

CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES AND ORDERS OF CONSCIOUSNESS:  
A CONSTRUCTIVE-DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

by

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores the correspondence between contemplative practices and orders of consciousness from a constructive-developmental perspective, using Robert Kegan's approach. Adult developmental growth is becoming an increasingly important influence on humanity's ability to deal effectively with the growing complexity of modern life. This study investigates the relationship between contemplative practices and adult development in a sample of highly educated adult students.

Kegan posits that a central principle of mental organization is the subject-object relationship, wherein "object" refers to thoughts, beliefs, and relationships that consciousness can hold and observe, while "subject" refers to the meaning-making structure of the mind that holds the mental objects. Developmental growth is a process of increasing one's mental complexity through successive differentiations from that with which one identifies, gradually recognizing them as mental objects separate from oneself, and finally reintegrating these mental objects into a new and larger meaning-making structure.

Kegan identifies six meaning-making structures he calls *orders of consciousness*. Most adults are in one of the three top orders of consciousness, or

are in transitions between them. These three are termed *Socialized* mind, *Self-Authoring* mind, and *Self-Transforming* mind, with each successive order representing a more complex meaning-making mental structure.

Adult development researchers have proposed theories linking contemplative practice to developmental growth, yet few studies have empirically investigated the relationship. This study of 19 participants, Ph.D. students from the California Institute of Integral Studies, used two primary instruments: (a) Kegan's *Subject-Object Interview* to measure order of consciousness and (b) a contemplative practices interview designed by this researcher to explore the meaning participants make of their contemplative practices.

Notably, this study found that the participants at the Self-Authoring order of consciousness, with a few exceptions, tend to engage in contemplative practices that quiet the mind, are self-directed and eclectic in their type of practice, and have consistent and longer sessions of contemplative practice than participants at the Socialized mind order of consciousness. The results of this study are not generalizable due to its exploratory nature and small sample size; however, these findings are significant for the direction of future research.

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The seed of the idea to embark on this Ph.D. journey was first planted by Bud Stone, founder of The Graduate Institute in Connecticut. It was there that I studied in an unusual Master of Arts program entitled *Conscious Evolution*. After graduation, I became the program coordinator and teacher in the Conscious Evolution program. Soon thereafter, Bud, not so subtly, suggested that I might consider enrolling in a Ph.D. program. I fondly recall his counsel, describing the process of obtaining the Ph.D. as a difficult but rewarding experience. Andrew Summa, also of The Graduate Institute, who holds a doctorate three times over, was always interested in hearing about my progress and provided encouragement along the way. I would also like to thank my Conscious Evolution master's degree professors, Elizabeth Debold and Tom Steininger, who skillfully led our cohort to

deeper understandings and experiences of consciousness. Elizabeth was the first to suggest I consider Robert Kegan's theories for my research. Finally, I thank all of my colleagues at The Graduate Institute.

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I cannot express enough gratitude to the participants in this study. Without these nineteen amazing people this study could not have taken place. As I



interviewed each participant, I could not help but take notice of their unique interests and contributions manifested in their careers, pursuits, and worldviews.

I would also like to express heartfelt appreciation for my wife, Andrea, who provided love and support while I was pursuing this degree, offering suggestions and reminding me to breathe. And I also thank my son, Ben, for his love and support, and for cheering me on with each accomplishment.

Lastly, I thank the support I constantly felt from the deep silence within. During a weekend meditation retreat, one morning as I awoke, the design of the study unfolded as if in a vision. I quickly made notes lest I forget the message as one forgets a dim dream. Whenever doubts or uncertainties arose, subtle synchronicities reminded me that this project was bigger than me, and that I was fulfilling one of my life purposes. May this project be a blessing to all who read it.

## **DEDICATION**

To my wonderful wife of twenty-four years, Andrea, and our son, Ben

To my mother, Eleanor, whose lifelong intellectual interests served as a role model and who passed away while I was in the Ph.D. program, and to my father Ben, who left this world so, so many years ago

And to my small but loving extended family, Bobbie, Ted, and Howard; Karen; and Len and Judy

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### *Statement of the Problem*

The evolution of consciousness is becoming an increasingly important factor in humanity's ability to deal effectively with the growing complexity of modern life (Kegan, 1994). This exploratory study focuses on the correspondence between contemplative practices and orders of consciousness or developmental stages utilizing constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1980, 1982).

*Constructive* refers to a theoretical orientation that looks at the individual as a meaning-making organism, constantly putting the world together. *Developmental* refers to a growth process of transformation of the self, characterized by the differentiation from an aspect of the self, a resulting reorganization, and finally the reintegration of that aspect of self leading to an increase in an individual's meaning-making capacity. Contemplative practices include meditation, chanting, praying, movement, journaling and other practices (see Appendix A). This investigation uses Robert Kegan's (1980, 1982, 1994) approach to developmental growth. Kegan posits that a central principle of mental organization is the subject-object relationship, wherein "object" refers to thoughts, beliefs and relationships that consciousness can hold and observe, while "subject" refers to the meaning-making structure of the mind that holds the mental objects. Developmental growth is a process of increasing one's mental complexity through successive differentiations from that with which one identifies, gradually recognizing them as mental objects separate from oneself and finally reintegrating these mental objects into a new and larger meaning-making structure.

Kegan (1982) identifies six meaning-making structures he calls *orders of consciousness*, with four transitional sub-stages between each major level. Most adults are in one of the three top orders of consciousness or are in transitions between them. These three are termed *Socialized* mind, *Self-Authoring* mind, and *Self-Transforming* mind, with each successive order representing a more complex meaning-making mental structure (Kegan, 2009). Periods in which the individual organizes his or her meaning-making structure around one of these orders are periods of equilibrium and stability for the mind. Transitions are periods of disequilibrium during which life experiences present difficulties of interpretation to the meaning-making structure of the mind, which must transform to resolve them.

Researchers have investigated life experiences that are often associated with developmental growth, including disorienting dilemmas (Mezirow, 1978), facilitative agents (Marko, 2006), personal growth activities (Pfaffenberger, 2007; Scott, 2008), and contemplative practices (Alexander et al., 1990; Alexander, Heaton, & Chandler, 1994; Chandler, 1990, Shapiro Carlson, Astin, & Freedman, 2006). Researchers have related contemplative practices to growth in developmental stages since at least the 1990s (Alexander et al., 1990; Chandler, 1990). From a theoretical point of view, these practices may be contributing to developmental growth through an increase in awareness, by bringing unconscious or suppressed psychological material to conscious awareness, or by strengthening a witnessing self (Shapiro et al., 2006). These capabilities can lead to growth by starting the process of differentiation from the individual's current meaning-



making mental structure. This study investigates the correspondence between the ways participants make meaning of or engage in their contemplative practices and their orders of consciousness.

In general, researchers who have looked at the relationship between increasing self-awareness and adult development have explored either the characteristics of individuals at high developmental stages or educational programs that have shown the transformation of individuals to higher levels (Alexander et al., 1990; Chandler, 1990; Marko, 2006; Pfaffenberger, 2007; Scott, 2008; Torbert, 1994). These studies did not address the broad scope of contemplative practices, focusing instead on either (a) a single style of meditation or education or (b) individuals at a high level of development. In contrast, this study looked at the similarities and differences of participants' contemplative practices at the various stages of adult development. Neither the developmental level of the participants nor their type of contemplative practice, if any, was known at the start of the study.

### *Significance of the Study*

This study seeks to reveal the similarities and differences of contemplative practices at various stages of adult development. It is my hope that the study leads to insights that help practitioners refine their practice, thereby facilitating developmental growth.

As the world and daily life continue to increase in complexity, it is important for the complexity of the self to keep pace; otherwise the result is the felt sense of being "in over our heads" (Kegan, 1994). Kegan points out that,

Whether we are looking at our culture's literature of expertise in the realms of partnering, parenting, or providing, we see what seems to be a single, common, unrecognized claim on the minds of most contemporary adults for the degree of psychological authority described by the fourth order. (Kegan, 1994, p. 185)

The fourth order of consciousness is the level of the Self-Authoring mind in which the individual has moved beyond the Socialized mind that internalizes the beliefs of the institutional surround and is able to rely on his or her own inner compass for direction "in the realms of partnering, parenting, and providing.... [Yet,] at any given moment, around one-half to two-thirds of the adult population appear not to have fully reached the fourth order of consciousness" (Kegan, 1994, pp. 185, 188, 191). If a large segment of the population is operating with a meaning-making capacity below the level of complexity demanded by the culture in which they live, modern life becomes a severe burden leading to pathologies for the individual and society.

From this perspective, closing this gap between the level of complexity of modern humans and the complexity of the demands posed by our civilization becomes crucial for a society to cope with modern life. We cannot solve these problems if we cannot see the complexities inherent in them. Today, we see our leaders putting forth simplistic, polarizing visions instead of responding to the need for more complex perspectives. Many so-called leaders present black-and-white-style thinking indicative of a less complex mind that will make solutions even more remote. Environmental problems, the distribution of wealth, climate change, and health care demand expanded approaches and challenge our society to increase the level of complexity in our thinking. Einstein famously said, "The significant problems we face can not be solved at the same level of thinking we

were at when we created them” (Einstein & Calaprice, 2000, p. 317). The vital task of our society at this time is to raise as many people as possible to the Self-Authoring level of consciousness.

This framework underscores the importance of research into activities that may facilitate higher stages of adult development. Both individuals and society at large would benefit from a program that promoted more complex meaning-making mental structures.

One activity researchers often mention as a possible facilitator of developmental growth is contemplative practice (Irwin, 2002; McGarvey, 2010; Shapiro et al., 2006; Wilber, 2000, 2006; Zajonc, 2006). Wilber (2006) posits that “the more you experience meditative or contemplative states of consciousness, the faster you develop through the stages of consciousness” (pp. 196-197).

Researchers have speculated that contemplative practices lead to a witnessing of the mind that contributes to the process of transforming the current meaning-making structure of the mind to a mental object that can be held in the mind, precisely Kegan’s formulation of the theoretical underpinnings of developmental growth (Shapiro, et al., 2006; Wilber, 2006). However, researchers have completed few empirical studies designed to understand the mechanisms of how contemplative practice may lead to such growth.

Therefore, the study of contemplative practices as it relates to developmental growth is of profound importance. This research specifically investigated participants’ levels of development through the lens of Kegan’s schema in conjunction with an inquiry into the meaning that the participants make

of their contemplative practices in order to identify correspondences that may be able to shed light on the relationships between practice and development.

### ***Personal Relationship to the Topic***

I became a student of the evolutionary nature of human consciousness when, as a teenager, I read books such as *Cosmic Consciousness* by Richard Bucke (1901/1969), and *The Three Pillars of Zen: Teaching, Practice, and Enlightenment* by Roshi Philip Kapleau (1969). While still in college, a relative introduced me to books by and about George I. Gurdjieff, a spiritual teacher of the first half of the 20th century, who taught esoteric principles he had learned from Asian mystery schools that were designed to lead to the evolution of consciousness (Ouspensky, 1949/2001). Influenced by my extracurricular esoteric studies, my final paper for a philosophy class was entitled, *The Higher Working of Consciousness as a Psychological Evolutionary Step*.

I present my spiritual autobiography because it resonates with the experiences of many of the participants and serves as a foreshadowing of the findings. At the age of 18, I learned my first contemplative practice, Transcendental Meditation (TM). After a few weeks of practice, I did not feel that I was getting much out of the practice and soon found myself too busy to keep it up. This was probably due to my own low level of development rather than any fault with TM itself. I continued my search for a teacher by attending introductory lectures in Sufism, Buddhism, and other groups on weekends.

I finally joined a spiritual group whose guru had proclaimed his divinity. As it turns out, this was the same guru that one of the participants currently

follows. This guru promoted obedience to the teacher as key to the process of growth. Although the guru was no longer living, teaching lineages developed. The same teacher trained both my teacher and the participant's teacher, and the similarities of the experiences in our respective groups were fascinating for me. Our teachers did not promote contemplative practice other than gazing at the guru's picture or repeating the guru's name for maybe five minutes a day. The idea was that activity in service was more important than "naval gazing," as it was pejoratively referred to, and so the culture discouraged meditation. My sense now is that the culture of this spiritual movement kept the followers at the level of the Socialized mind. I believe that spiritual movements sometimes create such a culture to maintain power over the believers. After twelve years of dedication to the group, I left.

In 1987, I met a woman who would become my wife and who had been a daily practitioner of TM for fifteen years. I began to practice with her, and that began my daily practice that continues to this day. I practiced TM exactly as taught until 1995. At that time I became interested in the spirituality of my birth religion, and began to study Kabbalah and Jewish meditation. I developed a Jewish meditation practice and attended an alternative healing school based on Kabbalistic insights. I continued exploring all forms of contemplative practices from Tai Chi and Qigong to visualizations, brainwave entrainment tapes, and shamanic journeying. My approach to contemplative practice was eclectic and focused on those practices that resonated most with me.

I have had a meditation practice now for 25 years, and have seen my practice grow in depth and in the silence I experience. These days, my practice is mostly TM with some Jewish meditative add-ons.

After taking an early retirement from a career in the financial industry, I earned a Master of Arts degree in Conscious Evolution—a program about consciousness and transformation. The curriculum included the study of stages of developmental growth and wisdom traditions. It was in this program that I first studied Robert Kegan's (1982) constructive-developmental theory of subject-object relations and adult development through stages of growth. I found his theory fascinating and satisfying. I enrolled in a certification program in conducting and analyzing the Subject-Object Interview in the fall of 2010, led by Annie Howell and Deborah Helsing, two of Robert Kegan's senior teachers at his consulting firm Minds at Work (Helsing, Howell, Kegan, & Lahey, 2008). This study combined my two major academic and practical interests, the evolution of consciousness and contemplative practices.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This project explores contemplative practices at the various stages of adult development as explicated in the constructive-developmental theory of Robert Kegan (1980, 1982), the developmental psychologist who coined the term. Robert Kegan (2000) described his theory in a seminal essay entitled “What ‘Form’ Transforms: A Constructive-Developmental Approach to Transformative Learning.” As the title implies, the human mind has a form or structure, and transformational learning occurs as the mental structure transforms. This form or structure of the mind is the individual’s epistemology, way of knowing, or frame of reference (Kegan, 2000). Transformative learning is a change in the individual’s mental structure, a change in *how* a person knows, not *what* a person knows. Both the structure and its transformation have subject-object relations as its underlying principle. Just as Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 1966/2000) defined four stages of cognitive growth from birth to early adulthood, Kegan has defined six stages of epistemological growth. These stages vary by the location of the borderline between subject—that which one identifies with, and object—that which one can see as separate from the self. The elegance of this theory lies in the guiding principle of subject-object relations in the transformation of the structure from one stage to the next. Transformation occurs when the borderline shifts in such a way that what was subject—a mental part of the subjective sense of self—becomes an object to the self. The person no longer identifies with a thought or emotion but sees the thought or emotion as separate from the self. Instead of *being had by* anger, one *has* anger. Instead of being sad, one has

sadness. Anger still arises, but one holds anger as a mental object with some semblance of control rather than becoming angry and losing control.

Some adult developmental researchers have focused their theories on the transformational aspects and not the structural aspects. For example, Jack Mezirow (1978), who pioneered Transformational Learning (TL) focused on disorienting dilemmas that initiate profound transformations in the lives of adults. But Mezirow's transformative learning theory is not a developmental model and consequently did not include stages of development. On the other hand, Jane Loevinger (1976), one of the first researchers to extend Piaget's (Piaget & Inhelder, 1966/2000) developmental stages to ego (a central organizing tendency) development in adults, focused on the stages, but did not have a theory, nor did she study the transitions from one stage to the next (Kegan, Lahey, & Souvaine, 1998). In Kegan's constructive-developmental theory, both stages and transitions are studied and have the same underlying principles.

