

Many of the respondents indicated that the self-assessment had been very extensive in that they had analyzed many different aspects of themselves. As Tim says, "Everything is on the table" (10, 166). All of him is being assessed. Five of the respondents said that after the separation they had gained insights about how their family of origin had influenced their past development and contributed to the current situation. In the following passage, Ellen describes her realization of how her upbringing contributed to not acknowledging her feelings in her marriage. She said, "My feelings were repressed. Well it goes back to childhood, you know, so you don't realize what's happening" (7, 15-18).

Analysis and insights about the influence of the family of origin on previous development seemed to help these respondents to understand the problems in the marriage and provide goals for personal change. Three of the respondents indicated that the separation helped them to realize current unresolved issues in their family of origin, with which they
now had to deal. This has been both beneficial as well as stressful, as Tim describes.

There's a lot of family stuff that was surfacing and swirling about in terms of just family matters that we have done a lot of talking to each other, or certainly more than we did. Well in some ways it's allowed me to, I guess, increase confidence and that sort of thing, but there's also a tremendous amount of confusion. (10-2)

Recognition of family issues clarified some problems for Tim, but it also raises new issues, at a time when he already has to deal with a number of separation issues.

Although this process of self-assessment is helpful and provides an approach to the future which is hopeful, many of the respondents also describe it as tiring. William describes wanting to work towards a better balance of self-analysis and spontaneity.

Yeah there's still a lot of thoughts. I probably do too much thinking. I should probably read some more novels to take my mind off this thing. I think I get very tired because I just overwork my brain trying to analyze too much, trying to think about the problem, rather than just relax and let it flow. (6, 550-552)

The process of self-assessment is valuable, but William has a desire to start living in the present without the constant reflective analysis of the past.
Stage 2: Challenges.

All of the respondents found themselves personally challenged following the separation. Achievement of these challenges provided the opportunity for (a) greater self-knowledge, (b) increasing a sense of competence and self-esteem, and/or (c) an increased repertoire of capabilities.

Many identified challenges in the day to day aspects of life which was, for Scott, doing the laundry, and for Rae Ann managing to shop and 'cook for one person. Some of the day-to-day challenges which were met were actually challenges of survival. Many of the women expressed concerns similar to those identified by Sandy who was uncertain about how she could keep a roof over her head and wondered, "What the food bank's like" (4, 20).

For many, the challenges after separation represented goals they had identified for themselves. In the following transcript, Tim describes how he attempted to achieve a goal of disclosing more personal information while talking with a friend.

So we went out and we ate and we were sitting there for about half an hour and we talked back and forth and stuff, and I'm going have some fun. Not fun, but I'm going to experiment, see what happens. So, we started to talk a little bit more on the personal side and she sort of reciprocated back and forth. (10, 389-390)
This type of experimentation with new behaviour was quite a common experience for the respondents. A couple of the respondents purposely placed themselves in challenging or uncomfortable situations frequently. Ellen describes this process when she says, "Trying to do things differently. Every day I've got to do something a little different. Something I don't ordinarily do and some way that I wouldn't ordinarily do" (7, 59-60). Ellen would then decide whether to integrate or discard these new types of behaviour, depending upon how the experience had been. This process represents hard work and the courage to take risks, which is exemplified in Jane's description of a social function she attended.

I was really feeling insecure that I would have to mix with these people and things. What have I got to talk about, they're all Ph.D.'s. Totally forgetting that I am intelligent even though I don't have a Ph.D.. So I threw myself into the middle of it and it was really hard. (9, 164)

Each attempt to try new behaviour is risky in that there is a chance for failure and/or extreme discomfort in the new situation. Much courage is required to undertake these challenges because, as Jane expressed in the above excerpt, many of the respondents were already experiencing low self-esteem coming out of the separation.

With each challenge, whether it is self-imposed or imposed by circumstances of the separation, many of the respondents described a general process of taking on greater
and greater challenges. Tim, who had only accepted the finality of the separation 5 months before the interview, experienced difficulty risking new behaviours. Scott describes the change in the quality of his personal change over time when he says,

Well there's negative things about me being separated. When you look back, there's less and less. They seem greater at first, and they were strictly feeling sorry for yourself, but you find out you are not helpless and you can do these things. (1, 214-215)

As more challenges are met and overcome, there comes a greater sense of competency, self-knowledge, and abilities which then allow for new "tests", a term used by 3 of the respondents to describe this process. For Jane, the experience of success in each risk would help her to gain the confidence to try other risks. This enabled her to participate in activities and develop a lifestyle which was better suited to her and could provide her with some happiness. Toni describes how trying new behaviour in interpersonal relationships has improved her life in the following excerpt.

I'll reserve my judgement, and in a way, the thing is that your whole world can open up. This is what is happening to me is my world keeps expanding because I'm being more accepting and more tolerant. My world's getting bigger and bigger. (8, 209)
Toni's increased tolerance has widened both her circle of friends and the variety of perspectives they bring with them.

**Stage 3: Maintenance of changes and change process.**

All of the respondents indicated that the processes of change were ongoing, in that they had discovered many insights and made many changes, but still had issues to clarify further and goals to achieve. Toni, who had been separated the longest, has found, "I find that you never stop learning and you never stop growing, so you just value that in itself" (8, 235-236). She finds that, "it's the crises and the problems that I kind of delve into to see, well, what was it, but it's hard reflecting back. I think it is an ongoing thing. Something will trigger a little memory or whatever" (10-2). It seems that as current events remind her of the past, she will re-enter the process of reflection and continue the process of development related to the divorce process. This continual process of development is reflected in many of the respondents' stories of their current processes of change. With time they, too, may be able to objectively describe their process, as Toni has been able to, as she now looks back.

Many described the feeling that the changes were tenuous and that it would be easy to go back to their old ways of being. Sandy emphasizes, in the second interview, how difficult it is for her to maintain the changes she has made since the separation when she says,
I think that what I'm trying to get at is that I'm a little bit wobbly on that, and I think that I was doing a bit of the political, "things were just fine", you know. We're certainly through the worst and on to the better, and handling things fine. I do almost all the time feel like I will handle things, not all the time, but almost all the time I do think I'll handle things, but I wouldn't want to give the impression that it was just kind of an easy thing that you just kind of do and it just happens like that because it's more complicated than that and it's harder than that. (4-2)

This impression of being "wobbly" or on a "slippery surface" (2, 513) with new patterns of behaviour or attitudes led many respondents to identify circumstances which would set them back and strategies for staying on more stable ground.

Half of the respondents described how ongoing problems, such as problems with a job, co-parenting, and finances would bring them back to old attitudes and behaviour patterns. Toni gives an example of experiencing this kind of set-back when she has to deal with her ex-husband in order to discuss the children. She said, "and you know, I sometimes sit there and think, 'here I am, this confident, assertive person in any other situation, and he can crush me like that'! Right back! I think that happens a lot" (8, 455-456). Although the respondents found that they would recognize and solve problems in their lives as part of the change process, issues
which arose out of co-parenting and finances were problems over which they had little control. It seemed to re-introduce the same experience they had had while in their failing marriages; unsolvable problems over which they had little control, because they were only one of the responsible parties involved. On-going problems after the separation seemed to bring feelings of discouragement and helplessness, which would decrease their self-confidence and set them back to previous ways of being.

To avoid having set-backs, Trevor and Ellen both mentioned that they try to think positively so as not to be discouraged by ongoing problems. Tim noticed in the second interview that he felt less positive, as though he was not progressing, and related this to,

I really haven't made you know any sort of bold moves or anything in the last two or three weeks, but you know I think I'm sort of getting on towards that, and certainly you know, looking forward to it in some respects. (10-2)

It may be important to continue the process of risk-taking and challenge to maintain the changes which have been undertaken, and continue the process of development.

These changes may eventually get to a point where they feel normal, natural, and secure in their repertoires of behaviour and attitude. Trevor describes this transition in the following transcript.
For example, the other day, as I said, my sense of humour was coming back. A friend of mine was over, and we phoned someplace to get a pizza. We wanted to order a 15-inch, and for some reason, they couldn't do it. Now, normally I would have come up with you know, well, "if you can't do it, I'll find somebody else that will", or something like that. And the thing, they said they could give me a 12-inch one instead, and ha ha, the thing that came out of my mind two minutes later was "that wouldn't be a pizza, that would be a foot". Ha ha. But then I said, wait a minute, that reaction was spontaneous, and I never had those kinds of instantaneous reactions before. So, the process has gone from sort of consciously trying to be spontaneous, to more subconsciously having it there all the time. It's a great feeling. (2, 520-529)

With hard work and courage, the changes had become less tenuous and purposeful to more stable and effortless.

**Theme II: Mechanisms of Change**

The respondents identified many different resources they had utilized for self-assessment and change. Eight indicated that they had received some type of professional help, which included psychological counselling, group therapy, and psycho-educational groups. Six had read a number of self-help books and 3 had attended courses which provided information
regarding communication or psychology. Two had used writing and journalling to assist with self-reflection.

All of the respondents indicated they had received social support from family and/or friends. Scott found that his friends and relatives provided the following kinds of input which improved his confidence: (a) their affirmation of his decision to separate, (b) reassurances about the future, and (c) positive feedback. Scott relates an example of the kind of affirmation he received, "She says, 'I can certainly tell you that's the smartest thing you ever did'. As I say, these comments are positive, and this is the way a lot of friends were" (1, 179-181). Social support was commonly seen as something which improved the respondents' ability to cope during the separation. The relationship of coping and self development in divorce will be discussed further in the section pertaining to the substantive themes of development, in the subsection titled "Theme II: Coping".

The resources of professional help, reading, courses, writing, and social support provided information which could be utilized for self-assessment. They also provided ideas for new behaviour or ways of thinking. Many of the respondents also described a process of reflection within themselves during this time of transition. Toni tries to capture this process in the following excerpt.

So you know, where I started with values, say, or beliefs, so I have to choose whatever, then I moved to this point. Well in order to move again you've
got to reflect back on that point to move forward. Say well, how did I get to where I am now? (8, 412-413)

Through the process of reflection to understand how she chose certain values and beliefs previously, Toni was able to change her values and beliefs to suit the present better. This process of reflecting back seems to constitute a process of change in and of itself as well as constitute the initiation of a process of goal-setting as discussed in the previous section on opening up.

Toni's story of reflection is very similar to the process of self-empathy which was identified as a process of women's development by Jordan and Surrey (1986). This is a process whereby the observing and judging self makes an understanding contact with objective aspects of the self (recognized aspects of the self) and thereby modifies the self. This process was described in both the men's and women's stories of change.

**Theme III: Transition Outcomes**

The transition process led each of the respondents to become a changed person. All of the respondents became more knowledgeable about themselves and acquired new skills through the divorce process. Toni's story is illustrative of how little she knew about herself before the separation.

I knew I was a very outgoing person and that was really about the only thing I knew about myself, so everything was really very superficial. The whole
of my life was just riding on the crest of a wave,
I never really thought about anything. (8, 10-14)
With the self-assessment she has done since the divorce, Toni
is much more knowledgeable about herself. Toni also
indicates, in the above transcript (8, 10-14), that she has
acquired the skill of self-reflection. Many of the
respondents acquired numerous skills following the separation
which included practical living skills and communication
skills. For many, the outcome of the transition process is
self-improvement.

For four of the respondents the separation has allowed
them to gain self-knowledge to the extent that they have been
able to get, "in touch with the real me" (6, 19). For the
first time in their lives, they have come to have knowledge
of themselves, as Ellen says, "I finally have a perception of
myself" (8,1). For these people, the new found ability to
know their feelings and to act on these feelings has brought
them to a clearer sense of who they are. William gives an
example of this in the following transcript.

This involves this whole process with getting in
touch with the real me, which is still going on.
You know, I'm still not a happy person by any
means, but I face things a lot more honestly now.
This is one of the things I learned, is that you
sit down and listen to your insides and be honest
with yourself. You can't fool your feelings. (6,
19-24)
With increasing self-knowledge, the four respondents seemed to move to a position where they could freely choose their identity rather than continue with an identity previously accepted because of others' expectations. William describes how he used to be.

I think I never really knew what the hell I was doing. I was this perfect little boy, you know, graduated from high school, I was in the band, I played sports, I went to university, I found a course I liked, I worked, I got married. I never sat down and said, "hey, is this what you want to do?" You know why are you doing this? I never asked that question. (6, 26-30)

William has started asking the questions, and has started to make lifestyle choices which better suit his interests, needs and values.

This identity transition to the "real me" is similar to that observed by Josselson (1987) in her study of women's identity development. One of the identity transitions which she observed was the transition from the foreclosure identity status, in which there is a commitment to an identity without a searching phase, to the identity achievement status, in which there is the choice of an identity after a testing of options. William, along with three other female respondents, seems to have moved from the foreclosure identity to identity achievement. For these respondents, the divorce transition has allowed them to find themselves.
For many respondents, there was a regaining of qualities which had been lost during the marriage. Scott describes how he has regained his sense of humour, people have told me that I've developed a sense of humour. I didn't have [one] when they first knew me in Calgary, and I've only been here eleven years. I find out from friends of mine of a few years ago, that I used to be that way. It disappeared, and it has come back. (1, 196-199)

For some respondents, the change resulted in a new person, who could be chosen and named. For others, the change involved improvements, while the basic identity remained the same. As a result of this transition, the new self was one which had (a) been improved, for example acquiring knowledge and skills; (b) found and named, in that there was a newly found sense of identity; and/or (c) regained, with the development of qualities that had been lost during the marriage.

**Theme IV: Timing of Transitions**

All but three of the respondents stated that they were unsure whether the changes they had experienced were attributable to the separation or were the result of the multiple life transitions and experiences they had had during the same time frame. Although many acknowledged the difficulty they had in sorting out which transition came first, and had some confusion about which change could be attributed to which transition, all were clear in their
stories of the transitions they had experienced since the separation.

Trevor describes the interplay of different influences upon his personal development when he says, "The marriage brought on the admission that I needed some help in this area. The separation afterwards gave me more determination to do it; just simply to be able to cope with the failures and what had happened before" (2, 462). Sandy wonders where some of the changes she has experienced have come from when she says, "I'm not sure how much of it is directly related to being married and then divorced, and how much is related to also hitting 40" (4, 6).

It is an impossible task to decide which changes are attributable to which life events. This issue reflects the complexity of people's lives. There are often a number of major events and experiences occurring within the same time frame. The process of divorce does not occur in isolation while other life events are placed on hold. It was a common experience for the respondents and, for John, it contributed to a sense of disorientation with which he also had to deal. He tries to describe this in the following transcript.

I still do have some difficulty with, I think the term that I heard is dissociation. I feel kind of out of sync. with everything. I think a lot of it is there's just so much change in my life. (5, 43-45)
John was separated, made a career change, and had a major accident within two years. Each of these events has contributed to major transitions in his identity and his lifestyle. Although other respondents may not have experienced as many major transitions, all have had to deal with the reality of multiple transitions during the divorce process.

Summary of the Process Themes

For these people, the transition experienced during the divorce tended to be profound and positive in quality. The transition process seemed to be generally represented by the non-linear stages of:

1. A process of opening up, which represented a self-assessment motivated by unhappiness or by an intention to improve future relationships. The self assessment was extensive and may have included the analysis of the individual's family of origin.

2. All were challenged by situations which were self-imposed or imposed by the separation. Many of the challenges represented goals identified through the process of self-assessment. These challenges provided the opportunity for greater self-knowledge, improved self-esteem, and better capabilities. With time, greater challenges tended to be attempted.