The underlying principles in Kegan's (1982) approach to understanding the stages and transformation in adult development has as its major metaphors (a) the process of differentiation and integration originally found in the biological explanation of physical development, (b) the construction of an organism's reality through its epistemological stance, (c) the boundary set between the organism's subjective sense and what the organism considers objects under its control, and (e) stages of development in equilibrium.

Kegan clarifies the nature of structure transformation by making a distinction between transformational learning and informational learning (Kegan,



2009). Informational learning occurs when the learner shapes new experiences to conform to existing knowledge structures. Transformational learning occurs when the learner's knowledge structure changes to accommodate the new experience. The new knowledge structure constitutes a new frame of reference (Kegan, 2000), and a new epistemology (Kegan, 1982; Piaget, 1977).

Developmental psychologists studied the various structures of consciousness in adults and found stable levels, which they subsequently named. The various developmental psychologists often had different numbers of structural levels along with different names. Later, I will compare these models. At different structural stages, individuals actually see the world differently. Movement from one stage to the next constitutes transformational learning or transformational change. These types of developmental models are whole-person or center-of-gravity stage models since they characterize an individual's epistemological central tendency.

A different approach to development is the framework of task performance complexity, which assigns an order of complexity to task performance as seen in Fischer's (1980) skill theory and in Commons' Model of Hierarchical Complexity (Commons, Trudeau, Stein, Richards, & Krause, 1998). The task complexity approach focuses on the level of complexity of an individual's performance or behavior in various contexts or domains. This is in contrast to the *whole person* approach in which the focus is on the individual's central tendency or center of gravity in overall development. In Kegan's constructive-developmental theory in particular, the focus is on the individual's

overall epistemology, how he or she makes meaning of experience that leads to the performance or behavior observed. Just as in task performance models, in constructive-developmental theory the level of complexity of meaning-making also varies when the individual is in different domains. However, by focusing on meaning-making the researcher is focusing on the underlying epistemology that leads to the behaviors that both task-complexity researchers and whole-person researchers observe. Comparison of these two approaches is beyond the scope of this paper. Indeed, in a study that analyzed interviews utilizing both Kegan's whole-person approach (the Subject-Object Interview, described below) and the Model of Hierarchical Complexity, the researchers found that the two approaches were "speaking to significantly different dimensions of human complexity" and that the measures were "vastly different" (McGuigan, Popp, & Ross, 2010, pp. 36-37).

This study utilizes the whole-person approach in order to focus on the central meaning-making capacity of the participants and how they make meaning of their contemplative practices. Because individuals see the world differently at different stages, my expectation was that at different stages of development individuals made meaning of their contemplative practices differently. In addition, as a result of these differences in how they make meaning, I suspected that they engaged in contemplative practices in different ways. By comparing the way adults at different developmental stages make meaning of their contemplative practices, there may be much to learn that will be helpful to practitioners.

In this literature review I will briefly trace the history of adult developmental theory from Jean Piaget to Robert Kegan. Along with a review of these developmental theories, I will discuss assessment methods culminating in a comparison of them. Finally, I will review contemplative practices and the relationship between contemplative practices and developmental stages.

### ***Jean Piaget***

Jean Piaget (1896 – 1980) was a French developmental psychologist who focused on the cognitive development of children from infancy to late adolescence. His was a constructive-developmental approach, incorporating stages of cognitive equilibrium. Constructivism holds that individuals construct the meanings of their perceptions and understandings through meaning-making systems embedded within their mental structure. These mental structures shape our experience (Kegan, 1980). A person does not see an objective reality, rather the person sees based on the structure of his or her meaning-making system. The constructionist view is succinctly expressed in the quote: “We don’t see things as they are, we see them as we are” (Nin, 1969, p. 124). Developmental refers to the concept that an individual’s mental structure will change over time, and that change in the direction of greater complexity is beneficial to the individual and to society.

Piaget’s constructive-developmental theory incorporated the principles of assimilation, accommodation, and adaptation. In *assimilation*, the learner is able to incorporate a novel occurrence into an established way of thinking. The learner’s mental structure is able to interpret and store the memory of the

occurrence in a way that is consistent with its structure. When the learner is unsuccessful in incorporating a novel occurrence, the learner's mental structure may change to *accommodate* the new information or situation. Piaget based the organism's ability to *adapt* to its environmental surround on the equilibrium between the two processes of (a) *assimilating* a learning occurrence and (b) *accommodating* the mental structure. Piaget looked at an organism and its environment as a whole, with the subjective self constantly adapting to the objective surround through assimilation and accommodation (Piaget, 1962/2000, p. 243). However there is a deeper process that Piaget studied—that of decentration, which provided a principle indicating a direction of development.

Piaget noted the principle of decentration in the epistemological progression of many human endeavors of knowledge, including causality, time, movement, cosmological systems, and theories of physics (Kitchener, 1985, p. 21). Decentration is a process of changing one's point of view or subjective location. For example, Piaget traces the history of science from geocentrism to the Copernican revolution as an example of the decentering process. The center of the solar system shifted from the earth to the sun as the science matured. Piaget considered the decentering process the correction of previously held errors in epistemology, not only for science, but for the individual. It is this shift in the decentering process that Piaget incorporated as the process of development in his constructive-developmental theory. Later, I will show how Robert Kegan extended the principle of decentration beyond the age of adolescence and encompassing more than cognitive development.

Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 1966/2000) also held that at certain points of cognitive development, an equilibrium was reached in which the child had a stable mental structure. Piaget named these equilibrium points stages and identified four: (a) the Sensorimotor stage, (b) the preoperational stage, (c) the concrete operational stage, and (d) the formal operational stage, shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Subject-Object Balancing in Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Stages*

Stage	Age	Subject "Structure"	Object "Content"
Sensorimotor	0 – 2	Impulses	None
Preoperational	2 – 6/7	Perceptions	Impulses
Concrete Operational	6/7 – 11/12	Reversibilities	Perceptions
Formal Operational	11/12 up	Abstract thinking	Reversibilities

*Note.* Adapted from *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development* (p. 40), by R. Kegan, 1982, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Copyright 1982 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

He applied the decentering principle to the developing self in each of the four stages. For example, Piaget noted that a child at an early stage of development considers space centered on his own body, but “at about 18 months, through a decentration truly comparable to a Copernican revolution, space becomes a singly homogenous container in which all objects are situated, including one’s own body” (Piaget, 1962/2000, p. 244). The process of correcting one’s epistemological errors through decentration continues throughout childhood. At the sensorimotor stage, children are not in control of their impulses, appearing wiggly, often unable to sit still. As these children become aware of their impulses, and learn to control them, they are no longer subject to them and

begin to identify with their needs instead, over time entering the preoperational stage.

Through this process of decentration, the child constructs his world with objects that he was once subject to. What the child is subject to is his mental structure through which he sees and makes meaning of his objective surround. With developmental growth through decentration, what was once subject becomes object, and the child can now hold, control, and manipulate that object. In other words, the child will separate from his impulses and can control them, but now will be subject to his perceptions. The mental object of impulses is now part of the contents of the mind for the child at the preoperational stage. With growth to the concrete operational stage, the child decenters from his perceptions, which become object, and is now able to use logic to think through a number of steps and then reverse the direction of the steps, called reversibility. Perceptions are now part of the objective contents of the mind, while reversibility is part of the subjective mental structure. The child is now capable of logic, but only with concrete objects or concrete symbols. Finally, at the formal operational stage, reversibilities become content while the mental structure advances to abstract thinking, including hypothetical and deductive reasoning.

While Piaget's theory was concerned with cognitive development, subsequent developmental psychologists extended the constructive-developmental view to the domains of the emotional, personal, and social worlds, and not only during childhood, but throughout an individual's life. This was the starting point for neo-Piagetian developmental psychology.

### *Ego Development Theory: Jane Loevinger*

In Jean Piaget's (Piaget & Inhelder, 1966/2000) cognitive development theory of stages, development ended with the formal operational stage. However, developmental psychologists extended Piaget's theory by researching levels beyond the formal operational stage and by widening the focus of the development line from cognitive development to ego development. One of the first developmental theories to go beyond Piaget's was Jane Loevinger's (1966, 1976, 1979, 1985) ego-development theory. Loevinger defined ego function as the "search for coherent meanings in experience, [noting that the ego] maintains its stability, its identity, and its coherence by selectively gating out observations inconsistent with its current state" (Hy & Loevinger, 1996, p. 4). Loevinger's ego function is a holistic construct representing a "master trait" while subsuming other developmental areas. Her ego construct is comprised of four interpenetrating domains: character development, cognitive style, interpersonal style, and conscious preoccupations.

Piaget's (Piaget & Inhelder, 1966/2000) formal operational stage is the modal level of adult development, therefore considered "conventional." Preconventional stages are those levels that occur prior to the conventional stage, while postconventional stages occur subsequent to the conventional stage.

To measure placement in her schema, Loevinger (Hy & Loevinger, 1996) developed the Washington University Sentence Completion Test (WUSCT). This is a semi-projective assessment in which individuals project their frames of reference onto the test sentences, thereby revealing their levels of ego

development. The responses represent verbal behavior that a trained scorer analyzes to determine the individual's ego development stage. Loevinger (1976) named the stages from birth to conventional adulthood as follows: Infant, Impulsive, Self-Protective, Conformist, Self-Aware, and Conscientious (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Jane Loevinger's Extension of Piaget's Developmental Levels*

Tiers of Development	% Adult Population	Piagetian Stages	Loevinger's Stages
Preconventional	10%	Sensorimotor	Infant
		Preoperational	Impulsive
		Concrete Operational	Self-Protective
Conventional	75%	Formal Operational	Conformist
			Self-Aware
			Conscientious
Postconventional	15%		Individualist
			Autonomous
			Integrated

*Note.* Adapted from *Ego Development: Nine Levels of Increasing Embrace*, by Susanne Cook-Greuter, 2005. <http://www.cook-greuter.com/9%20levels%20of%20increasing%20embrace%20update%201%2007.pdf>. Copyright 2005 by Susanne Cook-Greuter.

Conformist, Self-Aware and Conscientious stages correspond to Piaget's (1977) conventional or formal operational levels. Seventy-five percent of the adult population makes its home here, with the Self-Aware stage the "modal level for adults in our society" (Loevinger, 1976, p. 19). Postconventional levels are the Individualist, Autonomous and Integrated stages, with the Integrated stage the highest level. Loevinger did not define the Integrated stage other than to say it is



best described as Maslow's Self-Actualizing person. She pointed out that at one time Maslow thought that "oceanic, mystic and profound esthetic experiences were universal in this group, but that proved not to be true" (p. 140). Although not universal, these types of experiences, which tend toward the transpersonal, are often associated with contemplative practices.

Loevinger's (1976) theory has not been without its critics (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Noam, 1993). Although the theory behind Loevinger's ego development model and the WUSCT is constructivist, Loevinger designed the assessment method based on data rather than theory revealing a positivist bias (Cook-Greuter, 1999). In other words, Loevinger determined the developmental stages based on the statistical analysis of the perceived categories displayed by the received responses and not on an underlying theory for (a) the particular stages (Cook-Greuter, 1999) or (b) the hierarchical levels she assigned (Noam, 1993). The lack of an underlying theoretical basis is troublesome. Loevinger's WUSCT is taxonomic in that the scorer associates verbal responses with developmental stages, a process that assumes a large inferential leap and not a direct determination of developmental stage (Kegan, Lahey, & Souvaine, 1998). At the highest levels of ego development, the data were very sparse, resulting in minimal and confusing instructions in the WUSCT instruction manual updated in 1996 (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Hy & Loevinger, 1996).

The theory and test became available at a time when quantitative analysis in psychology was valued, yet not readily available in adult developmental psychology. The test, originally designed for a study of adolescent girls, became

popular among researchers due to its quantitative nature and validation.

Researchers have updated the test to include both males and females and to include changing cultural norms. However, the theory is stochastically-based; therefore the stages can shift over time.

Another concern is scoring. The test is semi-projective, with the individual's answers providing the display of verbal behavior the scorer interprets according to the manual (Hy & Loevinger, 1996). The manual cannot cover every answer, so the scorers must make judgments based on the spirit of the manual. However, the WUSCT has achieved a high level of inter-rater reliability across a number of studies (Manners & Durkin, 2001, p. 545). Lastly, because of the stochastic nature of the theory construction and the very limited scores in the postautonomous stages, Loevinger discouraged assigning the top level – the Integrated stage. Regarding these higher levels, Loevinger (1993) lacked confidence in her manual and was concerned about scorer misunderstanding. Therefore, in scoring the WUSCT, she recommended combining the Autonomous and Integrated stages as one score.

### ***Postautonomous Stages: Susanne Cook-Greuter***

Loevinger set the stage for a developmental psychology that could serve as a vehicle for researchers interested in personal growth that extended toward the transpersonal. Susanne Cook-Greuter's investigations into the higher levels of ego development stemmed from her interest in spirituality.

I theorized that ego development—if it reaches its highest potential—is one path to ego-transcendence, a rational road to the Divine, so to speak. I speculated that the highest ego stage I had observed, the Unitive stage,

might be an early form of ego transcendence, akin perhaps, to Cosmic Consciousness in the Vedic model. (Cook-Greuter, 2000, p. 228)

Cook-Greuter had scored more than 1,900 WUSCTs by the time she wrote her dissertation in 1999 focusing on the stages beyond Loevinger's Autonomous stage of ego development. Cook-Greuter called the levels beyond the Autonomous stage the postautonomous tier. Her interest had been in the higher stages of adult development, and she accumulated the test results of those individuals who had scored at these stages (Cook-Greuter, 1999). Where Loevinger combined the Autonomous and Integrated levels, Cook-Greuter focused on and developed her own method of scoring the WUSCT in the postautonomous region, separating the two combined stages and even naming higher stages.

Based on this research, Cook-Greuter (1999) changed the name of Loevinger's highest stage from Integrated to Construct Aware and provided a better definition. Instead of associating it with Maslow's Self-Actualized stage, Cook-Greuter associated the Construct Aware stage with a systems worldview. This level includes (a) the dismantling of rigid boundaries between the knower and the known, (b) the greater awareness of cultural conditioning, and (c) the awareness of circular causation. "Individuals at the Construct-Aware stage try to be conscious of the difference between symbol and the underlying phenomenon it symbolizes at all times" (Cook-Greuter, 2000, p. 235).

In addition, Cook-Greuter (2000) added a higher stage she named Unitive, which she described as "a potential gateway to the transpersonal or spiritual realm of knowing" (p. 237). At this level, the process of self-awareness deepens, leading

to greater access to one's intuition, feelings, dreams, and other transpersonal material. Going beyond the systems view, individuals begin to see through their mental and language habits.

[They] learn to accept themselves and reality 'as is.'...They can embrace polar opposites on an affective level and not just cognitively. Good and evil, joy and regret, closeness and separateness are valued as natural and meaningful aspects in the dance of life, or as part of the eternal cycle of creation, destruction and recreation. (p. 236)

Here we begin to see the dawning of nondual awareness in the Unitive stage.

Cook-Greuter's stages are compared to Loevinger's in Table 3.

Table 3

*Cook-Greuter's Extension of Loevinger's Levels*

Tiers of Development	% Adult Population	Loevinger's Stages	Cook-Greuter's Stages
Preconventional	10%	Infant	
		Impulsive	Impulsive
		Self-Protective	Self-Protective
Conventional	75%	Conformist	Conformist
		Self-Aware	Self-Conscious
		Conscientious	Conscientious
Postconventional	12%	Individualist	Individualist
		Autonomous/ Integrated	Autonomous
Postautonomous	<3%		Construct-Aware Unitive

*Note.* Adapted from *Ego Development: Nine Levels of Increasing Embrace*, by Susanne Cook-Greuter, 2005. <http://www.cook-greuter.com/9%20levels%20of%20increasing%20embrace%20update%201%2007.pdf>. Copyright 2005 by Susanne Cook-Greuter.

Cook-Greuter was a WUSCT scorer for the dissertation of Howard Chandler (1990), one of the earliest studies associating contemplative practice

with postautonomous ego development. Chandler's research was a longitudinal study of 34 Maharishi International University alumni who had engaged in the contemplative practice of Transcendental Meditation (TM) for at least 10 years. The study showed that these alumni's scores on the WUSCT were markedly higher than those of a control group. However, Chandler did not look at differences in the experience or characteristics of the contemplative practice of TM at the various developmental stages of his participants.

Cook-Greuter (1999) provided both an underlying theoretical model and evidence for the postautonomous stages in her landmark study. She offered a constructivist view of ego development that extended toward the transpersonal.

### ***Constructive-Developmental Theory: Robert Kegan***

Robert Kegan (1982), in his seminal book *The Evolving Self*, developed an elegant theory of constructive-developmental psychology based on the framework of transformation in the subject–object relationship of the self. Kegan developed a constructive-developmental framework for his theory, in which the self grows with an increasing complexity of mind. Constructivism assumes that the individual plays a role in interpreting and organizing his or her experience, as opposed to the assumption of the existence of a true reality “out there” that one can perceive correctly. Developmental psychology assumes a growth process that includes periods of transformational reorganization through the processes of differentiation and integration (Kegan, 1982). In Kegan's theory, as the self evolves toward greater complexity, emotions and thoughts that the mind is subject to transforms to mental objects that the mind can observe and think about. For

Kegan, the transformation from subject to object is the change that brings about a more complex, more encompassing epistemology. An example of the movement from subject to object is indicated when the individual “has it” rather than “is had” by it (Kegan, 1994). For example, “I *am* angry” denotes identification with the emotion, while “I *have* anger” denotes a certain separation indicating that the individual can now hold anger as an emotional object. For Kegan, an individual’s transformation is a change in one’s epistemology due to this movement from subject to object.

Kegan’s (1982) constructive-developmental theory is an open systems model incorporating equilibrium and disequilibrium through an organism’s interaction with the environmental surround. An open system is a system that interacts with the environment surrounding it, thereby exchanging information and energy. In a closed system, one that does not interact with its environment, the second law of thermodynamics holds that the system’s disorder, known as entropy, will increase. In an open system, the environmental surround provides energy and information to the system that supports greater self-organization, complexity, and adaptation. In other words, an open system can experience negative entropy, an increase in complex organization. Our planet Earth is a complex open system that receives energy from the Sun, a continuation of the energy which drove the self-organization and complexification of earth, water, and air into simple life forms and the evolution of simple life forms into complex eco-biosystems. The same is true for the human mind and its environmental surround. John Donne (1923/2010) said, “No man is an island, entire of itself;

every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main” (p. 108). In a similar vein, Winnicott (1987) said “There is no such thing as a baby” (p. 88), meaning that a baby does not exist on its own but only in relation to its mother. In constructive-developmental theory, an individual does not exist on his own, but only in relationship with the domains within which the individual’s life is lived. If the individual is in equilibrium with the domain or environmental surround, then all is well. There is no need for the individual to transform to a greater level of complexity. But if the domain presents a challenge for the individual, the equilibrium will be disturbed. If the environmental surround that contains this challenge is supportive, the disequilibrium and support will facilitate the human mind’s growing to a greater level of complexity. However, if the environmental surround provides little support, the challenge may be too much for the human mind leading to a regression. In this sense the self is an open complex adaptive system engaging with the complex domains of its environmental surround.

Kegan (1982) identified six stages in which the individual is in a state of equilibrium. Kegan also refers to these stages as orders of consciousness indicating that these are whole stages that encompass the individual’s epistemology, that is, the very way the individual makes meaning of the world. The individual also undergoes transitions between the stages during periods of disequilibrium. In fact, it is these disequilibriums that foster developmental growth. When the domain requires a more complex order of consciousness to remain in equilibrium, the dissonance between the current order of consciousness and the required order of consciousness will provide a disequilibrium that can

encourage positive transformation to greater complexity. At first a new, more complex order of consciousness begins to emerge. If supported, the new stage will fully develop. At this point the individual will have both the old stage and the new stage both operating. The individual will make meaning from both the old and the new perspective alternatively, depending on the context and domain, but the old stage will be relied upon more than the new. Eventually, if growth continues, the new stage will take precedence over the old stage. As the individual relies more on the new stage, only a vestige of the old stage will remain. Finally, the old stage is forgotten, and a new equilibrium is reached.

The newborn baby begins life with a zero order of consciousness held approximately until the age of two. Because Kegan (1982) called this stage a zero order of consciousness, some researchers refer to five orders of consciousness, omitting the zero order altogether.

From the age of two to six, young children are in the first order consciousness called the Impulsive stage in which the children cannot hold the idea of “durable objects,” that is, the experience that things retain the same qualities over time (Kegan, 1982). Because children at this stage do not hold objects durable, they identify with their perceptions. Items at a distance that look small actually *are* small to the child at the Impulsive stage. From a tall building the child will *see* small people, not people who *look* small. This is the preoperational stage that Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 1966/2000) famously showed through the conservation tasks. In conservation tasks, an object’s shape changes so that it somehow looks bigger, such as pouring a liquid from a wide, short



beaker to a narrow, tall beaker. Since the liquid is now higher, the Impulsive child, identifying with his perceptions, sees more liquid. The child cannot hold his perceptions as an object and understand that no water was lost or gained when poured from one container to another. This principle was important to Piaget's theory, and it is important to Kegan's theory. In later stages, instead of the individual identifying with his perceptions or impulses, he identifies with certain thoughts or emotions. The process of growth is the same in both instances; that is, through the process of differentiation from that which one is subject to and identifies with, followed by integration in which one learns to hold and control as object what was formerly subject. Children at the first order cannot control their impulses, demonstrated through their constant squirming. Over time, these children begin to differentiate from their impulses, no longer being subject to them. As they learn to hold their impulses as objects under their control, they enter the second order of consciousness.

In the second order of consciousness, called the Imperial mind stage, children, typically from six years of age to adolescence, control their impulses, but now identify and are subject to their needs, interests, and desires (Kegan, 1980, 1982). This stage and corresponds to Piaget's concrete operational stage (Piaget & Inhelder, 1966/2000). Children at this level are self-centered and see others only in terms of helping or hindering them in attaining their desires. Rules are important, although the child follows rules out of fear of punishment rather than allegiance to an ideal. Children at this level now know that there are others with their own thoughts and needs, but cannot internalize the other's point of

view, and therefore only seek to fulfill their own needs. They believe that others are out for themselves just the way they are. This mindset is prevalent in middle school children, which is why teachers often find this age difficult. Students at this level act out of their needs and desires which they are subject to. They see things in concrete terms rather than abstract. They think in terms of what they will get out of something in a concrete way. Getting an education is to get a job to earn money to buy things. When they do begin to grow to the next stage, they mentally separate from their needs, interests, and desires, leading to their ability to understand others' point of views and see the underlying reason for rules as they develop abstract thought.

The third order of consciousness called the Socialized mind stage is the level of older adolescents and many adults (Kegan, 1982, 2009). This is the conventional level in Kegan's framework. People at this level are able to internalize the perspective of the other, and, since they can hold their needs as an object, they can mediate their needs with the needs of others. However, they are now subject to the thoughts and feelings of other individuals and institutions that they have internalized. The ongoing dialogue in their mind is the internalized points of view of important others, such as peers, parents, teachers, and their traditional religion. Relationships are of utmost importance, as is being popular. This world begins in high school although many adults remain at this conventional stage of development. The individual at this level depends upon experts to know what to do and what to believe. Education is important for attaining success and becoming intelligent rather than getting a job, indicating the

shift to abstract thought. For the first time, an individual is able to sacrifice his own needs for another, since needs, interests, and desires have become object rather than subject, or content rather than structure. They do not have their own firm perspectives and become conflicted when others' perspectives conflict. If development beyond the Socialized mind is to occur, the individual will enter the process of differentiating from the internalized points of views. The person will begin to recognize the internal voices as the voices of other people and institutions. As this process proceeds, the individual's own voice begins to emerge, which is the hallmark of the Self-Authoring mind.

The fourth order of Self-Authoring mind is the level of some adults who have developed a self by shifting their interpersonal relationships from subject to object (Kegan, 1982, 2009). They are no longer subject to these relationships, which they had internalized. They were not aware that their beliefs and opinions were the internalization of the beliefs and opinions of important others. However, at some point they may become aware that their beliefs and opinions were not their own as they transform from subject to object, from structure to content. Their own self-system begins to emerge, allowing them to hold and mediate their own perspectives and the perspectives of others. Through the development and awareness of their own self-system, they are able to make their own judgments rather than relying on the internalized judgments of other individuals and institutions. They have a well-developed internal governing system, and are self-motivated and self-evaluative. They can hold interpersonal relationships as

objects, but are subject to their own self-system, and cannot easily stand criticism of their point of view about which they are so sure.

The fifth order, Self-Transforming mind, is a rare level achieved by few adults (Kegan, 1982, 2009). These adults have moved their self-system from subject to object, and no longer need to defend the self as did the fourth-order adult. These adults are able to look across their self-systems and the self-systems of others, and mediate between them without preference. They are more open to others' criticism and see the benefit of feedback that can reveal their own shadow, that is, subconscious parts that undermine their performance. "The self-transforming mind both values and is wary about any one stance, analysis or agenda" (Kegan & Lahey, 2009, p. 19). They are more comfortable with paradox and less likely to see the world in terms of polarities. The individual at the Self-Transforming structure no longer feels responsible for the form of his self-system, but feels responsible for the transformation of the form. He will seek information that can transform the form rather than filtering information that might invalidate the current self-system's form, as a Self-Authoring mind would do (Kegan, 1982, p. 247).

This highest order of consciousness in Kegan's (1982, 2009) schema, Self-Transforming mind, is in the postautonomous tier, higher than Loevinger's (1976) top level of Autonomous/Integrated and perhaps equivalent to Cook-Greuter's (2005) Construct-Aware and Unitive levels. If, at this highest stage of development, all subject has shifted to object, the individual is no longer "subject to" anything, and, in a way, has attained a form of inner freedom, perhaps

spiritual in nature. Kegan posits that at this rarefied stage of adult development, the individual's epistemology is such that the individual no longer identifies with any self, including his or her self-system. Such an epistemology might represent the dawning of nondual awareness, as seen in Cook-Greuter's Unitive stage.

Table 4

*Kegan's Orders of Consciousness Compared to Cook-Greuter's Stages*

Tiers of Development	%*	Cook-Greuter's Stages	%**	Kegan's Order of Consciousness
Preconventional	10	Infant Impulsive Self-Protective	13	0 – Infant 1. Impulsive 2. Imperial
Conventional	75	Conformist Self-Conscious Conscientious	66	2–3 Transition 3. Socialized 3–4 Transition
Postconventional	12	Individualist Autonomous	18	4. Self-Authoring
Postautonomous	<3	Integrated Construct-Aware Unitive	3	4–5 Transition 5. Self-Transforming

*Note.* Compiled from Kegan and Cook-Greuter as follows: Adapted from *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (p. 195), by R. Kegan, 1994, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Copyright 1994 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Adapted from *Ego Development: Nine Levels of Increasing Embrace*, by Susanne Cook-Greuter, 2005. <http://www.cook-greuter.com/9%20levels%20of%20increasing%20embrace%20update%201%2007.pdf>. Copyright 2005 by Susanne Cook-Greuter.

\* % of adult population from Cook-Greuter

\*\* % of adult population from Kegan

Table 4 summarizes Kegan's stages of development and compares them to Cook-Greuter's stages and also compares the estimated distributions of the adult population under the two schemas (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Kegan, 1994). The distributions vary from one another, but are relatively consistent.

Given that an outcome of many contemplative practices is the awakening to nondual awareness, contemplative practices might be effective in facilitating developmental growth. In an interview, Kegan acknowledged that he "has not yet considered how contemplative practices might inform or affect transformative learning" (as cited in Duerr, Zajonc, & Dana, 2003, p. 180). This study explores relationships between contemplative practices and developmental stages.

Kegan (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1988) developed an assessment tool to quantify an individual's order of consciousness known as the Subject–Object Interview (SOI). Although Kegan's model encompasses five orders of consciousness, he also specifies four transitional stages between the rising orders of consciousness, resulting in finer gradations in the assessment. Details of these transitional stages are in Table 5.

Research on the SOI has provided strong test-retest and inter-tester reliability, as well as good construct validity measures (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1988). Kegan presents a coherent theory, backed by empirical data and research confirming reliability and validity measures.

The importance of Kegan's work lies in his attempt to understand and narrow the gap between the complexity of the world and the needed complexity of the mind to manage the challenges life presents. Kegan (1994) estimates that

half to two-thirds of adults live at an order of consciousness below that which modern life demands.

### *Contemplative Practices*

Contemplative practices are many and varied, but in general, common themes of many of the practices include mindfulness, inner awareness, and shifts in perspective (Duerr, 2004, p. 43; Goleman, 1988; Shapiro et al., 2006). The most common forms of contemplative practice are meditation and prayers, but can include any practice that promotes a quiet mind or insight into the inner life in general. Categories of contemplative practice include stillness practices such as meditation and prayers, movement practices such as yoga and Tai Chi, written activities such as journaling, and relational practices such as dialogue and deep listening (see Appendix A).

The benefits of contemplative practices have been well documented in the areas of physical well being (Andresen, 2000; Ospina et al., 2007), education (Hart, 2004; Nelson, 2006; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Shapiro, Brown, & Astin, 2008), brain function (Davidson et al., 2003), the workplace (Duerr, 2004), spiritual development (Goleman, 1988; Wilber, Engler, & Brown, 1986), and adult development (Alexander et al., 1990; Chandler, 1990; Irwin, 2002; McGarvey, 2010; Shapiro et al., 2006). However, for this study, the focus of the literature review will be on research relating contemplative practices to adult development.

Contemplative practices may contribute to adult development to the extent these practices increase awareness of and foster differentiation from one's

meaning-making structure (Brown & Engler, 1980; Irwin, 2000, 2002; Shapiro et al., 2006). However, increases in self-awareness as a result of contemplative practices may vary based on the form, attitude, regularity, and commitment to practice. Therefore, it is not enough to ascertain the quantity of practice; quality of practice is perhaps even more important. Meditation teacher Adyashanti (2006) notes that, “I’ve met a lot of people who have meditated for many, many years. One of the most common things I hear from many of these people is that, despite having meditated for all this time, they feel essentially untransformed” (p. 6).

Viewed from the perspective of Kegan’s (1982) constructive-developmental framework, effective contemplative practices that increase self-awareness may provide the necessary differentiation from one’s current meaning-making structure to allow for its transformation from that mental structure to mental content. As the differentiation and integration occurs, a more complex meaning-making structure emerges to take the place of the old. The increased awareness that stems from contemplative practices would facilitate the process of moving the then-current meaning-making structure to observable content through the process of differentiation from the current mental structure, followed by integration into a new mental structure as content. Effective meditation would encourage the process of differentiation and integration. It may not be important how many years or how much time one spends meditating, which is akin to the content of the meditation process. Rather, the importance of meditation may lie in its ability to provide greater awareness of one’s mental structure. That greater



awareness is not necessarily related to the amount of time a person meditates, but rather the quality of the meditation.