3. A continual maintenance of changes and the change process occurred. The changes tended to be
tenuous. There were set-backs if on-going problems were experienced or the challenging process was discontinued.

The respondents utilized professional help, reading, courses, writing, social support, and reflection as resources in the transition process. The transition process led each individual to become a changed person to a different degree. The 'new' person may have made improvements to his or her previous self, found and named the self, and/or regained parts of the self which had been lost. The transitions may have been attributable to multiple life transitions occurring simultaneously with or previous to the divorce transition. Although the respondents found this difficult to sort out, they were clear in their stories of personal change since the separation.

The respondents' stories of the divorce transition do not include a stage during which there is a loss of self, as Weiss (1975) suggested. For many, there was a regaining of parts of self which had previously been lost during the marriage. The respondents did not identify a loss of social definitions or loss of marital roles as part of an identity loss after separation. The emphasis in their stories was not the loss of identity after separation, but more of what they had gained following a marriage characterized by loss.

The self-assessment stage may appear to be a "between selves" period (Weiss, p. 70), because of the way all parts of the self can be opened up for evaluation and change. Even
during this time, however, all respondents were recognizing and naming who they were. Weiss also identifies a process of obsessive review, which involves a pre-occupation with what happened in or might of happened in the former marriage. Obsessive review allows a person to make his or her current identity and current events consistent with each other and allows for the incorporation of the divorce experience into the new self. The respondents in this study also identified a reflective process. This, however, tended to represent a process of change in and of itself, or a mechanism for self-assessment. The self-assessment process then provided information which could be utilized in the formulation of personal goals for change.

Rice and Rice (1986) identified two tasks which are resolved during divorce. These are the resolution of the tasks of communion and separation. The respondents indicated that the tasks or challenges undertaken during divorce tend to be individually defined and are more varied than those suggested by Rice and Rice. The challenges of separation are determined by both the circumstances of separation and the personal goals set during self-assessment. The essence of these challenges will be presented during the next section, which presents the themes of the transitions.
Substantive Themes of Development During Divorce

The respondents experienced varied numbers and types of changes during their divorce transitions. This diversity represents the individuality and unique context each respondent brought to this study. Many respondents identified similar issues that they had struggled with during the separation and had made personal changes as a result of this struggle. The substantive themes of personal development include (a) self-esteem, (b) coping, (c) self in interpersonal relationships, and (d) self-reliance.

Theme I: Self-esteem

Every one of the respondents described having an increase in self-esteem following the separation. Half noted that it was the primary change they had experienced and that it was a very large increase in self-esteem. As Trevor says, "I like myself more. I'm feeling more in a position of personal strength." (2, 414). William also stated, "probably my self-confidence has really gone up in the last 3 or 4 years tremendously" (6, 364-365).

All indicated that they came into the separation with low self-esteem. Four believed that their confidence had always been somewhat low. Four thought the marriage had caused them to lose their self-confidence. Rae Ann describes how she lost confidence in her marriage to an alcoholic husband, "I had no self-confidence while I was with him, cause he called me a stupid son of a bitch and told me I didn't know anything at all, all the time, okay? Particularly
the last 10 years." (3, 666-667). The other 2 respondents explained they had lost their self-confidence through the pre-separation and separation stages. William defined himself as a "failure" (6, 96), because his marriage had ended. Tim lost confidence in his own perceptions, which he describes in the following excerpt,

> When I got married there was no doubt in my mind what I was feeling and I thought there was no doubt in my wife's mind what she was feeling and what I saw. In our discussions going through all that, maybe it wasn't there to the same degree. You start this sort of question: I'm in doubt, and was it really there? (10, 359)

Because the marriage problems and the separation came as such a shock to Tim, he lost confidence in his own ability to accurately perceive what another's feelings were in an intimate relationship. He finds that he asks himself in new relationships, "Do I trust the other person, do I trust my own feelings, my own relationship" (10, 188)?

A number of influences resulted in the growth of self-esteem during separation. Support from friends, family and colleagues helped many of the respondents to feel more confident. As was previously discussed in the section on mechanisms of change, social support can validate the respondent's decisions and value as a person. Starting a new relationship with a member of the other sex also improved the self-confidence of 5 of the respondents. Rae Ann describes
this experience when she says, "I did have a relationship
with one of those men the night before I left town. It made
me think, 'hey I can still do this and I can still feel
good', cause I was attractive enough to him." (3, 183-485).
John also found that while he had tended to date to make up
for a sense of internal inadequacy, he now is able to say, "I
don't need that external kind of support in a sense that I've
found some inner strength in myself now" (5, 25).

The experience of personal achievement also facilitated
a sense of self-worth. Having one particular skill helped
Toni's confidence, as she says, "but while I didn't feel
confident inside, I guess I felt confident with running" (8,
372). With this confidence in her running skills she was able
to join a running club and eventually gain more confidence
with this group of people. Solving practical problems seemed
to contribute to a sense of competency and self-reliance for
7 of the respondents. Toni found that, "When I started making
the big decisions for myself and seeing that I could affect
my life, that made me feel even better. Those are the things
that really built my confidence." (8, 166-167).

Along with a general sense of self-acceptance and
valuing of one's self, some of the respondents found
confidence in certain aspects of themselves. Sandy found that
she liked her femininity more, and felt more confident in
interpersonal relationships. Jane, William, and Toni found
they have more confidence that they know what they feel and
think. William describes this as "confident that my emotions are correct, that my feelings are correct." (8, 156).

**Theme II: Coping**

Although the purpose of this inquiry was not to explore the nature of coping in the divorce transition, it became apparent that the respondents' coping experiences were intricately entwined with changes in self-esteem and self-definition. All of the respondents had some difficulty coping, particularly right after the separation. Ellen expresses how difficult that time was for her when she says, "when the marriage fell apart, I was really devastated. There was only one step past where I was and it would have been to die" (7, 33-34). For John, the time right after the mutual decision to separate was very positive. However, he found it difficult to cope with problems he had with his in-laws, who isolated him within their shared business. For Scott and Trevor the separation was so upsetting at first that they tried to avoid thinking about it. Scott explains, "Well, it put a lot of pressure on you. You tend to ignore it and the best way is to keep busy. If you stop, you tend to let it worry you." (1, 325-327).

The experience of being close to not coping with some aspect of the separation seems to lower self-esteem and lead to a negative definition of self. William states that the separation has contributed to how he defines himself: "I don't picture myself as a success" (6, 92). Sandy experienced a financial set-back after the first interview, and she
describes how this was an example of how her difficulty coping affected her confidence. "I realize that it really scared me to get that close to the line financially, and that I always said that I didn't feel confident, didn't feel like I was going to make it." (4-2). As previously discussed in the section on maintaining changes and change processes, unresolved problems, such as problems with a job, co-parenting, and finances tended to bring the respondents back to old attitudes and behaviour patterns. Inability to cope with ongoing, unresolved problems as well as inability to cope with new issues, can lead to negative self definitions and a lowering of self-esteem throughout the divorce process.

There is also some evidence which indicates that coping ability may be related to how strong of a sense of identity the individual had at the time of the separation. Both Ellen and Toni thought that they had more difficulty coping because they did not have strong knowledge of themselves. Toni describes the differences in her coping experience at the time of separation and her coping experience in a current situation in the following transcript.

If you don't know who you are, you can't deal with what you're feeling. These past 2 weeks have been really trying for me and I know I'm putting a lot of pressure on everyone else because I'm not my bubbly self and I'm tired and introspective. I've said, "I'm sorry I'm this way, but it's because I'm stressed", and I can accept this. T can say it's
not going to last that long, so I have validation from him too. I can express it now. I can say, "I'm feeling this way because, and bear with me". You know that I'm not like this usually, I'm not going to stay this way for long because my past history says, hey, you've been a really happy, go-lucky person for a long time, so that I don't panic about it. I don't feel bad about it. (8, 241-248)

Without a sense of identity, Toni tended to attribute her feelings, such as sadness and anxiety, to personal problems rather than recognizing that her feelings were due to the current situation. Attribution of the feelings to her personal problems added the "bad" feeling of guilt to whatever the external crisis was also making her feel. A strong sense of who she is and how she tends to respond to pressures, contributes to a more realistic attribution of responsibility for the problems, and a sense that the problems will be transient instead of long lasting. This seems to help her cope with situational stresses and maintain her level of self-confidence.

Theme III: Self in Interpersonal Relationships

All of the respondents made changes in how they thought and interacted with others in relationships, primarily with the intention of improving future relationships. As was previously discussed in the section which described the transition process stage of opening up, it was common for the respondents to assess themselves in previous relationships
and set goals for more effective functioning in future relationships. Within the general theme of self in interpersonal relationships, the respondents attended to personal development in the three sub-themes or areas of (a) communication skills, (b) assertiveness, and (c) exploring new relationships.

**Communication skills.**

The respondents identified a variety of newly acquired communication skills or improvements to already existing skills. These skills include (a) better listening, (b) an increased level of self-disclosure earlier in new relationships, (c) the honest disclosure of affect, (d) more openness to negative feedback, and (e) better conflict resolution. William describes the extent to which he has made changes in his behaviour in interpersonal relationships, "I was very much a closed shop. Now I'm sure people think I'm cuckoo, because I let things out more. I mean, I'm far more honest and far more straight forward person." (6, 201-203).

Tim describes how he has made changes in self-disclosure in the following excerpt.

I found myself relating to her a lot differently than I thought I would to somebody that I didn't know. I said, well, that's good because I'm able to sit down, and to tell this woman that I was divorced or 99% divorced (we were essentially divorced), to talk about that relationship, to talk about her relationship, to talk about my
relationships before. That's something I would never have done, or I would have to know the person a lot longer. In one day we covered more ground than I thought I would probably cover in months and months and months. (10, 231-235)

Ellen describes how she has improved her listening skills by trying to be less judgemental, "trying to exercise a little intuition, a little perception. Trying to understand other people's points of view and where they're coming from without it being a judgement call." (7, 46-49). Many described themselves as being more confident now in relationships and being able to be themselves in relationships.

Assertiveness.

All the respondents described an increased ability to be assertive; an ability to express their feelings, thoughts and needs, and an ability to set limits. Three men indicated that the first time in their lives that they had stood up for themselves in an intimate relationship was when they told their spouses that they no longer loved them. Trevor is illustrative when he relates his understanding of telling his wife he did not love her any more, "I think it was the first time I ever stood up for myself, and I knew I was putting a lot on the line when I did that...YAH, the big difference about that was it was the first time I actually stood up for myself" (2, 37-40). This event seemed to be the beginning of assertive behaviour in other relationships as well.
It is unclear why the respondents all indicated they thought it important to be more assertive after the separation or why this was one area they all addressed. John described himself as having given so much in his marriage that he had lost a sense of who he was. Rae Ann and Jane realized after the separation that they deserved better treatment than they had been receiving in the marriage. Tim began to set limits during a time after the separation when he was feeling overwhelmed. William started to be more assertive as a way to be more happy. It would seem that there may be many starting points for the development of assertiveness following separation.

In the interpretive account of William, a process of his development of assertive behaviour was identified, as follows.

I think that a summary of these changes you experienced may be: (a) increasing your awareness of your feelings; (b) becoming knowledgeable of the origins of these feelings; (c) recognition of the importance of listening to your feelings; (d) acting upon the feelings, for example being assertive; (e) feeling a sense of accomplishment.

(revised interpretive account: #6)

Others identified the importance of how they have come to be able to be aware of their feelings and being able to act on these feelings in relationships, as Sandy says, "When you get that feeling that something's going wrong, being willing to
say 'just exactly what did you mean by that'" (4, 556). She goes on to describe an incident when her boyfriend forgot a date and left flowers to apologize.

Before I had just kind of gone, "Oh gee, the poor guy's so busy". I made excuses for them. I felt that I always had to be understanding and that kind of stuff. Now he called and said, "Did I get the flowers?" I said, "yeah, it's not good enough", and hung up. He was really fun and I like how he looks, but I don't need that. I really don't need that. I've had enough in my life of the little picking away. I have no tolerance for it at all and no fear about [saying], "Fine if I don't want to be picked away at, I don't want to be with you". It took me a long time to really believe that, and [now] I really do [say] it. Even if it had been a good marriage for me, I don't know if I would have understood that. (4, 389-399)

Sandy's feelings of decreased tolerance for receiving poor treatment represent the beginnings of being able to be assertive about how she does and does not want to be treated in relationships.

Although the development of assertiveness has different starting points, it seems directly related to the growth of self-esteem following the separation. Recognition of one's value and the right to be heard, respected and/or be happy is intrinsic to assertiveness. This involves the confidence to
trust one's feelings and act on them, as exemplified in William's process above, and the confidence to risk the loss of a relationship, as Toni talks of in the following transcript.

I have become very good at confrontation. I would never have raised anything. I would have raised things that were bothering me perhaps but wouldn't directly jeopardize the relationship. Now I will. I will because I sit and I think about it and I think, well, why should I be eaten alive by my problems. If I don't deal with it it's going to come up again and it may be worse, and what's the worse thing that can happen. If the relationship ended because of this then it's not very strong.

(8, 311-314)

There is strength in Toni to survive the loss of a relationship that is going to cause her problems; a strength which allows her to be assertive about problems rather than tolerate the unhappiness.

Some of the respondents describe how they are still refining their new found assertiveness. For William it is finding a way to be less offensive and more tactful. For Rae Ann and Sandy, it is still finding a balance between giving to others and giving to themselves.
Exploring new relationships.

At the time of the interviews, 4 of the respondents were dating and 2 were in on-going relationships with someone. Two were planning to start to date and were trying to discover how they could meet people with whom they had something in common. None of the respondents had re-married.

All of the respondents expressed the desire to become involved in the future in another committed relationship. Except for Jane, they all are starting to explore how they can develop a positive relationship. Jane, however, has decided that she will put the issue of how she relates to men in intimate relationships on hold for awhile because, "it frightens me to think of new relationships and meeting new men, and wondering am I going to be aware enough to see things, to see danger signals?" (9, 131).

Others expressed a similar sense of the fear and risk involved in pursuing new relationships. As Tim says, "It scares the hell out of me" (10, 155). He struggles with trust issues.

Trust is the big word. Do I, do I trust the other person, do I trust my own feelings, my own relationship? Like, I've met a number of, well a few people, I should say, over the last couple of months where I'd be saying, "yeah, okay I wouldn't mind going out with that person", but I haven't asked anybody out yet. That's gonna be a big step because it's the fear of rejection. (10, 188-190)
Trust in new relationships seems to involve both trust of the other person as well as trust in one's own feelings and perceptions about the new relationships. The latter kind of trust involves being able to recognize one's feelings and the origin of those feelings. An example of this is knowing whether a feeling of attraction to someone is real or comes from feeling lonely. William also gives an example of not being able to trust his feelings in new relationships when he says,

I was trying to figure out where these ladies fit in, and this whole business of sex and female friends. I mean, you know, you can get it all mixed up. The whole thing being generated because I am sexually attracted to these women, or is it because I like them? (6, 448-450)

Another kind of trust of one's self is described by Ellen when she says, "Even though by nature I don't think I'm a passive person, but somehow, in a [male-female relationship] my assertiveness kind of gets undermined" (7, 240-242). Ellen is unable to trust that the changes she has made in self-assertiveness can be maintained in a male-female relationship, in which she is more vulnerable to put the man's needs before her own. Similarly, Sandy has found that she can be more trusting in relationships because of the trust she has in her communication skills, which allow her to deal with any problems that may arise.
Three of the respondents had discovered that it was possible to have a friendship with a member of the opposite sex without being sexually involved, and were realizing that this kind of relationship may provide the basis for a more intimate and positive relationship. After dating a number of women, John describes what he has come to believe is important in the next relationship, "that those shared values, and shared concerns, and concern for one another is much more important to me than lust, and steam, and all that stuff" (5, 205-206).