One spiritual teacher who seems to have applied the principle of differentiation and integration directly in the meditation instructions to his students was Ramana Maharshi, a Hindu in the Advaita Vedanta tradition. Maharshi taught the practice of self-enquiry where one asks oneself, “Who am I?” in such a way that the practitioner begins to witness some aspects of his subjective identity. The effect of such a realization is transformation of those aspects of the subjective identity or mental structure to mental content. But this is only a partial transformation. Maharshi has his students continue this process over and over, resulting in the ever increasing transformation of structure into content. At the end of the process when all mental structure has transformed to content, the practitioner identifies with pure awareness. The process is one of realizing that the mental structure one currently identifies with is not who one really is. By asking “Who am I?” the practitioner is to realize that he is not the current “I,” but is a deeper “I” that transcends the current “I.” In other words, in asking “Who am I?” the individual feels his identification with his subjective self, and challenges that feeling. This self-enquiry process is asking the individual to differentiate from his current mental structure, thereby forming a deeper, more complex mental structure that can hold the previous mental structure now as content. In this way, the individual differentiates from the currently felt subjective self, and reintegrates with a new subjective self closer to that deeper pure awareness. Ramana Maharshi made it clear not to ask ‘Who am I?’ as a mantra, that is, as

content, but with full awareness (Sharma, 2006) in order to expand one's mental structure.

Wilber (2000) refers to these two aspects of the self as the proximate self and the distal self. The proximate self is the self the individual identifies with, the self that witnesses its inner and outer life. The distal self is the part of the self that the proximate self can hold as an object and observe as if from a distance. Wilber goes on to say that "proximate-self development is, in my view, at the very heart of the evolution of consciousness" (p. 35).

Adult development from a constructive-developmental stance is a stage theory of development. Researchers have related contemplative practices to both stages of development (Chandler, 1990), and states of consciousness (Goleman, 1988). Consciousness researcher Allan Combs (2002, 2009) and integral philosopher Ken Wilber (2006) collaborated on a model detailing the relationship between stages of developmental and states of consciousness. Stages refer to the sequence of adult development examined above, that is, the stages from preconventional to conventional to postconventional. Kegan's (1980) constructive-developmental theory is a stage theory of development. A tenet of stage theory is that an individual must experience each stage before developing to the next.

Combs (2009) referred to the states of consciousness as realms of experience or realms of being. Combs (2009) and Wilber (2006) described these realms of experience as *gross*, *subtle*, *causal*, and *nondual* states of consciousness. Gross consciousness is the everyday waking consciousness.

Subtle, causal, and non-dual states of consciousness are spiritual states of consciousness or deeper experiences of reality. They can be temporary as in a peak experience or permanent. A subtle state of consciousness refers to the experience of subtle energies, a causal state of consciousness refers to an experience of emptiness, while a non-dual state of consciousness or nondual awareness refers to “the ever present ground of all states” (Wilber, 2006, p. 74). Unlike developmental stages that emerge sequentially, states of consciousness or realms of being can occur in any order and at any developmental stage. Combs and Wilber developed the Wilber-Combs Lattice (Combs, 2002, 2009; Wilber, 2006) which displays the states and structures of consciousness orthogonally. However, the relationship between states and stages are complex, and certain similarities between states and stages may exist. For example, an individual at an advanced developmental stage might experience life as an interconnected unity, while an individual experiencing nondual awareness may also have a similar experience of unity. Another relationship is that a temporary experience of an advanced state of consciousness may accelerate stage development (Marko, 2006). In Kegan’s (1982, 1994) model, at an extreme stage of development, all subject would be transformed into object, that is, all mental structure would be transformed into content, and the experience might be that of a non-self corresponding to the causal state of emptiness, or the nondual aware state. In fact, experienced Buddhist meditators have frequently suggested to Kegan that his book *The Evolving Self* be re-titled as *The Evolving Non-Self* (Kegan, 1994, p. 362).

Researchers have mostly studied relationships between contemplative practice, notably meditation, and *states* of consciousness (Brown & Engler, 1980; Goleman, 1988; Schlitz, Vieten, & Amorok, 2007). However, relatively few studies have investigated the relationship between contemplative practices and the *stages* of development.

Shapiro et al. (2006) wrote a theoretical paper relating the contemplative practice of mindfulness to the stages of developmental growth utilizing constructive-developmental theory. The authors posited that mindfulness meditation practice leads to development by becoming a witness to consciousness, thereby allowing the subjective structure of the mind to become an object of the mind. However, the authors provided no empirical evidence for their theory.

Alexander et al. (1990) developed a theoretical model based on the Vedic tradition of India as taught by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the teacher of Transcendental Meditation. According to Alexander et al., through the practice of TM, one experiences pure consciousness, which promotes development at any stage. However, stress and the accumulation of stress hinder such development. The second function of TM is to reduce stress by “normalizing the nervous system from deep-rooted stresses that block further growth” (p. 299). Lastly, the reduction of stress and the repeated experience of pure consciousness allows for the “repeated flow of awareness through each sequentially deeper mental faculty stimulat[ing] both their differentiation and integration” (p. 306). Alexander et al. included a research appendix that related TM to adult development through the

assessment tool of the WUSCT. The first study of interest was a longitudinal study conducted by Chandler (1990) for his dissertation.

Chandler's (1990) study followed 34 alumni of Maharishi International University (MIU) for ten years. The participants in the study were practitioners of TM. Chandler found that an astonishing 38% of the alumni scored at the top of Loevinger's WUSCT scale (a combined Autonomous/Integrated), while only 1% of the control group scored at that level (p. 139). This provided strong evidence of a relationship between the contemplative practice of meditation and adult development. The WUSCT is a semi-projective sentence completion test that calls for a written verbal response to sentence stems such as "A woman is..." It is possible that the curriculum at MIU which focuses on Vedic knowledge and states of consciousness may have provided language to the participants that would allow their answers to appear developmentally advanced, even if they were not. The advantage of the Subject-Object Interview when compared to the WUSCT is that the interviewer can probe until satisfied that she has revealed the developmental level of the participant.

Another empirical study of an intervention that led to adult developmental growth took place in an MBA program designed by William Torbert (1994). Torbert developed a program he called *Action Inquiry*, which draws "on the first-person action research of the Gurdjieff Work tradition" (Torbert & Livne-Tarandach, 2009, p. 133). G.I. Gurdjieff, a mystic who emphasized self-awareness in daily life (Ouspensky, 1949/2001), developed spiritual teachings he referred to as "The Gurdjieff Work." Torbert had engaged in inner self-study with

the Gurdjieff Work for 25 years. Torbert describes the Action Inquiry program as “meditation in action” (Torbert, 1994, p. 191), and bases the success of the approach on the individual’s self-exploration. Torbert incorporated Action Inquiry into the MBA program at Boston College, reporting that 10% of the students showed a full stage increase in their developmental level (Torbert, 1994, p. 197). The average stage movement of all students in the program was a 0.1 stage progression (Torbert, 1994, p. 197). The relationship of Action Inquiry to the Gurdjieff Work, and the greater awareness that meditation-in-action provides, indicates that the contemplative nature of Action Inquiry may be responsible for its success.

McGarvey (2010) investigated mindfulness as it relates to adult development from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. In her dissertation, McGarvey related Kegan’s constructive-developmental approach to Theravada Buddhist psychology. The participants in the empirical part of her study were leaders of organizations for at least five years and either had or did not have a mindfulness practice. Although McGarvey takes a constructive-developmental perspective on adult development, her research focus was on the relationship between mindfulness and emotion-related personality characteristics and not directly on developmental stages. She correctly perceived that learning to improve the way one works with strong emotions is key to clear, compassionate thinking. The results of her study showed a positive correlation between higher scores on mindfulness and both lower scores on negative emotional-related personality characteristics and higher scores on positive emotional characteristics. I believe

she intends to continue this research through comparisons of various forms of mindfulness and the trajectories of emotional development.

A few additional studies looked at adult development outside of an educational framework. Angela H. Pfaffenberger (2007), a Buddhist meditator of over 20 years, studied those who scored at the high end of the WUSCT as modified by Cook-Greuter, interviewing them to determine the characteristics of postconventional individuals. Among other findings, she discovered they “engage in specific practices that enhance their inner awareness and carry them out often consistently for many decades” (p. 89). However, investigating contemplative practices played a minor role in her study, which focused on verbal complexity, introspection, and the commitment to personal growth.

Paul W. Marko (2006) investigated life experiences he called “facilitative agents” to see if they were associated with higher levels of adult development. Although Marko questioned his participants on their meditative practices, it was a minor aspect of his study, which focused more on experiential events and life circumstances that provided inconsistencies or dilemmas within participants’ life paradigms. Marko focused on those who had reached Loevinger’s Individualistic stage or higher on the WUSCT, interviewing participants to reveal events that facilitated developmental growth.

Sydney Ann Scott (2008) studied the personal growth activities of life coaches who scored in the post-conventional stage of adult development. In a phenomenological study, Scott found that the keys to postconventional developmental growth were “critical introspection, time for quiet contemplative

activities, and a supportive network of associates with similar interests” (p. ii).

Krafcik (2011) had a similar finding in his dissertation on the characteristics of postconventional “wise” people.

These four studies (Krafcik, 2011; Marko, 2006; Pfaffenberger, 2007; Scott, 2008) focused exclusively on postconventional individuals. They did not look at the introspection, commitment, facilitative agents, or contemplative activities of conventional individuals. In contrast, this current study explores both conventional and postconventional individuals and compares their approaches to contemplative practice seeking to explicate the similarities and differences in the quantitative and qualitative aspects of contemplative practice.



## CHAPTER THREE: METHOD AND PROCEDURES

### *Rationale for Choice of Method*

In developmental psychology, growth can be horizontal or vertical (Hartman & Zimberoff, 2008; Kegan, 1982; Piaget, 1977). Horizontal growth reflects learning or change at the same level of development. An individual is able to fit new information into the self's existing epistemology. An example is learning or improving a particular skill. In vertical development, a new awareness or experience presents information that does not fit the current epistemology, creating difficulty in incorporating this experience and information through the normal meaning-making structure of the self. Only through an increase in complexity can the self accommodate the new information (Kegan, 1982). This type of growth is indicative of a more complex adult development stage, accompanied by greater self-awareness. Only vertical movement is transformational in the context of this study.

As shown in the literature review, adult development researchers see a connection between inner work—such as meditation (Alexander et al., 1990; Chandler, 1990), meditation-in-action (Torbert, 1994), and critical introspection (Scott, 2008)—and developmental growth. These contemplative practices and meditative activities lead to greater awareness of the self, which is also a characteristic of developmental growth. Therefore, it makes sense to hypothesize that contemplative practices can, in fact, lead to developmental growth. However, that hypothesis requires a much larger and longer study. Instead, I have based this research on the idea that since movement from one developmental level to the

next occurs with a new structure of the mind, the meaning that a person makes of his or her contemplative practice also shifts, thereby changing the nature of a person's practice.

Therefore, the hypothesis for this investigation is that contemplative practices will have different meanings for the participants at different developmental stages, which can be detected by asking them about the characteristics of their practice. These differences may correlate with the levels of development of the participants, but any correlations found in this study will not imply causality. This study is exploratory, utilizing methods of basic qualitative research and statistical analysis where applicable.

### ***Research Tools***

To determine the level of adult development of the participants in this study, I administered the Subject-Object Interview (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1988), in which I have received training from Robert Kegan's senior teachers at Kegan's consulting firm, Minds at Work. The training program included a scorer certification program requiring the correct scoring of five sample interviews within one deviation of the score determined by an expert scorer. I passed this requirement in January 2011, and am now a certified reliable SOI scorer. In addition, a second highly experienced scorer assessed the interviews for inter-rater reliability. The second scorer was Dr. Nancy Popp, who has scored more SOIs than any other researcher. As a doctoral student in the early 1980s, she was trained in the SOI by Kegan, Lahey, and Souvaine, three of the

main architects of the SOI. She did her doctoral work and dissertation with Robert Kegan as her chair, and Lisa Lahey as one of her committee members.

The SOI is a semi-structured interview designed to assess an individual's stage of development (Appendices E, F and G). In the constructivist-developmental theory upon which this assessment tool is based (Kegan, 1982, 1994), developmental growth occurs as the meaning-making structure with which one identifies and to which one is subject, becomes a content of consciousness or an object from which one can stand back and experience through thoughts and feelings. The theory identifies six orders of consciousness, as described in the literature review, based on how the individual makes meaning as identified by the self's constructed boundary between what the self is subject to and what the self can hold as object. In addition there are four transition stages between each of the six orders of consciousness. To go from one major order of consciousness to the next, an individual undergoes a total of five transitions. Kegan begins his schema with a zero order of consciousness found in the infant child. The next two levels, the first and second orders of consciousness, are levels prior to abstract thought, found almost exclusively in children. Most adults are in a range from the third order to the fourth order of consciousness, while very few reach the range between the fourth and fifth orders, and occasionally an adult has a vestige of the second order. Therefore, for adults, the SOI assessment typically results in a score between the third order with a vestige of second order and the fifth order. With four transition stages between each major stage, there are a total of 12 stages in the adult range just defined. I describe these levels in more detail below.

To explicate the quantitative aspects of their contemplative practices, I asked the participants to complete an open-ended “Contemplative Practices Questionnaire” (Appendix A). To gain insight into participants’ qualitative approach to their contemplative practices, I conducted a semi-structured interview (Appendix B). Smith (1995) notes:

Researchers use semi-structured interviews in order to gain a detailed picture of a respondent’s beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of, a particular topic. Then by employing qualitative analysis an attempt is made to capture the richness of the themes emerging from the respondent’s talk. (p. 9)

Therefore, the semi-structured interview is appropriate given the research interest in understanding the qualitative aspects of contemplative practices and their relationship to adult development. More than a method, qualitative research interviewing is produced socially where the craft of the interviewer is important (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Unlike positivist science in which strict adherence to procedures attempts to remove the experimenter from the equation, in qualitative research, the interviewer and the interviewee create a social interaction in which knowledge emerges.

### *Participants*

I recruited participants for this study from the entering class of Ph.D. students in the Transformative Studies Program of the Transformative Inquiry Department at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS). This is an online program focused on the development of thought-leaders interested in inquiry into leading-edge issues. Many of the students in this program are interested in spirituality and often have a regular contemplative practice. Sri Aurobindo,

developer of the contemplative practice of Integral Yoga (Ghose, 2001), influenced the early direction of CIIS, which still attracts students interested in contemplative practices and spirituality.

I recruited 19 students for this study who varied in age from 28 to 66, with a mean and median age of 45. Based on the responses to the Contemplative Practice Questionnaire, most of the participants engage in some form of contemplative practice and have an interest in personal growth, making it possible that a disproportionate number of participants would score at a higher level of development relative to the general population. There is a recruitment bias due to the attraction these two programs have for those with alternative beliefs and lifestyles and educational levels. With the small sample size of nineteen recruited from the incoming class of approximately 30, it was not possible to create a group balanced by demographic features. For example, in this study there are 14 women and 5 men. Other demographics were also difficult to balance with this small sample size.

### ***Data Collection***

Participants signed a consent form and received a copy (see Appendix C). I requested that they fill out the demographic form (Appendix D) and the Contemplative Practices Questionnaire (Appendix A). Next, I scheduled and conducted the SOI (Appendices E, F and G) and completed the data gathering by conducting the semi-structured interview on contemplative practices (Appendix B).

The Subject-Object Interview process has three steps. The first step is to provide the participants a document that listed the following ten structural prompts, that is, prompts that elicit material to determine the level of the participant's meaning-making system.

1. Angry
2. Anxious / Nervous
3. Success
4. Strong Stand / Conviction
5. Sad
6. Torn
7. Moved / Touched
8. Lost Something
9. Change
10. Important to Me.

I sent the document to each participant the day prior to the scheduled SOI and asked the participant to write a few notes about one or more recent experiences that exemplified each phrase. The purpose was to provide self-created prompts for the interview process. This first step typically takes 30 minutes.

The second step was the interview itself (see Appendix E for the protocol). The one-hour interview took place telephonically, at a time set with the participant. I began the interview by asking the participant to select one of the structural prompts from the list, perhaps one that she felt strongly about. I advised the participant that she did not have to discuss anything she did not wish to discuss. I listened carefully to the responses, and followed up with questions meant to reveal the interviewee's boundaries: *What was the most important thing about that? What was at risk? What was hardest for you?* While interviewing the participant, I was formulating a hypothesis regarding the participant's

developmental stage. I recorded the interviews on a digital recorder and hired transcribers to transcribe the interviews. I reviewed the transcripts for accuracy.