New relationships tended to be seen as something that would add pleasure to the respondents' lives, but as not being really necessary. John initially dated out of some kind of need, but has come to realize that, "I've found I don't need that external kind of support. I've found some inner strength in myself, right now, being able to be happy" (5, 25). Ellen also expresses a willingness to become involved with someone, but a contentment to be on her own for now when she says, "and it's best for me to meet somebody who matches me in some of those ways, then it's fine. I don't need anybody. Things are fine the way they are" (7, 320-321).

Theme IV: Self-Reliance

Seven of the respondents described how they felt more self-reliant after the separation. Self-reliance involves realizing that "you are quite capable of learning by yourself" (1, 409). and that "I answer to me now. I don't answer to him" (3, 742). In the previous introduction of
Ellen, examples of her experience of self-reliance were given. She said, "like this is my show, and I have nobody else to blame anything on other than the director. That's me. So I better, you know, do the best I can here" (7, 61-63). Self-reliance after separation is comprised of a better understanding of responsibility, better decision making, and being more in charge.

A better understanding of personal responsibility was expressed by 6 of the respondents. Toni expresses her sense of responsibility as,

Well, I think the thing about being kind of self-responsible is that you have the power then to change things, if you so wish. If things go wrong, you can say, "well it went wrong because of this and this, and now I'll do this." Whereas, if you blame someone outside, well you could go on blaming that person ad infinitum and never make a change for yourself. (8, 155)

Responsibility seems to be accepted as totally one's own without the presence of a spouse who can be blamed or expected to share in that responsibility. Many of the women described a profound recognition of their responsibility in all aspects of their lives. This will be discussed further in a discussion of gender differences. Six of the respondents realized that they could give up some of the responsibility for certain problems. Jane expresses the experience of, "more in charge and yet, at the same time, not in charge. It's a
wonderful thing, you can let go and I trust" (9, 151-152).

Some were able to give some responsibility for problems to higher powers, rather than to try to accept total responsibility for everything. Others were able to accept less responsibility for how successful relationships were, giving some responsibility to the other participants in the relationship. John describes the latter change in himself as,

> I think that awareness, that emerging awareness that it wasn't my responsibility and it wasn't my fault. I was very dutiful and very devoted and done all that I could do, in retrospect, to make it work. It was okay to let it go. (5, 355-357)

John has continued to let other people have some of the responsibility for the outcome of relationships, and has found this to be a great relief. The understanding of responsibility gained through separation involves both the acceptance of personal responsibility, and the recognition of the limits for what one can and cannot be responsible.

Part of self-reliance for some of the respondents is to assess problems and make decisions on their own. Scott made the decision to stop smoking, which contributed to a greater feeling of independence. Trevor decided to start smoking, which came out of the realization that he could make his own decisions without consulting with his wife. Ellen found it easier to problem solve and make decisions because, "mind it's easy to do for just one person. Having to make decisions as a couple, that's a whole other arrangement to negotiate
and communicate. That's probably a challenge for the future" (7, 223-224). The challenge for many was accepting the responsibility to make decisions on their own, and finding that they could successfully solve problems. This led to feeling increasingly self-reliant. For some, decision making was easier outside of the context of a problematic marriage.

**Summary of the Substantive Themes of Development**

Following the separation, the respondents experienced an increase of self-esteem. Their self-esteem had been low coming into the separation for different reasons, including the marriage, the separation experience, and a life-long experience of low self-esteem. A sense of self worth was facilitated after the separation by receiving social support and having personal achievements. There tended to be a general increase of self-esteem as well as a gaining of confidence in certain aspects of themselves. Rice and Rice (1986) suggested that there is generally a short term loss of self-esteem initially, after divorce which is due to role loss and object loss (one feels unlovable and incapable of intimacy). Most of the respondents described an overall increase in self-esteem after separation. Some did experience a lack of confidence in their ability to have a future intimate relationship, even though their overall self-esteem was higher. It would seem that the development of self-esteem after separation was more complex and individualized for these respondents than that suggested by Rice and Rice.
The respondents' difficulty with coping after separation was related to changes in self-esteem and self-definition. Poor coping tended to lower self-esteem and lead to a negative definition of self. Those who had a weak sense of identity at the time of separation described having more difficulty coping.

All the respondents made changes in how they think and act in interpersonal relationships in the following areas:

1. Communication skills, such as listening, self disclosure, receiving feedback, and conflict resolution, were improved upon or developed.
2. An improved ability to be assertive, which seems related to the concomitant increase in self-esteem. Many different reasons for improving this ability were identified. Some identified the process of identifying and acting on feelings as the process of developing assertiveness.
3. All intended to become involved in another committed relationship, and most were exploring how they could develop this new relationship. Many were developing trust in: (a) others; (b) their own feelings and perceptions of new relationships; and (c) trust that the changes, which they had made in interpersonal skills, would be maintained. Some had discovered that friendship provided a basis for successful relationships. Many saw the next
relationship as complementing their lives, but unnecessary for their happiness.

Many of the respondents identified an increase in self-reliance, which involved a better understanding of responsibility, better decision making, and a feeling of being more in charge. A better understanding of responsibility was described by some as both the acceptance of personal responsibility and the recognition of the limits for what one can be responsible.

Themes of Gender Differences

The complexities and variety of personal change due the unique context of the individual, the marriage, and the separation make it difficult to identify regularities related to variables such as gender. Stories of general experiences and changes do not provide specific information about the substance and process of change for each gender. Similarities in the nature and process of self development for men and women during divorce were described in previous sections. Analysis of the data with a view guided by possible conceptualizations of gender differences gained from previous research and theory does give impressions of possible gender-related differences in the experience of self development in divorce.
Three features of development during divorce stand out in the women's stories: (a) the importance of self-reliance, (b) coping and self-definition, and (c) nurturing one's self.

**The importance of self-reliance.**

All of the women respondents emphasized the challenge of becoming self-reliant following the separation. Sandy describes the importance of self-reliance right after the separation as, "at the time it was, 'I have to do it completely alone', and not being really ready emotionally or even knowing how to do that" (4, 201). Rae Ann also emphasized how she purposely made efforts to be self-reliant after the separation and not rely on her son for help. She said,

C had a way of getting around. I made my own. I ride the bus and L.R.T. I didn't rely on C unless he went to get groceries, because the groceries I was buying were for the kid. I did not rely on that little boy to take me anywhere. (3, 372-375)

As previously mentioned in the section on self-reliance, many of the women felt a deep level of responsibility in all aspects of their lives after the separation. Ellen did not think she just let others be responsible for her before the separation. She thought that the internalized knowledge of the meaning of responsibility was absent. Toni talks about responsibility and the importance of self-reliance in the following passage.
You've got to take responsibility of yourself and be thoroughly independent. And it's, I mean it's scary because number one you're socialized to believe that this person's going to look after you. And then, then it's really hard to see that all the skills you had before you were married because I was perfectly capable. You've lost them along the way by this being cared for business which is a lot of nonsense. (8, 173-175)

She relates the problem with responsibility and the importance of self-reliance to the socialization experience of women. Rae Ann also describes her experience of not being given responsibility in banking procedures during her marriage. She said,

I would go down to the bank and sign on the dotted line, and it's none of my business. "You don't understand this sort of thing". I was treated like an idiot. Because I was treated like one, I felt like one, and I didn't ask the questions. I wish more women would take hold and say, "listen, I've got brains, you know". (3, 435-439)

At that time, Rae Ann could not conceive herself as asking those questions, as she now does.

This transition to self-reliance and an internalized knowledge of responsibility, seem similar to the transition to subjective knowing, which was identified by Belenky et al. (1986). This is knowledge which is personal, coming from
within, as opposed to knowledge coming from authorities. Subjective knowing is listening to an inner voice or feeling for the truth. Jane describes a similar change in that she "listens to my gut now" (9, 93) and she "just instinctively know what feels right" (9, 95). These women all value their increasing self-reliance and emphasize how important it now is to achieve independence. They seem to have personalized this knowledge internally during the divorce transition. Sandy describes the difference between her experience of received knowledge and of subjective knowing in the following excerpt.

I think that I'm of the kind, and strangely to me, from the way I was brought up, of an outlook that I really do think that until the divorce, and the time I was really on my own, that really somewhere inside I really thought that my life would be made okay, safe, by a man. I never would have said that out loud at the time. I was just disgusted by women that act like that you know. But I really do think that that was very much part of me and I think that if it wasn't part of me that I would've been a lot more together about university education, and about career paths, and about goal setting and all kinds of things like that, if I didn't somehow have some belief that somebody was going to take care of me, you know. If I was truly seeing that I will be taking care of myself, then I would've been doing
things about that. So I think that that's the first
time I really went, "I am taking care of myself".
While I may get a little excessive of about it,
sometimes, I think in a lot of ways that's really
only realistic because I think that that really,
truly will be the situation. (4-2)
Sandy always had knowledge that she should care for herself,
but this only had a subjective truth for her after the separation.
The women respondents' realizations of self-reliance
during divorce are similar to the descriptions of the stories
of women interviewed by Hancock (1985), in her research on
the nature of major turning points in women's lives. Hancock
found that the women had experienced a crisis in a
significant relationship which caused them to realize that
"they had pictured themselves happily embedded in enduring
relationships. With these images shattered, they began to
realize that investing in relationships without articulating
a sense of self could not insure against change, damage, or
loss" (p. 278). These women then experienced positive
development if they could gain personal autonomy and shape
their lives. The women in Hancock's study placed a similar
emphasis on the development of self-reliance during their
developmental transition, as did the women respondents during
the divorce transition.
Two women described having some confusion about how to
balance self-reliance and accepting support from friends.
Jane described herself as dependent on her husband, and now she is "not wanting to be too dependent on anyone, and that's good but I don't want to carry it too far." (9-2). Sandy finds that,

while I really do believe that while friends are terribly important and close friends are terribly important, I think that it is really important just to handle it. Period, yourself. Included in that part of handling, knowing when to go to your friends. (4-2)

She learned about when to go to friends later in the separation. She found that, "what has happened through the course [of separation] is that I have gotten better about saying, 'I don't have to be completely independent'" (4, 199). The initial confusion about relying on self and relying on others may come out of an acceptance of a societal definition of independence and maturity, and, for Sandy, her self expectations as a feminist, that is, someone she defined as self sufficient and strong. Facing the challenge of becoming truly self-reliant encompassed a balancing of doing it yourself and accepting help from others for these respondents.

Coping and self-definition.

All except 1 of the women respondents expressed worry and concerns about their financial situation following the separation, and these concerns were ongoing. Three of the men mentioned concerns regarding limited finances, but these were
minor concerns such as not being able to participate in as many leisure activities as they usually did. Women's financial limitations were more severe, as it was common to hear worries about, "keeping a roof over my head" (3, 159). The financial problems continued for these women. Toni struggled with financial problems 6 years after the separation. These results support the findings of previous research (Arendell, 1986; Doherty, Su & Needle, 1989), which reported the substantial drop in income that women experience after separation.

As discussed in the section on coping, each time a financial problem recurred, their confidence was undermined and they felt as though they had lost the positive changes they had achieved since the separation. Sandy said, "I realise that it really scared me to get that close to the line financially, and that I always said that I didn't feel confident, didn't feel like I was going to make it" (4-2).

For women this seemed to occur more than for men. Although previous research (Arendell, 1986; L'Hommedieu, 1984) has found that women who have economic difficulties also experience less personal growth, the women of this study tended to experience profound growth even with financial problems. The problems did lower their self-confidence and tended to make them feel that they were losing gains which had been made. However, they would recover, and the experience of personal development was enduring, despite the experience of occasionally losing ground.
Sandy relates her present problems with finances to her previous lack of internalized knowledge about having to look after herself. She said, "Well, how can we carry a blanket in our trunk for winter survival, yet never do the other stuff?" (4–2). As her marriage has "gone into the ditch"; she realizes she does not have the skills or the plans to survive. This has made her and the other women more susceptible to financial problems which undermine their progressive development after the separation.

Nurturing one's self.

Three of the women mentioned that they had made a conscious decision to nurture themselves after the separation. Ellen said,

I'm trying to be nicer to myself. Treating myself, not driving myself so much. It's just doing things that I like. Playing music I like, resting. "No I'm not going to go down and do that last load of laundry, I don't feel like it", kind of thing. It can wait. Taking time out with the kids, you know, trying to do more with that instead of being so consumed you know, doing things in the house. So, usually by the end of the week when I have the kids, things are a mess, but, that's okay. (7, 67–73)

Giving to themselves is something these women do not usually do. They seem to have made a transition to recognizing that it is all right to care for one's self. Jane describes, in
the following excerpt, how she started to look after herself as a way to cope with the preparations for her move.

I frequently will beat myself up over something, you know, being a perfectionist and really pushing myself. So this is a learning experience for me, just getting ready, and just knowing that I have to take care of myself. I can't beat myself up. I have to be good to me. (9, 191-194)

To be able to cope with the preparation for her move abroad, Jane was forced to nurture herself.

These women's stories of how they came to be self-nurturing support the theory of women's development of an ethic of care, which was proposed by Gilligan (1982a). She suggested that women start to care for themselves during crises, out of a need for survival. They eventually develop an interdependence of care for self and care for others. Rae Ann describes how she came to give more to herself, but continues to try to find a balance of giving and receiving in the interview. She said, "Look it, my life stunk. I'm a giver not a taker, and I give too much." (3, 492-493). When the interviewer suggested that it sounded as though she has started to give to herself more since moving to the city, she responds, "Yeah, but I'm not giving enough. I'm not satisfied. Like I say, I'm in a job right now where I don't give." (3, 494-495). After giving more to herself, Rae Ann is trying to find a better balance of giving to others as well as herself.
The Men

The male respondents did not suggest that self-reliance was a major challenge for them during divorce. With the exception of 1 man, the achievement of intimacy in relationships after the separation was a common challenge.

Intimacy in relationships.

For 4 men, part of their development after divorce involved coming to a better understanding of intimacy in relationships and developing skills which would help them achieve intimacy in relationships. Two of these men told the interviewer that an indication of how much more open they are in relationships is evidenced by their participation in this research. Prior to the separation, they would not have been willing to self disclose on such a personal level to anyone.

Tim describes how he tended to relate to others prior to the separation when he says, "In a lot of ways, I tended not to let people get that close. I put up a lot of barriers" (10,125-126). William describes himself, before the separation, in a similar way, "I was very much a closed shop" (6, 201). Three of these men indicated that the field of interpersonal relationships was new to them before the separation. William explains how it was an area of weakness for him, "because I didn't know how to think about this stuff. I mean if you give me a science problem, I'll solve it. Give me a social problem, and I'll fall all over my face" (6, 207-210). These men had been unprepared for interpersonal
issues and this may be related to their lack of knowledge about the achievement of intimacy in relationships.