In the third step, two certified scorers of the SOI reviewed each transcript and assigned a score. Scorers have mastered the text *A Guide to the Subject-Object Interview: Its Administration and Interpretation* (Lahey et al., 1988) and have completed the certification process. I was one of the SOI scorers for all interviews. When discrepancies occurred, the scorers compared how they arrived at their score for an agreeable resolution. In this study, three discrepancies were resolved through this process.

On the SOI, adults typically score at or above the Socialized mind order of consciousness. Transformation from one equilibrium stage to the next occurs in four steps or sub-stages. For example, between the two the levels of Socialized mind and Self-Authoring mind the first sub-stage is a Socialized mind with an emerging Self-Authoring mind, designated as 3(4). In the next sub-stage, the Self-Authoring mind is fully developed, but is secondary to the Socialized mind, and is designated 3/4. The next sub-stage is the Self-Authoring mind is now primary while the Socialized mind is secondary, and is designated 4/3. Finally, only a vestige of the Socialized mind is left, and the designation is 4(3). The next step is to the full fourth order of consciousness, just designated as 4. Then the process and nomenclature continues to the Self-Transforming mind. Table 5 displays the orders of consciousness and the sub-stages for most adults.

Table 5

*Subject-Object Interview Scores*

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Orders of Consciousness	Name of Orders and Descriptions of Transitional Stages
5	Fully Self-Transforming Mind
5(4)	Full Self-Transforming Mind with vestige of Self-Authoring Mind
5/4	Full Self-Transforming Mind primary; Full Self-Authoring Mind secondary
4/5	Full Self-Authoring Mind primary; Full Self-Transforming Mind secondary
4(5)	Full Self-Authoring Mind with emerging Self-Transforming Mind
4	Fully Self-Authoring Mind
4(3)	Full Self-Authoring Mind with vestige of Socialized Mind
4/3	Full Self-Authoring Mind primary; Full Socialized Mind secondary
3/4	Full Socialized Mind primary; Full Self-Authoring Mind secondary
3(4)	Full Socialized Mind with emerging Self-Authoring Mind
3	Fully Socialized Mind
3(2)	Full Socialized Mind with vestige of Imperial Mind

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*Note.* Created by author.

Lastly, I conducted an interview designed to qualitatively explore the participants' contemplative practices. The Contemplative Practice Interview (CPI) is a semi-structured interview (Appendix B) developed for this study. The CPI consists of thirteen questions designed to reveal important characteristics of the participants' practice. I began a line of questioning with these thirteen questions,



then probed more deeply based on their answers. I conducted these interviews telephonically, and took notes while digitally recording them. Each interview lasted approximately 25 – 30 minutes.

Afterwards, I transcribed the interviews. In this I was influenced by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) who point out:

[Researchers who] transcribe their own interviews will learn much about their own interviewing style; to some extent they will have the social and emotional aspects of the interview situation present or reawakened during transcription, and will already have started the analysis of the meaning of what was said. (p. 180)

At times, questions and the need for clarifications arose after the major collections of data. In those cases I emailed the participants the question, and they emailed their responses.

### *Data Analysis*

I collected participant data from the demographic form, the Contemplative Practices Questionnaire, and SOI results. Variables included age, gender, marital status, number of children at home, religion, spiritual and/or religious, SOI score, frequency and duration of contemplative practice, and years of contemplative practice. I summarized this data in the Results chapter below.

The procedure followed was to organize the Contemplative Practice Interviews by SOI score, and note the salient aspects of the participants' practices while looking for themes that might emerge. The themes emerged as I was reading and writing about the interviews in a general way. As I was reading the interviews, I noticed patterns that allowed for qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis or both. For quantitative analysis, I conducted simple linear regression

analyses using the SOI score for the independent variable, and a continuous variable related to the contemplative practices of the participants for the dependent variable, such as time spent engaging in contemplative practice. In order to use the SOI score variable in a simple linear regression model, I translated the SOI score notation to a numerical variable as shown in Table 6. In order to translate the SOI score to a numerical value I used the simplifying assumption that the stages and sub-stages are evenly spaced along the developmental continuum. In other words, the sub-stages between any two stages of consciousness are 0.2 units apart. This may not be true if for example, the change from 3 to 3(4) was not as profound as the change from 3(4) to 3/4. However, I believe this is a good approximation for the type of analysis in this study.

Table 6  
*SOI Score and Equivalent Numerical Value*

SOI Score	Numerical Value
4(5)	4.2
4	4.0
4(3)	3.8
4/3	3.6
3/4	3.4
3(4)	3.2
3	3.0

*Note.* Created by author.

Because of the small sample size, I grouped participants together into two or three groups. When I divided the participants into two groups, one group had at least a full Self-Authoring level established, i.e., 3/4 and above, while the other

group was below that level, i.e., 3(4) and below. When I divided the group into three groups, the most complex group had at least a full Self-Authoring mind primary, i.e., 4/3 and above, the middle group had a full Self-Authoring mind secondary, i.e., 3/4, and the last group did not have a full Self-Authoring mind, i.e., 3(4) and below. I used these divisions for both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

To statistically test for qualitative distinctions between the two groups as defined above, I created a two-by-two matrix for which a Chi-square test is appropriate. A finding of significance would statistically confirm a difference based on the participants' developmental levels. However, with 19 participants, the sample size was not large enough for a Chi-square test based on a well respected rule of thumb that recommends a minimum of five data points per cell due to the type of estimation employed in the test's calculation (Sirkin, 2006). In this study the expected value per cell was under five. However, Fisher's exact test calculates the exact probabilities involved thereby avoiding the problematic estimation making the test useful for studies with small sample sizes (Sirkin, 2006). Fisher's exact test is the method of analysis used in this study.

### ***Limitations and Delimitations***

This study was exploratory and will not be generalizable to any population. The sample size of 19 was small and the participant group was not a random sample. I did not seek participants who were at the postconventional or postautonomous levels of development nor did I seek participants who were at the conventional level of development. I did not seek participants who either had or

did not have a contemplative practice. Instead, the commonality of the participants was that they were first-year students in the Transformative Studies Ph.D. program at The California Institute of Integral Studies and joined the study as volunteers. The participants in this study tended to have an interest in personal growth and spirituality, which makes this group different from the general population.

The design of the study was exploratory and focused on correlations, quantitative and qualitative, between developmental stages and the various characteristics of contemplative practice. Correlation does not imply causality and the design of this study did not allow for the exploration of causality between the variables.

Errors can occur in the scoring of the SOI. The score is highly dependent on the ability of the interviewer to generate structural material for evaluation. SOI assessments do not always result in a single score. If the generation of structural material is deficient, the scorers will be able to assign only a range of scores rather than a single score. For example, a scorer may indicate a range of 3(4) to 4/3 rather than a particular score of 3/4. In this study, all interviews resulted in a single score.

Although two certified scorers need to agree on a score for interrater reliability, both scorers could be wrong due to misjudgment or due to the interviewer's inability to generate the structural material that would have expressed the participant's true developmental stage. For example, an interview may generate structural material such that both scorers rate the developmental

stage at level 3. Had the interviewer probed in a different way, it is possible to have generated structural material indicative of a higher score.

### ***Reliability and Validity***

Lahey et al. (1988) reported on the reliability and validity of the Subject-Object Interview based on 27 interviews conducted in the 1980s. Regarding interrater reliability, Lahey et al. found 67% of the scores they reviewed were in complete agreement by two experienced raters, and 82% of the scores were within one transition stage rating (p. 356). Each major stage has five transition stages to the next major stage, e.g., 3, 3(4), 3/4, 4/3, 4(3), 4. To ascertain the scoring group's growth in understanding scoring issues, Lahey et al. tested the interrater reliability of the same scores eight months later. Using the agreed upon score from the initial test as one score, and a score from a rater not previously involved in the project, 89% of the scores were in complete agreement and 100% were within one transition stage rating (p. 356). This indicated strong interrater reliability. Lahey et al. compared interrater reliability with that of Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview, regarded as a similar and more established measurement (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987), finding a favorable comparison.

More recently, Lewis et al. (2005) utilized the SOI in a study of college age students at a military academy and reported on interrater reliability, finding 63% within one transition stage and 83% within two transition stages prior to reaching a consensus score for each interview (p. 362). In general, the Subject-Object Interview shows good interrater reliability and test-retest reliability.

Of the three types of validity, criterion-related validity, content validity, and construct validity, only construct validity is the applicable test for the SOI because the test seeks to determine if what is being measured corresponds to the theoretical definition of the psychological construct one is claiming to measure (Lahey et al., 1988). Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, & Lieberman (1994) state, “the appropriate validity concept for developmental measure...is construct validity, not prediction to an external criterion” (p. 26). Criterion-related validity and content related validity are of the external criterion type.

Lahey et al. (1988) note that construct validity infers the capacity to “1) capture gradual changes in subject-object development within persons in the expected direction over time, and 2) demonstrate a consistency of structural usage across a wide variety of contents” (p. 368). At the time Lahey et al. wrote this, few longitudinal studies of the SOI were completed that would apply to the first capacity. However, by 1994, Kegan was able to report on an ongoing study that his team had been conducting for nine years. Although only able to report on the first four years of the study, Kegan indicated that, with minor exception, his team found a gradual change in the developmental level of the participants in the study, in the direction expected, confirming the first capacity. In the study of college students in a military academy, Lewis et al. (2005) also found such gradual changes in the longitudinal part of their study. Regarding the demonstration of consistency across a wide variety of contents, Lahey et al. reported that the SOI had moderately positive correlations with other similar measures that one would expect for the criterion of consistency, namely, Kohlberg’s Moral Judgment

Interview, Loevinger's WUSCT, measure of Piagetian stage, and Selman's social-cognitive measure. The conclusion is that the Subject-Object Interview offers strong interrater reliability and construct validity.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

### *The Subject-Object Interviews and Demographic Data*

I conducted the Subject-Object Interviews between September 8, 2011 and October 26, 2011 telephonically. The scores ranged from 3 to 4(5). Table 7 shows the distribution of scores and other demographic data.

Table 7

#### *SOI and Demographic Data*

SOI Score	No. (%)	F	M	Avg. Age	% Child(ren) at Home
4(5)	2 (10.5)	2	0	51	0
4	1 (5.3)	1	0	31	0
4(3)	1 (5.3)	0	1	57	0
4/3	2 (10.5)	1	1	62	0
3/4	4 (21.1)	3	1	39	0
3(4)	1 (5.3)	1	0	29	100
3	8 (42.1%)	6	2	45	50
Total	19	14	5	45	0

*Note.* Created by author.

The participants were students in the Ph.D. program at the California Institute of Integral Studies, and their educational levels were homogeneous, with all participants having at least a Master's degree. No relationship between age or gender and SOI score was found. Five participants have one or more children living at home, four (50% of 8 participants) at level 3, and one at level 3(4).

The demographic question on religion indicated the very diverse religious background of the participants. The largest response was "none" with ten responses. In a few cases, the participants who responded "none" were very



involved with a guru or spiritual teacher. Three were Christian, two Buddhists, one Bahá'í, one Hindu, one Universalist Unitarian, and one self-identified as eclectic. All of the participants responded yes when asked if they considered themselves spiritual.

Table 8

*Distribution of SOI Scores in Current Study and Historical Study*

SOI Score	%			
	This Study	Historical Composite	Full SES Composite	Professional Highly Educated
5	0	0	0	0
4(5) to 5(4)	1	6	3	7
4	5	34	18	40
3(4) to 4(3)	42	32	31	33
3	42	14	12	15
2(3) to 3(2)	0	8	23	2.5
2	0	5	13	2.5
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Participants	n = 19	n = 282	n = 75	n = 207

*Note.* Adapted from *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (p. 195), by R. Kegan, 1994, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Copyright 1994 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Table 8 compares the distribution of levels of mental complexity among the participants in this study and a meta-analysis of studies with a total of 282 participants who are skewed toward middle-class, college educated professionals (Kegan, 1994). Compared to the historical composite, more participants in this study, on a percentage basis, scored at the third order of consciousness, that is, in the Socialized mind stage and from 3(4) to 4(3), that is, in the transition stages between Socialized mind and Self-Authoring mind. Kegan divided the

distribution into two groups in order to provide an estimate of the distribution of scores for a full socio-economic status (SES) composite and a highly educated composite. When this study is compared to the highly educated group, the overweighting in the Socialized mind and transition stages to Self-Authoring mind is even more pronounced. This may be a function of the small number of participants in this study or an artifact of self-selection for this study.

### *Introduction to the Contemplative Practices Interviews*

I conducted the contemplative practices interviews from November, 2011 to January, 2012. After the transcription of the interviews, I analyzed the results for patterns and insights. In this first section on the participants' contemplative practices, I will present a summary of each participant's interview in light of their SOI score. I present this section to provide a sense of what contemplative practice looks like at each stage of development. I begin with the participants at the highest level of mental complexity. In the next chapter on the analysis of results, I will present the five themes that emerged. For a glossary of meditative terms, please see Appendix H.

The participants seemed to enjoy this interview, and appreciated the questions as clarifying for their own practice. I, too, enjoyed the interviews, providing a window into the participants' practices that I would typically not be privy to. In the interview I maintained neutrality asking questions in such a way that they would not feel that their practice was in any way lacking. In fact, for those with practices, I was impressed with the interest and dedication they had for

their practice. I felt fortunate that these Ph.D. students were willing to share this part of their lives for this research.

### *Contemplative Practices Interviews by SOI Score*

#### **Level 4(5)—Full Self-Authoring Mind With Emerging Self-Transforming Mind**

The highest SOI level found in this study was in two individuals, both women. Their score was 4(5), Self-Authoring mind with Self-Transforming mind emerging. I will begin with Roberta's interview. Roberta is a 58 year old business executive. Her primary form of contemplative practice is meditation, introduced to her through her practice of yoga. Although only meditating for three years, she has created a meditation room in her home. She portrays a certain naïveté in her practice:

I'm not agile with all the different kinds of meditation there are. I sit quietly, and I use visualization. Sometimes I use practices that I've learned that are simply about clearing your mind. I don't know what the names of all of them are. It's through my reading and through my meditation teachers that I attend yoga classes with. So I attend yoga classes, and at the studio where I practice yoga, meditation is integrated into the yoga practice. Typically you will have a practice followed by a 30 minute sitting meditation. And so the yoga teacher will be guiding you through it, sometimes it will just be quiet, sometimes he'll teach something, like a metta meditation, chanting, it just varies. I don't always know all the names of those things.

Although she meditates at the end of her yoga class, she more often meditates at home. She typically meditates for 30 minutes, but does not time her meditations. She begins with a breathing exercise that serves as a way to, "to just center myself and my body." The body plays a role in her practice:

One of the first things I do just to settle down. I find that if I don't settle myself, I'll be fidgety. Even in my meditation, I don't even notice that I'm

doing it. The first thing I do is check in with my body as I'm sitting quietly with my eyes closed, in a comfortable seated position. I will check in with my body just to feel it grounded so I'll imagine energy flowing from my tip toes to the top of my head. And then I'll often create some kind of energy flow. This might happen during the meditation, after I've been [at] it for a while. Or I'm imagining energy flowing through my chakras.

One of the issues that all contemplative practices must deal with is what to do with arising thoughts. This is where attention comes into play. The various approaches include concentration, witnessing or effortlessness. Language can be difficult in explaining one's approach in that even effortlessness may include some small modicum of effort to remember to be effortless. Roberta indicated that effortless resonated with her and quoted Pema Chödrön, a well known contemporary American Buddhist teacher:

Well, Pema Chödrön says, "Don't beat yourself up." She says notice you are thinking and let it go; release it. I often will visualize clouds in the sky and that they are very active and moving around and those represent my thoughts. I'll use a visual like that to say let it go, and try to imagine it just leaving. I guess you would call that visualization.