With the separation, these men tried new skills to attain greater intimacy in relationships. William describes how he tried to increase his level of self disclosure,

The fact that you can get some of this stuff out to your friends, you can get it out of yourself, and that's more important. What do we call it? Listening post, when somebody's going to listen, that's not going to be judgemental; say whatever you want. I've even looked at my life and I said, "I don't have anybody like that, I'm going to try this". (6, 492-497)

William is now able to say, "I'm much more open with people, much more straight forward" (6, 205). These men have evaluated the level of intimacy that is in romantic relationships with women, and have come to value greater emotional intimacy based upon a friendship and mutual interests. After struggling with the issue of what constitutes a positive relationship with a women, John is coming to believe, "that those shared values and shared concerns, and concern for one another is much more important to me than lust and steam and stuff" (5, 204-205). He is thinking that an emotional intimacy, one which is, "an intimacy that I didn't really enjoy in a lot of ways in my marriage in terms of being able to be very, very honest" (5,
61-62), may be a better basis from which a more satisfying relationship with a woman can be established.

The separation opened these men to the realm of interpersonal relationships, which had been outside of their awareness. They learned the skills to establish greater intimacy in relationships and are starting to value intimacy as a criteria for future romantic relationships. It would seem that this emphasis on intimacy may be related to the emphasis in male development on the processes of separation and individuation, which was reported by Gilligan (1982a) and Bergman (1991). The issue of self-reliance is not as relevant due to the emphasis in their previous development on separation and individuation. During the life crisis of divorce, these men have become aware through their self assessment that they are relatively unknowledgeable about the area of intimacy and connection in interpersonal relationships. This then has become an area that they have focused on for self improvement.

Contrary to the stage models of development which suggest that relationships are not influential enough for men to significantly alter their development (Erikson, 1968, 1982; Levinson, 1978), the men participating in this study reported significant developmental changes following divorce. Although some of the men experienced other stresses, including employment problems, they clearly attributed aspects of self assessment and change to the process of change in their interpersonal relationships.
Gender Comparisons

It would seem that the challenges for some men and women in divorce are partially influenced by previous development. The resolution of the masculine-feminine polarity, which was suggested by Levinson (1978), seemed to be addressed during divorce. Levinson proposed that, during the mid-life transition, there tends to be the development of one's opposite gender characteristics. During divorce, the women, who have knowledge and skills for intimacy and connection in relationships, address the issue of self-reliance and subjective knowledge. Some of the men in divorce, who have knowledge of separation and individuation, focused on the development of intimacy and connection in relationships.

Both the men and the women described how they received social support during the time after the separation. It is unclear from the interviews whether the amount or quality of social support varied for men and women. One can speculate that the quality of social support may vary, considering the concerns men had about their capability for intimacy in relationships. However, without more specific descriptions of the exact nature of the social support, it is difficult to draw any conclusions, or to answer questions about whether the context of self development occurred in intimate relationships for the women, as suggested, by self-in-relation theory (Jordan & Surrey, 1986; Surrey, 1983).

It is also difficult to infer from this study whether there are any gender differences in the magnitude of
development during divorce. The participants have been separated for different lengths of time, ranging from 1 year to 6 years and 2 months. They also seem to be at varying stages of the divorce process, represented by Tim, who has only accepted the finality of his separation in the last 5 months, to Toni, who is legally divorced and has committed herself to a new relationship.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this inquiry was to explore the phenomenon of self development as experienced by divorcing adults. The stories shared by the participants in this study have added some clarity and depth to the understanding of the process and nature of development during the process of divorce, for these men and women. The insights offered by the respondents will be summarized in terms of previous research and theory within the psychology of divorce, and adult development and transition theory. Suggestions will also be given for further research that may help to answer questions which were left unanswered by this study.

Self Development in Divorce

The life cycle perspective of divorce considers the quality of divorce adjustment as being determined by many variables including the individual, the stage of the divorce process, the stage of the individual's life cycle, the family stage of divorce, the type of family, the stage of the family, and society (Ahrons & Rogers, 1987; Kaslow & Schwartz, 1987; Rice & Rice, 1986). The respondents' descriptions of self development during the separation and divorce process provide an understanding of the great amount of complexity involved, which is comparable to the complexity of post-divorce adjustment conceptualized by the life cycle perspective of divorce. The nature of development was highly individualized for the respondents and related to many
factors such as the individual's background, family of origin, and the quality of the marital relationship. This study indicated that the types of changes the respondents' experienced tended to be influenced by the divorce situation or the individual's goals. Although there was great diversity, the experienced changes tended to fall within the categories of self-esteem, coping, relationship issues, assertiveness and self-reliance. These changes were essentially positive, although the transition journey was fraught with risks, fears, and hard work.

Rice and Rice (1986) suggest that the key developmental task of separation in divorce can be utilized to achieve differentiation of self and a sense of identity. A similar achievement was described by many of the respondents, and they were able to elaborate the processes involved. Following the separation, the respondents experienced greater self knowledge and gained the ability to choose and describe their identities. This was achieved through the processes of self-assessment and trying new behaviour or ways of thinking. Many resources were utilized by the respondents during these processes, such as reading, social support and professional help.

The transition process for the respondents tended to be complex, non-linear, and characterized by individual differences. The transition process was comprised of the stages of opening up, challenges, and the maintenance of change and the change process. This process has some
similarities to the characteristics of the psycho-social transition Reinke, Holmes, and Harris (1985) observed in their study of women who experienced a psycho-social transition between the ages of 27 and 30. They observed that this transition consisted of an initial personal disruption, during which the women reassessed their lives and sought unknown changes. The middle phase reflected a focus on self development, during which aims were altered and the women sought things for themselves. The final phase involved a closure on the transitions with a new sense of well being. This transition process evolved with time, over a three year period. The transition process which was identified by Reinke et al. (1985) has marked similarities to the one experienced by the respondents during divorce. Although the time frame during which the transition occurred was different, the similarities suggest that their experiences of the divorce transition process may be similar to the experiences of others' life transitions.

The transition process did not include a stage during which there is a loss of self as was suggested by Weiss (1975). The transition process was characterized by gains in self-definition, following marriages which often caused the respondents to lose parts of their identities. After the separation, each respondent made improvements to his or her self, found and named the self, and/or regained parts of the self which had been lost.
The magnitude of change that is experienced during divorce can be ascertained through either focusing on the end-product of the transition process or considering the process utilized to achieve change. Wallerstein (1986) identified the following as indicators of the extent of personal change during divorce (a) self concept coherence and effectiveness, (b) quality and emotional depth of relationships, (c) capacity for sustained commitment to goals, (d) resolution of divorce issues, (e) improved reality judgements. These indicators of change represent the end products of the transition process. Josselson (1987) suggests a process oriented definition of the indicators of growth, which focuses on the direction of change, rather than the final change state. She identifies growth as consisting of (a) increased internalization, (b) a better ability to stand alone, (c) the ability to set individual goals, (d) an awareness of who one is, and (e) increased self exploration.

The use of process as indicators of magnitude of change, would seem more appropriate for this study, as there was variation between the respondents with regard to the length of time separated and how far along the transition process they had come, in terms of negotiating legal, financial, and other practical issues. From the men's stories of their experience of change, it would also seem appropriate to include another indicator of growth, which is the increased ability to achieve intimacy in relationships. In consideration of these indicators of growth and the
respondents' stories of the process and nature of the transition, one can conclude that all of the respondents were experiencing profound growth during the divorce transition.

The respondents did not report role changes as having a major influence on their self-definition. Maury and Brandwein (1984) observed that women's role changes during divorce are a major influence on self-definition, particularly when the women are not involved in roles other than the marital role. The women respondents did not attribute the magnitude of personal change to loss of the marital role or the addition of roles outside the home. This may have been because they were all involved in multiple work and family roles while married. Their experiences may be similar to that of many other women in Canadian society today, in that female labour force participation rates have increased to over 50%, during the last 20 years (Gee & Kimball, 1987).