She sees the practice of meditation as something other than a chore, or something she feels she "should" do. She says:

I love the practice. It's like a dear friend now. That's how it feels today. And I miss it if I am traveling and I can't find a spot that feels good to meditate, when I come back to it, I'm like, "Oh, gosh, I missed you so much."

Lastly, when asked what aspect of her contemplative practice contributed most to her developmental growth, she said, "Quiet. Sitting. Silence. Just the discipline of it. That's another part – one of those unexpected things."

The other participant who scored at the 4(5) level was Jane, a 44 year old educator with eclectic contemplative practices. As a child, Jane engaged in

centering prayer, vespers, and journaling. As an adult, Jane has “experimented with meditations over the years.”

I have found that moving meditation is more effective for me than a silent sitting meditation. Movement seems to be more key or more important or more useful in getting to that space where I can get out of my head and be more receptive to what is coming at me.

However, for the past year, she has meditated for an hour each and everyday with a brain wave entrainment program.

Jane was hesitant to bring up an important form of meditation she engaged in for 19 years while she lived in Alaska. Sometimes meditation can take unusual forms but are useful if they allow one to reach a quiet place within. Jane revealed that her early morning delivery of newspapers became a contemplative practice for her. I asked how her delivery of newspapers was meditative for her:

There are two things about it. One was, there was no choice, I had to show up. No matter how late I stayed up, no matter what, I had to show up. It was a grounding discipline that no matter what, this is a given....The other thing was the carving out the alone time. Everything else in my life was very, very busy. This was a spiritually lazy way, but it worked, being sure I prioritized my alone time. Because obviously, once I climb in the car and get under way, there's nothing about the job I have to think about. It's basically carving out that space where I am truly alone. It safeguarded my solitude. It was also consciously about knowing that part of my practice was learning to see in new ways, to develop greater vision and so getting out of my head, using it as a driving meditation – like Thich Nhat Hanh talks about a walking meditation. Driving meditation – to use it to get out of the thinking and develop greater perception, awareness, and vision. And so having the landscape as the guide – am I actually seeing the trees, am I actually seeing – what am I seeing, what am I saying, what am I hearing. So it was to develop greater receptivity, awareness, and perception in addition to safeguarding the solitude and maintaining the discipline.

In both 4(5) cases we see the importance of regularity and discipline in whatever practice a person chooses. They have both been architects of their environments creating a domain conducive to meditation. The complexity of their

meaning-making capacity allows them to understand how to organize their daily tasks to permit time for practice. When I asked Jane what aspect of practice contributed most to her growth, her first words were, “the discipline.” Roberta also mentioned the discipline, in addition to the silence and quiet that meditation provided her. Jane also referred to the silence using the phrase, “getting out of my head.”

Any parts of it that helps me get out of my head. Which is why I experimented with so many different things. The goal of getting out of my head, to be completely connected in that flow.

I asked her what it meant to her to be “out of her head”:

It means a sense of all of the thoughts or sensations that make me feel isolated or separated or disconnected either from myself, other people, the cosmos, those things evaporating into this sense of a deep, deep, blissful interconnectivity. So that, then whatever impulse that moves me, I know is coming from that place deep within that is me connected to the whole.

When asked about impediments to her practice, she acknowledged laziness, fear, and places where she feels stuck. However, it is with discipline that she engages in her practice. When asked why she practices, she said:

I can’t even imagine...it doesn’t even occur to me not to stay present and challenged. I certainly fall down on my ass daily with it. But in terms of it being a priority in my life, it’s a non-negotiable...my only self perception is of someone here to participate in this unfolding...it would just be like walking away from myself completely.

This is similar to Roberta’s response. There is a sense of priority given to this part of their lives.

#### Level 4—Fully Self-Authoring Mind

Only one participant scored at the fully Self-Authoring order of consciousness, Ruth, a 31 year old interfaith minister. Her primary form of contemplative practice is *lectio divina*, which she described as follows:

My primary form is *lectio divina* which is where you pause at different points and meditate and pray on it. It means divine speech, and you are waiting for the spirit to speak to you through the scripture, so you'll read through a certain passage that resonates with you, and then you will take that and go with your day, and spend the rest of the day thinking about that passage, what does it mean for me and why does it mean that.

Ruth's practice is rooted in a religious tradition, and is a formal set routine. She learned this practice at a Benedictine monastery approximately eight years ago at a week-long retreat. In the morning she practices for a half hour to two hours, with an average of 45 minutes. Here she describes more of her routine:

Typically I do reading of scripture, and kind of come to something and I'll do some prayers, sometimes it's chanting sometimes it's rosary type prayers. Either way, that sort of thing – it is a structural, ritualized way for thirty minutes or so in the morning. So the *lectio*, maybe 15 minutes of scripture reading, then you kind of take that with you all day. I try to do the chanting every day, and the *lectio* at least two or three times a week.

The chanting and prayers provides the inner silencing of the busy mind:

But the chanting practice and silent prayers is much more a time where I am trying to turn off the thinking. Both of them are trying to get you out of your ordinary chatterbox stream that I tend to have running through my brain at any moment. But they do it in different ways. The *lectio* is focusing and giving you something to think about whereas the chants and prayers are trying to get you to stop having an active conscious thought process and just be in the moment.

When asked the benefit of practice, Ruth indicated that although an important part is relaxation and grounding, it also allows her to be “in touch with the bigger picture.”

From Ruth's description of her motivation to engage in contemplative practice, one can see the seriousness with which she has embraced this practice:

One of my overarching themes in ministry is my desire to help people reclaim their faith tradition and in my case that's Christianity and to figure out ways. You know, people say, if you want to meditate, you have to pull out your mat and sit and do zazen and whatever, and I said there's ways of doing it in my tradition. So I started to explore different ways and this one appealed to me because it is fairly unique to Christianity. There isn't a practice like it that I could find in other religions and I did like the fact that it's something you take with you. So some days you have a lot of time so you can read through the scriptures and immerse yourself in them and become a part of that and other days you don't have a lot of time. You just read a verse hurriedly and just think about it all day. Either way, you're still engaging in your daily life but you are bringing into your daily life this spirituality. You don't have to retreat to a mountain top and not get the laundry done. It kind of brings a sacredness to the ordinary, which I'm really attracted to.

Ruth, like Jane, incorporates not just spirituality into her daily life, but also the practice itself. Jane incorporated a spiritual practice into her newspaper route, and Ruth is allowing scripture to work her while she is doing the laundry. Rather than compartmentalizing their life between the sacred and the secular, they are expanding the sacred in their everyday life.

Regarding the theme of the discipline of practice, Ruth said:

For me, what contributes the most is when I'm consistent. And I know that's not a particular practice, but it is really hard for me to maintain consistency because things in my life keep shifting and so I don't know if there is a practice that has been better for me or anything, I just know when I practice more, I'm a better person.

For Ruth, impediments to her practice include time and health. She values consistency in her practice, and tries to maintain a balanced life that allows her to have the time and energy for her contemplative practices. Ruth engages in her chanting practice everyday and *lectio divina* two or three times a week. Although this seems to be a regular and consistent practice, she feels that it is hard to



maintain consistency. Compared to the 4(5) participants, she is a little less regular in her practice.

### **Level 4(3)—Full Self-Authoring Mind With Vestige of Socialized Mind**

Nick, a 57 year old priest, with many years in a contemplative order, is at the Self-Authoring stage with a vestige of the Socialized order of consciousness. His current practice includes quiet time and reflective time. He prays every morning for 15 minutes using the Psalms. For Nick,

Part of our way of being is being contemplative and active, so we are always engaged in some kind of contemplative activity. Contemplation is very much a part of our life. So there is the quiet time that would be part of it, but also it's constantly reflecting on events on what's happening in the world, in the ministry, and the scriptures as well. So while there is quiet time for prayer and contemplation there is also a lot that happens in terms of process. We are always sifting through and reflecting on things.

In other words, he lives a life of contemplation, not just at certain times. Similar to Ruth and Jane, there is little compartmentalization between his daily life and his contemplative life.

Being able to be present to the moment so that in that contemplative time being present to that moment enables the possibility of being present in other moments as well. So, it is about presence and for me experiencing the presence of God. Realizing the presence of God is crucial to that.

Nick indicated the importance of inner silence in his life of contemplation, "I do not engage in significant traditional meditative 'time out' experiences. I do spend two or more hours each day simply being present to the experience of God. This is the wordless boundless openness to God and the other." Nick also described his practice as a form of differentiation, using the phrase "stepping back from" in which he steps back from himself.

The silent time is the busy time, sort of stepping back from... Because it happens in the busy time, stepping back from it is the time to say “aha, in this moment this incredible thing happened,” and without paying attention, without being able to step back from it, it could just be another moment that just went by.

The self-awareness is an important part of his contemplative process.

It certainly helps to sort of stay focused, but also for me it usually helps to reframe a situation, or another way of seeing things. And that’s particularly helpful for me in terms of preaching, sort of opens ways of playing with words, language and symbols. Then in terms of professionalism, so part of that experience, having stepped back myself, being reflective, there is a greater sense of compassion for whatever somebody is in the middle of and helping them to see new possibilities.

When asked about his motivation to engage in contemplative practice, Nick said, “From the time I was very young it’s this desire to be in a relationship with God.”

As far as the aspects of contemplative practice that contributed most to his growth, Nick noted “the interplay of the scriptures and experience and being able to allow those two things to be in dialogue.”

Given Nick’s way of life as a priest in a contemplative order, he is very regular in his practice, and is familiar with many if not all forms of Christian contemplative practices. Nick believes that this practice has increased his self-awareness by keeping him grounded and focused. “I think taking that time apart allows questions and images to surface that the noise and busyness often keep down. It just allows the possibility.”

Nick described his impediments to practice as being tired, overworked, or not taking care of himself. However, living in a contemplative order provides the environmental surround or domain that is conducive to developmental growth through the challenges and support that a good contemplative order provides.

### **Level 4/3—Full Self-Authoring Mind Primary; Full Socialized Mind Secondary**

The two participants at this stage of development have a long history of contemplative practice and consistency in their practice. With both a full Self-Authoring mind and a full Socialized mind operating, but with Self-Authoring predominant, Barry and Sally show a responsibility for their chosen form of practice. Barry has incorporated Native American spirituality into his self-created ritual:

I had my own little ritual. I adapted it after sweat lodge, which I've done hundreds of. I draw an extremely hot bath, and then I darken the room and then I get in the water. And in my own mind I do a sweat lodge ceremony with a medicine wheel. I pray in the four directions. And then I just observe - that's part of it. The other part of it, I get my mind silent. I can just be in the moment and drift off into visions without words – try to watch my words and not focus on the words let them slip by. Of all the things I do, that's the thing that will get me grounded and centered better than anything else.

Barry has engaged in this practice for fifteen years, five times a week.

Each session lasts 40 minutes to an hour. The inner silent part of the practice lasts 30 to 45 minutes.

Sally began her contemplative practice 28 years ago, and embraced a quiet meditative practice:

It's been 28 years. When I began the practice it would be an hour or two hours at a time. And I found that to be a relief. I couldn't wait to get into that two hour sitting.

Sally, like the other participants with a full Self-Authoring mind, albeit with a full Socialized mind operating at the same time, displays a creative approach to her selected type of contemplative practice. When asked to explain her practice, she said:

I would say it is a sitting practice. And it evolved over the years. I have experience with a concentration form. A mantra association that I've adapted to my own Bahá'í beliefs, so I use words that are sacred to the Bahá'í faith. And I did a lot of research into mindful meditation. It's mindfulness that I do most of the time.

She no longer spends as much time at each sitting, but is very consistent in her practice.

But these days, I'd say 10 – 15 minutes a day tops. Sometimes 5, it depends on the day. But I don't know of a day recently that I've missed 5 – 10 minutes of a sitting practice.

Contemplative practices may be helpful in the transformation of consciousness due to its ability to increase self-awareness. Many meditation instructions include the concept of witnessing one's thoughts. This in itself provides a certain amount of differentiation from these thoughts. Instead of identifying with the thoughts, one notices them as a witness. When I asked her whether she uses concentration, witnessing or effortlessness in meditation, Sally responded:

I'd say witnessing and effortlessness. And by that I mean identifying thoughts. Doing all of that thinking, worrying, smelling, seeing, and then eventually it falls away into that effortlessness or witness is a really good description of that next state that I've really come to cherish. That state centers me.

And when a thought does come up, she indicated that "I watch it, notice it, and then focus again on my breathing." When asked about the most important outcome, Sally said:

I think it's a sense of belonging to a bigger picture. In that I could include the witnessing, the calming, but it's that a state of mind that feels closer to a home resting state... When you sit there and thoughts come up in a witness state that is detached from ego it's almost comical sometimes of how petty and little I can be. Over time patterns have shown up that I understand are part of this physical emotional endowment that is Sally and have really thought to develop an affection for this person that means well

but has all these patterns in her way. So it helps me see those things in a more detached way so I'm not personalizing them in the sense or I don't feel defensive about it. It's what is. And seeing it in a bigger picture with compassion.

Sally's contemplative practice seems to lead to a detachment that sounds similar to subject becoming object when she talks about herself in the third person. I followed up by asking her what she meant by a bigger picture.

A bigger picture means that I am not a tiny ego self. I am a part of a pattern and reality that while beyond me, I can sort of smell a different state of mind in that mindfulness witness space. Just the faintest of aromas of a bigger reality.

#### **Level 3/4—Full Socialized Mind Primary; Full Self-Authoring Mind Secondary**

Four participants were operating at this stage of development in which they made meaning through both the Socialized order of consciousness and the Self-Authoring order of consciousness with the Socialized mind primary. At this stage of development, I would expect to see similarities with the previously reported participants since both groups have a fully Socialized mind and a fully Self-Authoring mind in operation. Since this group has a full Socialized mind operating in the primary position, aspects of the Socialized mind are more likely to show up in their contemplative practice. However, with a skilled teacher providing both a challenging and nurturing environmental surround, the Self-Authoring mind may begin to take on the primary role.

Barbara is a 30 year old woman who is associated with the Diamond Approach, a path of wisdom developed by A. H. Almaas, a spiritual teacher. Barbara meditates for approximately a half hour per day, but would like to be more consistent with her practice. She described her meditation in detail:

My primary form of meditation, it's called *Kath* meditation. Focusing on two inches below the navel...I sit on a chair, the key is the knee needs to be below the hip. Then I put my right thumb in my right palm then close my left palm around it. Then I place both hands on my belly. Then I maintain my focus in my *Kath*. Sometimes I switch to circular meditation starting from the sacrum imagining energy moving behind my spine all the way up to my head then I inhale, then exhale, energy is flowing from my forehead to my belly. Circulating like this. Then I move my focus and I go back to *Kath*. And then I go back to circulation. The first thing I do is a sensing meditation starting from the right foot, asking the right foot about the temperature, anything, just making a note of the field of that place. Not trying to change anything, just noting it's there. Starting from the right foot, slowly moving up, the knee to right leg, hip and right hand to the shoulders, switch to left shoulder way down to left hand, left hip to the left foot. So now I covered all the legs and arms and shoulders and then I start feeling them both at the same time. Feeling both feet, both arms, both legs and then any sound in the meditation – being in touch with any sound that is around me. Then when I'm ready, I open my eyes. The key is not going out, but inviting in images while I am feeling my body and listening all at the same time.

I don't try to stop my thoughts. If thoughts come, I gently try to come back to my *Kath*. Sometimes I do this like a metronome movement. If thoughts are really busy and I can't come back to my *Kath*, I can't focus then I do that metronome movement like to the left, the right very slowly and then I slowly come back to the center. And it helps me come back.