Divorce is a major life transition, during which the respondents dealt with many of the transition themes outlined by Schlossberg (1981, 1984). Schlossberg identified six general themes which may be dealt with during transitions such as divorce. These respondents seemed to deal with four of these themes during the divorce transition, (a) identity, (b) the formation of mutual relationships, (c) autonomy and a sense of control, and (d) competence. The respondents' did not deal with the other two themes identified by Schlossberg. These themes were (a) generativity, which refers to the process of renewal in work and relationships, and (b)
belonging, which refers to the sense of belonging instead of being marginal. Schlossberg suggested that transitions tend to be characterized by one of these themes. Divorce, represented a major transition for these respondents in that it was characterized by having to deal with so many themes.

The respondents elaborated the nature of change in self-definition which was identified by transition theory and divorce theory. They provided a detailed understanding of the process and nature of this transition, for women and men.

Gender and Development in Divorce

The respondents indicated that a relationship crisis, such as divorce, did have a profound influence upon both men's and women's development. While some of the similarities in development during divorce have been outlined in the discussion of the nature and process of transition, some gender differences were observed.

The women respondents emphasized the challenge of becoming self-reliant. The women respondents' realizations of self-reliance during divorce are similar to the descriptions of the stories of women interviewed by Hancock (1985), in her research on the nature of major turning points in women's lives.

They also described a profound change in their understanding of personal responsibility. This transition was similar to the transition to subjective knowing, which was observed by Belenky et al. (1986) in their research on women's development of epistemological perspectives. Some of
the female respondents described the development of a personal knowledge of responsibility which came from within. There was also support for Gilligan's (1982a) theory of women's development, in that some of the women described the development of an interdependence of care for self and others which came out of a need for survival. Josselson (1987) also observed that women's relationship breakups caused the women to nurture themselves and structure their time more. A similar transition was described by the respondents as becoming increasingly self-nurturing, and looking for a balance of giving and receiving in their lives.

Some women struggled with finding a balance between accepting support and being totally self-reliant. This seemed to come out of a confusion about the meaning of independence as a woman in society today, as was suggested by Conarton and Silverman (1988). It also may represent the resolution of the conflict between the value of autonomy and the value of connection.

The women's financial limitations were more severe following separation than those experienced by the men. With each recurring financial problem, came the experience of a 'set-back' in the positive changes which had been made since the separation. Although women experienced profound personal development overall, at times they felt their progress was being undermined. This difficulty with financial security following the separation, was related to their lack of
internalized knowledge of having to look after themselves while married.

The men in this study reported significant developmental changes during divorce. This contradicts the suggestions of the stage models (Erikson, 1968, 1982; Levinson, 1978) of development which suggest that relationships are not influential enough for men to significantly alter their development.

Men tended to emphasize the challenge of achieving intimacy in relationships. These respondents' stories support Bergman's (1991) observation that men tend to develop without the knowledge of how to attain connection and empathy in relationships. The respondents' development of new knowledge and skills which helped them to attain more intimacy in relationships, suggests that divorce provides a crisis of the type identified by Bergman, which stimulates the potential for growth. Divorce was a crisis that made these men more receptive to addressing the development of themselves in relationships.

Women tended to emphasize the challenge of becoming self-reliant following the separation, whereas men tended to emphasize the challenge of gaining intimacy in future relationships. Divorce seemed to provide the opportunity to develop characteristics which, as Gilligan (1982a) suggests, had not previously been addressed due to society's emphasis on the development of intimacy and connectedness in women and the development of separation and individuation in men. This
is similar to the resolution of the masculine-feminine polarity, which Levinson (1978) observed to occur during the mid-life transition.

It has been suggested in previous divorce theory and research, that the goal of self development in divorce is that of greater autonomy (Rice & Rice, 1986; Weiss, 1975). The developmental goal of greater autonomy has been criticized as reflecting the societal emphasis on independence and self sufficiency, rather than the goals of connectedness, interdependency and mutual caring (Miller, 1986; Gilligan, 1982a). The respondents indicated the importance of maintaining relationships with people who provided them with social support after the separation. Social support improved self-esteem and was a source of information for self assessment and change in the process of development. Many respondents identified the common experience of greater self-reliance following separation, but they also commonly experienced improvements in interpersonal relationships, which included greater intimacy. For some of the male and female respondents, development following separation involved the process and goal of connection with others rather than only the goal of autonomy.

Previous research has provided contradictory results with regard to whether men or women experience a greater magnitude of change during divorce. The self development experienced may be characterized by a different kind of change for men and women rather than more or less of one kind
of change. It is not the magnitude of change but it is the emphasis on either self-reliance or intimacy in the quality of change that is notable in this study. This may not have been obvious in previous research which has focused primarily on women, and not men in divorce.

Questions Left Unanswered

Although this study answers many questions about the process and nature of adult development during divorce, some questions remain unanswered. The relative magnitude of personal change during divorce for different groups of people, such as men and women or different age groups, is difficult to ascertain from this study. This is due to the complexity of each respondent's particular situation. It is also difficult to quantify whether a respondent's experience of change is quantitatively greater than another's, due to subtle differences in the words they use and the differences in meaning they may intend to convey by these words. Although there may be more changes described by one individual, the sum of these changes may be less than one important change for another person, and this importance may be difficult to convey precisely.

The results of this inquiry have illuminated the nature of men's development during divorce, to a limited extent. Further research with a larger group of men would clarify the nature and process of men's development during this major life transition, and may provide further insights with regard to the relationship of gender to adult development.
It is also difficult to understand, from this study, the role of intimate relationships in the process of self-definition and how this relates to gender differences. Knowledge of intimacy in relationships involves an in-depth understanding of the quality and amount of social support the individual receives. This kind of specific information was not disclosed during the respondents' general description of development during divorce. A more specific question regarding the nature and quality of social support in future research would facilitate the understanding of this issue.

More specific questions asking respondents to describe any changes they perceived in their sense of personal responsibility during divorce may help to further clarify the nature of transitions of self as related to epistemological development. According to the epistemological perspectives identified by Belenky et al. (1986), some women in this study seemed to make the transition from a position of received knowledge to subjective knowledge, in terms of their knowledge of responsibility. The type of self assessment they were engaged in, also suggests that they may eventually be moving to a position of constructed knowledge. Belenky et al. describe this position as the integration, through a process of self analysis, of what is known intuitively with what is known from others. More specific dialogues about the nature of this transition in future research, may provide additional support for this theory of epistemological and self development.
Research into the phenomenon of the major life transition of divorce has the potential to provide a better understanding of many dimensions of the experience of self development and the divorce process. Future research which utilizes more specific questions or probes with specific groups of individuals, will allow for better descriptions, and provide some answers to questions which remain unanswered or have yet to be asked about the process and nature of self development during the process of divorce.
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APPENDIX A

Information Sheet

Age: ___ less than 20  ___ 51-60
    ___ 21-30  ___ 61-70
    ___ 31-40  ___ 71-80
    ___ 41-50  ___ over 81

Education (indicate highest level attained):

    Grade 9-11 ___
    Grade 12 ___
    Post-Secondary diploma or certificate ___
    University degree ___
    Post-Graduate degree ___

Present Employment:

____________________________

Length of Marriage: _________ years

Length of common-law relationship: _________ years

Length of time physically separated from spouse:
    ___ years ___ months

Number and ages of children:

____________________________

____________________________

____________________________

I would like the results of this study sent to me.

Name and address:

____________________________

____________________________

____________________________
APPENDIX B
Informed Consent Form

I, ____________________________, agree to voluntarily participate in a study which explores the nature of self change which may occur during the divorce experience. I am aware that I will be required to participate in two, taped interviews which will be from one to three hours in length. I also understand that all information will be held in strictest confidence and my identity will in no way be associated with the results. I have the right to withdraw my participation from this research at any time.

Date:_________________        Signature:_________________
Witness:___________________