I learned this technique from the Diamond Approach. There are two chantings I also do. A Hu and Ram chanting, before meditation. I've been associated with the Diamond Approach for five years. I've been doing the *Kath* meditation for five years. That was the first meditation we learned.

I would like to do it everyday, but I'm not. Let's say I do it three times a week and slowly increasing the numbers. I would like to do it everyday.

It seems that with a full Socialized mind leading a secondary Self-Authoring mind, consistent practice is more of a challenge than for the participants at more complex stages of development. I asked Barbara what was stopping her from practicing every day.

That's a very good question [long pause]. I haven't found the real reason, but the thought comes that I'm busy, there is something else I need to do, I'll do it later and I haven't been able to go beyond that.

I asked Barbara about her motivation to meditate.

It's like a flow when I meditate. It's like I don't even ask. Like I wake up and then meditate or during the day, I suddenly decide to meditate. It feels like part of the flow. It is what my body wants. It is not like a head thinking decision. It is more coming from, I feel like that is the time....So I don't use meditation practice when I'm too busy in my head, I don't use it to try to calm myself down. I use sensing. I only sense my arms and legs. If I'm too nervous, I don't sit down to meditate. I notice some people do process meditation. They process things. That's not what I do. I try to make it part of my day. These are very helpful questions. I hope they are helping you because they are helping me to really understand why my relationship with meditation. I need to meditate more. I meditate when it is the right moment.

Perhaps a meditator with a fully Self-Authoring mind operating would meditate whether it was the "right moment" or not, or would know how to arrange for the right moment. Busy mind or no, the discipline of regular practice is important.

One can still observe or witness a busy mind as part of the meditation.

In fact, a busy mind may be indicative of being embedded in a situation. In that case one is *had* by the situation rather than being able to hold the situation as object. Through discipline, the practitioner will meditate even during the difficult busy mind times, not necessarily by quieting the mind but by being a witness of the busy mind, thereby generating some distance from the situation. It is the development of this distance that sparks the process of differentiation that leads to developmental growth. If this is so then watchfulness of the mind is a very important factor in contemplative practice.

Barbara described this process when asked how meditation contributes to her personal growth:

Stopping from everything. Everything stops, quiets down. Life feels just so quiet. In those moments, everything is fine, so I can bring more objective perspective to my situations. Sometimes situations feel more important than they are. Then after some meditations, my mind quiets down I feel quiet and peaceful, and from that state it is easier to assess the

real importance of that situation. Sometimes I just realize how unimportant it is.

Through the process of quieting the mind, separation from her situations allows Barbara to have a new, less embedded perspective that over time can lead her from a Socialized mind to a Self-Authoring mind.

The second participant at this level of development is Peggy, a 28-year-old woman who is part of a Shambhala Buddhist community. Her parents raised her in the Shambhala tradition. Peggy describes her primary form of contemplative practice:

I do Vipassana through the Shambhala community. I aspire to seven days a week, but more realistically five and between a half an hour and 45 minutes in the morning. It is seated. It's a form of meditation where focusing on the inbreath and just coming back to the breathing, relaxing with any thoughts that come up, noticing them and then letting them fall away again, coming back to the breath. And usually, depending on the day, I'll do some contemplation, so contemplating a slogan or a phrase and then the basic following the breath technique.

Although she would like to practice every day, she practices approximately five times a week. She described the impediments to daily practice as:

Life and trying to be a doctorate student and working. Things like that. I think I'm fortunate enough that I have made it a priority for so long that feels like a natural state than not practicing, not meditating. The motivation to get me back onto the cushion is very strong because I have a reference point for the difference.

It seems as if the Socialized mind remains embedded in the grind of daily life while the Self-Authoring mind naturally prioritizes her contemplative practice. In addition, the Self-Authoring mind through greater complexity can see more alternatives and options to handle the vicissitudes of daily life. Peggy described her attention in her practice as a witnessing, a stance that might be helpful in



developing a differentiation from current situations of daily living, thereby contributing to developmental growth.

The third participant at this stage, Elaine, is a 46 year old woman who is the director of a retreat center and is interested in spiritual growth. Elaine has had a regular daily practice for between seven and eight years. Her interest and knowledge of contemplative practices is exemplary. She engages in Vipassana meditation, yoga, journaling, dialogue, and deep listening. She describes her meditation practice:

I am currently doing a led meditation – a CD – then I do Vipassana meditation after the CD ends. It's a ten minute meditation, then I do Vipassana which I've been doing for years after that. [I meditate] up to a half hour now. The way I'm currently meditating now I've been doing for about nine months. Before that I did Vipassana starting about six and a half years ago.

I have a spiritual teacher who discerned that I was using Vipassana meditation to keep myself from myself. Meaning that I was relying on this hour of meditation every morning to keep myself in line, to keep away the shadow parts of myself, and so he suggested that I lighten up a little bit on that because he thought that my attitude towards myself was not friendly. And so he was suggesting that I trust myself more. This new meditation is something he created for me which is a heart opening meditation and it's basically guiding me to link up with the unconditional love that is always available and to trust what is innately there.

First, his bringing my attention to that awareness was useful. With my work with him, I've been trying to be increasingly friendly to the shadow part I had and tried to repress before. When I do Vipassana now, and I encounter a tight spot in the body or a feeling or a thought that maybe before I would use my will force, I'm friendlier about it, more embracing. A friendlier stance toward whatever is in me that...whereas before I would have said it was unacceptable, it was something to be removed or something to be worked on, and now it is something to be embraced.

Elaine's meditation teacher is helping her become aware of the parts of herself that she has repressed. Being friendlier to those parts of herself may allow Elaine

to hold those parts as object rather than be subject to them. In this way, her meditation teacher may be facilitating her transition to the next sub-stage of 4/3.

Elaine leads personal growth workshops and feels an obligation to practice out of a sense of responsibility to her students. This is an external motivation rather than the internal motivation seen in those participants at higher stages of development.

Well, I feel like I have a responsibility to do it. I lead these groups that are about moving towards wholeness and so I feel like I have to do that myself every day if I'm going to be teaching it so that's a big motivation. Another is the feeling of centeredness. But it's funny how that one doesn't always work. So the responsibility one is my ace in the hole. Because I can talk myself out of how good it makes me feel. That almost seems like a selfish motivation. Then when I think it's my responsibility to do it, then I begrudgingly often will say ok. (laughter). I find that amusing because why wouldn't I do it if it makes me feel good. I don't always. But once I say, 'I need to, it's my job' then I do it.

When asked about impediments to her practice, Elaine said:

It's basically anything the ego can use as an excuse not to practice. And busyness is probably it's main mode for me. Now that I'm in this doctoral program, and I've got this paper due, that has to take priority. And I just have to have a conversation with myself about it. And that's where the responsibility thing comes in. Yes, I have a responsibility to do my homework, but I also have a responsibility to my clients. So, that's my trump card.

Although Elaine indicates that she meditates everyday, she is also indicating that the priorities of her external life can impede her practice. She seems to be successful in using her responsibilities as a "trump card" to enforce her practice rather than the enjoyment or centering of the practice itself.

Michael, the fourth participant at this stage of development is a 51 year old man who described his contemplative practice in terms of a practice developed by Johann Goethe and written about by Rudolf Steiner. Michael

teaches in a Waldorf school, an educational movement based on the teachings of Rudolf Steiner.

Basically, I'm a Goethean phenomenologist, which means that I work with imaginative conceptions of objects in nature. As a chemistry teacher, I'm interested in understanding chemical processes that are archetypal rather than material processes.

Michael describes the practice as follows:

For me phenomenology is an example of the process where I consciously apply what I think are universal cognitive stages. There are four of them, sensation or memory, imagination, inspiration, and intuition. So the actual practice of phenomenology is one where you try to call forth images and memory of a particular process. Then one works through this in a receptive mode to a place of an imaginative experience. Images arise from basically nothing and then by thinking about those images one can find meaning and meaningful relationships between the object under question and the image.

When asked about the frequency of his practice, Michael said:

At the moment, I'm not doing a lot of meditative practice. It's more of an ad hoc thing. So, my meditative practice is also not particularly strong right now....The most serious impediment for me is the sense that I am really on my own in doing it. It would be very gratifying if I could work with others more intimately. It seems like the community that is doing this kind of work is pretty fragmented. There is a lot of difficulty establishing language that is the same. The other impediment is really just sitting down and doing it. But the sense of being alone is the hardest part of it. I don't have a great sense of direction so when I'm working on a particular problem or something, then I can make use of it, but I'll go for long periods of time where I am not really applying it at all. The fact that I don't have an ongoing dialogue makes it really difficult to carry on.

Michael is not really practicing right now, and attributes the pause in his practice to the lack of a community with which to practice. Perhaps this is the full Socialized mind being primary and therefore holding sway over the operation of the Self-Authoring mind within Michael. A Self-Authoring mind would make meaning of contemplative practice in such a way that regular practice would have a high priority as seen in those who have a Self-Authoring mind primary. We see

in those for whom the Self-Authoring order of consciousness is primary an independent, consistent, and self-directed practice. Individuals at the Self-Authoring mind level make meaning of contemplative practice in more complex ways and therefore have greater options and opportunities and are more adaptable even when engaging in contemplative practices with a busy mind.

#### **Level 3(4)—Full Socialized Mind with Emerging Self-Authoring Mind**

One participant scored at the level of Socialized mind with Self-Authoring emerging. Amy, a 29 year old writer, is the first participant who does not have a full Self-Authoring mind operating, in primary position or otherwise. Although she engages in contemplative practices that include prayer and sitting in silence, she seems unfamiliar with the concept of contemplative practice, hesitating and wondering if prayer is included.

I'm not...I don't know, um, is prayer included in that? [I responded yes.] OK, that would definitely have to be it. I wish I had the opportunity to really just sit and meditate a little bit more, but I don't think I...I don't make the time to do it. But one thing I do try to do, especially in the morning when it's a little quiet, the baby is still sleeping, and my husband's just left, I try to make sure I have the opportunity to just sit and reflect and be kind of thankful for everything I have and everything that's going on in my life.

She told me that she has been engaged in a prayer practice for 13 to 14 years, but is not regular with her practice. She felt it important to let me know that she is not engaging in traditional prayer:

It's not like the traditional fall to my knees and clasp my hands together. It's definitely not anything like that. It's definitely the moment to just begin, and kinda just sit and literally like just be thankful. And offer up, you know, the universe, I don't know all the answers, whatever, but just to say like, thanks for everything just the way it's gone...that kind of balances me a little bit.

My impression was that although she engages in prayerful gratitude, she is awakening to the idea of learning more about meditation.

I am working towards making time to meditate. When I went to the intensive in the fall, I had an opportunity to attend a chant session with some of my fellow students, and it absolutely, I loved it. I absolutely loved it. It's kind of sporadic. Every now and again I'll have the opportunity to sit and do the Buddhist chant. I haven't quite gotten to the point where it's regular. It hasn't gotten to the point where I'm appreciating it like I was when I was at the intensive, but it is something I am striving towards.

She learned the Buddhist chant at the Ph.D. week long intensive, and is hoping to learn to find time to meditate. Compared to the participants who had both the Socialized mind and the Self-Authoring mind in full operation (3/4 and 4/3), Amy is at the beginning stages of engaging in a deeper level of contemplative practice. When she does sit in silence, it is to reflect upon issues of her life rather than to allow for the slowing of thoughts and inner silence:

My biggest thing is to be calm. I'm not really a high stress kind of person where I freak out, but I think I internalize a lot of things where I'm trying to be a mom, trying to be a student, also writing, being a wife of someone in the military and sometimes I think I get very overwhelmed. And so for me to have the opportunity to just sit and just think and reflect and be thankful, even for the stress, because at least I have something to be stressed about...It's kind of an opportunity for me to find my center, calm down a little bit, just relax a little bit, just kind of tell myself, this is all going to be OK.

### **Level 3—Fully Socialized Mind**

Eight participants scored at the Socialized order of consciousness, almost half of the sample. Of the eight participants, four have a regular contemplative practice while the other four do not currently have a practice. Two participants have practices that are very regular and disciplined, while the other two have practices that are engaged in at opportune moments.

Sharon is a 40 year old woman who had been on a 10-day Vipassana retreat three years ago. She kept up the practice for two years, but stopped the Vipassana meditation a year ago. In response to the question of her primary form of practice, Sharon said:

You know, I think that that form has changed, and at this point it would be prayer more than meditation. I'm just not in a routine of meditating the way I used to be. What year was it? In 2009 I did the 10 day Vipassana 12 hour sitting meditation, and that really got me into a meditation routine. But in the past two years, I've taken care of a little girl and also started a new relationship and that just made it so that I just don't have the same routine, but my goal is to get back into that because it has been so good for me in the past.

Prayer is Sharon's fallback practice if her experience of life is such that she cannot find the time to meditate. She says she would prefer meditating, but life circumstances impede that practice. The new relationship at first helped in her practice:

The first year we were together we probably were meditating three times a week. He might meditate with me. Prior to meeting me, he never had meditated. We do talk about it and we both miss it and would like to get back into that routine. And then for whatever reason it's just...our living circumstances are we're still with his mother in a very small space. And the child is very energetic and boisterous little girl. It always seems that there's something going on, some distraction happening. He works long hours as well. So we've been four months now looking for a house and one thing has fallen through or another and we finally found a place out in the countryside that we're just hoping will be a place we can go to and I think once we're out of these cramped quarters that we'll set up a meditation room and really make that effort to start doing that again. I do miss it. And he had watched something by David Lynch on Transcendental Meditation, and that's what got him interested in meditation.

I found that when I was by myself, I was practicing much more with yoga and meditation and my own prayer time but in my living situation I do not have the same time for many things and I think it's gotten better. Right now, my family life is an impediment to some degree, unfortunately.

Sharon experiences the busyness of her life as an impediment to meditative practice. She hopes that this interview itself will encourage her to begin her practice again:

So thanks for this reminder, maybe this is part of the universe working through you to get me back onto the mat.

She is hoping that external events and circumstances become more conducive in allowing her meditation to become routine. She is identifying the effect of her environmental surround on the way she makes meaning of her contemplative practice. I asked her about her prayer practice:

I'm flashing back to my grandmother and how she was in a constant state of prayer...it's almost like a song that goes on, just praying about family members and the planet or whatever issues are going on and also I remind myself to pray to the things I am grateful for, not just begging for help and dealing with problems. I'd say a lot of my prayers are about thankfulness. And that reminds me to be thankful for my life and for my family and for my health and I don't know how to give that prayer a title.

I ask to be in line with God's will. It's more like I visualize, I'm a very visual person and I'm an artist. It's more like my prayers involve visualizing light and just cleansing myself with that and letting that flow through me in a very healing way. It's very restorative and centering. If it's the kind of prayer when I'm washing the dishes or communicating about an issue or whatever it's an automatic prayer reflex I guess. It's this sensing of light. And now that I think about it, I do think that's something I do automatically anytime that I am praying. Especially if I'm intensely in prayer but even driving, and I can feel this viscerally as I'm talking about it right now, it's very much a heart centered feeling.

At first I thought that Sharon's practice, being prayer oriented and engaged in during her everyday activities would not provide an experience of inner silence. And it might not have except for the fact that she had experienced inner silence during her practice of Vipassana meditation. It seems that having learned that inner spaciousness during her year of practice gave her the ability to have that experience during prayer.

I think of my Vipassana meditation and the empty place that I got to there and actually since that time, and that was such a powerful experience, the spaciousness was incredible. I think I carried that into my prayer state and yes, even though I can't say definitely that this happens to me all the time, I do think there is a space that is very silent and very spacious. But I don't think I've always been aware of it in the same way that the Vipassana experience helped me to realize that so that now when I am engaged in a spiritual activity I get to that same place. I don't call it empty though, it doesn't feel empty, it's spacious but not empty.

Sharon's is a complicated case in which she does not have a set time or duration for practice, and her practice is a verbal-based prayer practice. Yet because of her experience with Vipassana meditation, she feels she can access the silence she experienced in meditation during verbal prayer. Her desire to return to a meditation practice may indicate that the prayer practice does not provide the experience of silence that the meditation would provide.

Lori is a 30 year old woman with a daily meditation practice she referred to as the "light meditation."

I like doing the light meditations. Basically you look at a candle or a light in front of you for maybe a couple of minutes or a couple of seconds and then you imagine the light within the center of your forehead in your mind and then you allow that light to travel down to the center of your heart. You imagine your heart to be a flower that is blossoming, embracing the light, accepting it, and the petals are opening up, and then you allow the light to travel to your different limbs, your arms, your legs, your feet. Then you make it come back up and it goes to your mouth, your tongue, your ears and your eyes. Then you charge yourself with that light and expand it out into your environment, into your community, and you allow that light to expand first to your loved ones and then you take it out to your greater community and then to the whole world and the whole universe. That is covering each animate and inanimate being.

I asked Lori about the frequency and the time duration of her practice.

Once a day. If I get deep into it, it takes 15 – 20 minutes. I've been doing this for at least four years. I go to the [name of guru] organization. This was the practice they used to do at the end of the prayer service and I picked up on it and used it after that.



I was curious about her involvement with the spiritual organization.

I still am very much involved. I was involved starting about 17 years old and I've been continuously involved in it, very active within the organization. It is a multifaith organization. There are no requirements, anyone and everyone is welcome regardless of their race or creed or background, ethnicity or gender. The focus is on encompassing human values, practicing truth, and peace....I spend a lot of time at the center.

Regarding the origins of the practices she engages in, Lori indicated that the source was from a text by the spiritual teacher of the movement to which she belongs. The light meditation itself was from a tape published by the organization. "So I listen to the audio format of it and when I follow it but since I already know it sometimes I listen to the audio and sometimes I just do it myself."

I asked Lori how her practice increases her self-awareness. She replied:

I feel my role is much greater in life. I have a purpose to fulfill in the world. You are here to do something for the betterment of the world. And in terms of my own self-awareness, to realize more about yourself in the sense that I feel that we are all energy fields and my energy field helps me to see that or put that into perspective. But I'm not there yet. I'm not there at realizing my true self. I don't feel like I've realized completely. Like when you get carried away by the pressures of daily life that's when you kind of fall back at it.

I'm not sure how meditation helps me be more self aware but it reminds me we are all light fields in a way that reminds me of my role to carry the torch to hold the light within and spread the light. It reminds me that is my role and my purpose.

Lori indicated that she does not experience any impediments to her practice.

Jennifer, a 58 year old woman, has been engaged in Buddhist chanting for many years. She describes her primary form of contemplative practice:

My Buddhist practice of chanting. That's it. I've been doing it for 29 to 30 years. I'm trying to break through something, so I'm doing two to three hours a day. It's less now, an hour to an hour and a half. I get up really early, so that makes a difference too. I practice every day, twice a day, without missing.

I asked Jennifer what is happening internally while she is chanting:

That is difficult. I become more hopeful, more energetic. I have a stronger conviction for the things I'm determining to change in my life, to overcome the challenges that are facing me. As I continue to chant I have more compassion for myself and for others, more appreciation, what we call overall generally higher life state, greater wisdom and courage.

Jennifer chants to overcome the obstacles in her life and belongs to a lay religious movement that provides its members with a scroll to observe while chanting.

Jennifer referred to this scroll when I asked her about the role of attention in her practice:

Paying attention. I guess I'm trying to focus on the scroll in front of me to pay attention to because if you don't you can really wander a bit. But I'm just focusing on the sound and the rhythm. As you chant more and more you find your thoughts being elevated. So where I was worrying about even a physical condition or something like that, suddenly I'm not, there is a higher or loftier thing I'm thinking of. Or, I start to think about goals for others as opposed to just my own thing, you know, my own egocentric world.

I asked her what she does when thoughts do arise:

I just fight them. I fight them by really chanting, determining to...lately one of the prayers that I've had is to understand that I am perfectly endowed. I am the Buddha so to speak. I am part of what we chant. As I am, I have this great expansive potential, equivalent to the universe. But, especially when something is going on in my life, I start to think, 'Am I deserving of that?' That I am not worthy, I am not that entity. So, I really chant to conquer that, lately that's been my goal.

Jennifer describes her relationship to thoughts as fighting them. I would describe her approach to the chant as concentration. Rather than allowing thoughts to pass like clouds or with nonjudgment, she seems to focus on the challenges and successes in her life. Jennifer's motivation to chant is to address her challenges in life:

My problems (laughter), my earthly desires, I'd like to say it's something lofty like world peace, which it ultimately is because I said as I chant I

notice that my life is rising higher and higher and those things start to come out. But we also have to deal with our own daily lives. We have to deal with these multitudes of problems that we face: physical, mental, spiritual, material. That's what motivates me – it works. I wouldn't do something that I didn't constantly see actual proof.

Jennifer chants to overcome specific problems that are coming up in her life. She also expressed that chanting can bring up and intensify the challenges of life and that chanting becomes even more important in that case:

The actual chanting will bring this stuff out, more. Also, there's a concept, it says, voluntarily assuming the appropriate karma for one's mission or destiny. In other words, we chose, so to speak, those various things so that we could overcome them and show proof to others and then mystically, I meet people who are undergoing similar things in my life. That's the mystical part, but I do. And I may look to encourage those people through my experience. They wouldn't listen to me otherwise. Well, you don't know what I'm talking about. But this is how our mission becomes more expansive, because we have more and more people we can relate to. So the chanting, if you imagine a hose that is sitting sedentarily for long periods of time and rust builds up inside the hose, you turn the hose on, that is our chanting. As you're chanting this water comes out, this pure water. But all the rust and the sediment is coming out too. As you chant you will have kind of problems in the fast lane. A lot of people can't stand it, that's why they say "to accept is easy, to continue is difficult" because you will actually experience things and overcome them and grow very quickly through those things as part of the way this practice works. The beginning, usually, not everybody's the same, but I particularly remember, I got huge benefits, we call them benefits, I got very unbelievable things happened, so I said "wow" this is either coincidence or this stuff is really amazing. Part of that is our state of mind I think. We are very doubtful but at the same time we are open. We're very seeking, we have this expectation because everyone is telling us, but there is a part of ourselves telling us "this can't be." This chanting, you can experience in less time the things that you would suffer down the line. You are able to grow that much more. Instead of having it linger and maybe 20 years from now, you do what we call lessen your destiny or karma, you even feel like, "wow, that was a close call, but look what happened," best case scenario, always seems to happen, "I'm alive, I shouldn't have been," kind of feeling.

In Jennifer's response are the internalized beliefs she has assumed from the Buddhist chanting movement. Her process of accepting these assumptions as a given may be indicative of the Socialized mind in operation. Since she makes

meaning through the Socialized mind, she forms her sense of role and identity from others, and is therefore more inclined to accept the beliefs her teacher presents. Without a more complex meaning-making capacity, one has fewer options, opportunities, and choices. The world is more black and white.

When I asked how her practice has increased her self-awareness, she responded:

By having ever more and more challenges that I am able to overcome with less and less freak out so to speak, with greater understanding, and a greater acceptance and appreciation thereof. Being able to effect people more positively because like many, many people, particularly when I'm feeling very strong, I can gauge when I'm having some challenges and I haven't really been at that place where I'm, like I say when I'm appreciating them. You know when you really appreciate your challenge your life is shining no matter what's going on, you can be in prison, but if you really understand that this is a great opportunity that this is not your efforts that you have ability to actually prove the greatness of your being through undergoing no matter what it is, you know, an illness or, again, persecution by authorities. We call it the third of the powerful enemies.

Jennifer's reference to "earthly desires" and "the third of the powerful enemies" are specific terms that the head of the religious organization she belongs to uses. My sense was that Jennifer had internalized the teachings and was responding to my questions from these teachings.

Larry is the last participant at the third order of consciousness with a contemplative practice. He is a 56 year old man whose practice is dream interpretation. When I asked him if he had a contemplative practice, he said:

I would say yes in terms of dream interpretation and I think just a lot of contemplation about what drives me and what motivates and what sort of conditions I'm responding to and how the environment affects me.

This did not sound like the usual types of contemplative practice, so I asked if this was a formal practice, or something he engaged in as things came up. He

indicated that it was not a formal practice, but was done “more as things came up.” However, he then said that he engaged in the practice of dream interpretation “probably five or six times a week, on average” for a time period of “probably 20 – 30 minutes.” Now it was sounding like a formal practice in terms of frequency.

I asked him how long he has been doing this kind of practice.

I would say for the last 20 years or so. Significantly less before then, but as I’m getting closer to where I’ve reached mid-middle age, it’s become significantly more frequent.

I asked Larry about the nature of this practice.

Well, I keep a dream journal so I try to write things down in the morning after I’ve woken up and then I try to keep a running log of that in my dream journal and hope to be able to use that to not only help me with my research but help me with my writing. The use of the collective unconscious for certain areas of research, certain areas I’m interested in writing about.

Larry was indicating that his motivation for this practice was to help him improve his research and writing. The dream interpretation practice seemed to be more about horizontal change, that is, change within an order of consciousness, than about growth to a more complex stage of developmental. He makes meaning of his practice through the lens of skill improvement, not a very complex point of view. When I asked him if he thought this practice was contributing to his personal growth he said, “Yes, I think so. I think my research skills are developing quite rapidly actually.” Although I was hinting at inner growth with that question, he was still focused on skill development. He was not talking about any inner change or process, so I probed further by asking him to describe what is going on while he is engaged in this practice internally. He replied,

It’s a matter of writing down the dream and then later going back and looking at these and seeing if I can derive some information out of them

that would be useful to me but sometimes it involves sending it off to people who have more experience than I do in dream interpretations.

Unable to elicit a sense of his internal process, I asked him directly if inner silence plays a role in his practice. Unfortunately, it is the type of question that begs a yes answer. Larry said,

Inner silence? Yes, I think it's critical, I think in order to be contemplative you have to be able to put yourself in a position of rest and relaxation in order to be able to focus.

Curious about what he meant by rest and relaxation, I made further inquiries.

Well, it's like a quasi nap or the state just before I go to sleep or the state just before I wake up. During daylight hours it would be almost like a nap only without going into a sleep state.

Perhaps he was indicating the benefit of being in a hypnogogic state, the state of consciousness between sleep and wakefulness.

From Larry's description, I was hesitant to classify his practice as a contemplative practice. However, he was very regular in his practice, and therapists use dream interpretation with their patients. Therefore, I classified his practice of dream interpretation as a contemplative practice.

The last participant I will review in detail is Janet, a 45-year-old woman who belongs to a movement founded by an Indian spiritual teacher, no longer living, who had declared his divinity. Janet joined this movement at the age of 19 and continues to be part of the movement. A few years later, Janet joined a group of followers in California whose leader held lineage from the Indian spiritual teacher. Janet regarded her teacher in California as perfect master, that is, a spiritual teacher who has reached a level of perfection. For the purpose of maintaining anonymity, I will refer to the Indian spiritual teacher Mikul, and her

California teacher as John. In the beginning, Janet's contemplative practice was concentrating on Mikul's name, but it has been a while since she has had a formal meditation practice. Here is how she described her contemplative practice:

Well, its nothing terribly formal. I...I guess it's just more in a form of an inner meditation...Different Mikul followers do this different ways – some every day. At this point I don't do something every day. There was a point in my life when I did. I used to follow that very simple formula that John recommended to everyone which is that you just concentrated on Mikul's name for about 15 minutes every morning. I did that for a long time. I don't do that now. If Mikul comes into my mind, I will take a moment, and just reflect on that and identify what that is in the moment.

On an even more informal level I do examine central issues in my life as they arise. And usually if something keeps coming up for me ...then I will take a few minutes and do a check in with myself and go through what I think that's about. And that could be related to just ordinary activities but for me that also has some sort of spiritual component so I consider that contemplation as well.

Janet regarded her local teacher as a perfect master. In the teachings of this movement, only five such souls at this most advanced state are alive at any one time. Therefore, this was a special relationship for Janet.

My teacher was John, and he is not in the body anymore. We looked at him as being a perfect master – our understanding of his role. They don't come back, and they don't have any influence once they...they can't intercede for you once they have left the body. He is still, probably just below Mikul – and is a source aspect of my life. I think about him a lot. I would say there still is an inner relationship that hasn't stopped. That's twenty-five years now.

Her contemplative practice and personal growth revolved around the teacher and the movement. Because Janet makes meaning of her contemplative practice from the perspective of a Socialized mind, she sought a student-teacher relationship that reflected her epistemological balance. As part of that meaning-making perspective, she internalizes, in this case very consciously, the teachings and directions given by her guru.

I asked her what aspect of her practice contributed most to her growth:

Usually those times when I was asked to do something that I didn't want to do. I'm not talking about being asked to do something that would be inappropriate. Being asked to do something that you have some kind of inner resistance to that's irrational, because there isn't a reason why you shouldn't do it. And somehow dealing with that resistance and moving through it, I would say that's one thing that's been very helpful and it becomes easier over time, you know, the first time you deal with this it's pretty intense.

I asked if she had an example:

I was 22 and I had just come to [the local group] and John sent me out here to [the group's location] and he called me on the phone probably a week or so after I had arrived and he said—he had a certain way of delivering these kinds of things—he said, “now Janet, you know we have a wonderful school and I was wondering how would you feel about teaching in that school.” And of course no one had to explain to me how this works. When you come to a guru, the thing is, you have to do what they ask you. That is the deal. For whatever reason, it brought up a complete rage reaction in me, probably because I'm resistant to everything at that point. It was an extremely difficult point in my life. But I swallowed that and said, “Oh, I would love to do that.” He said, “Oh, good.” And we both knew exactly. And I knew that he knew and he knew that I knew exactly what was going on. And that's the relationship. I knew that whatever he was asking me to do was for my own good.

Here, Janet indicates that her practice is in the daily activity and relationship she has with her teacher. No one explained to her how it worked, she had to do what her teacher asked.

Her contemplative practice, then, is selflessly serving her teacher and the movement as directed by her teacher. If there is a conflict between her own opinion and the direction of her teacher, the teacher is right, and her own opinion an irrational inner resistance. From a constructive-developmental point of view, the training is one of socialization, rather than the development of a self. The student internalizes the point of view of the teacher. This is a path of contemplative practice as devotion, service, and obedience.



The remaining three participants with a Socialized order of consciousness do not have a regular contemplative practice at this time.

## CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

### *Introduction*

In this chapter, I delineate five themes that emerged from the interviews: (a) having a practice, (b) consistency and duration of practice, (c) impediments to practice, (d) self-directedness in practice, and (e) quieting the mind in practice. In all cases these themes emerged directly from the interviews. I investigated a relationship when an aspect of participants' contemplative practice seemed to vary with the participants' stage of developmental. Although these aspects of contemplative practice varied with developmental stages, causality was not determined. In other words, I did not show that engaging in the same contemplative practices that the more complex participants in this study engage in will transform one's consciousness to a more complex stage. On the other hand, this study does not negate the possibility that there *is* a causal relationship between developmental stages and the meaning-making participants ascribe to contemplative practices that manifests in *why* and *how* they engage in contemplative practice. This is a study designed to show relationships but not causality.

In this study, I use qualitative analysis to develop the five themes. After each theme emerged, I constructed a table to summarize the thematic relationship. In some cases, the tables led to the development of a quantitative approach to further establish the existence of the relationship. Although a number of findings are significant, as mentioned earlier, there is limited generalizability to any population. Nevertheless, the themes shown to exist for the participants in this

study should be of value to researchers in this field and to individual practitioners in evaluating their practice.

### *Theme One: Having a Practice*

The first characteristic of interest is simply whether the participant has a practice, and if having a practice relates to the participant's stage of development. I divided the participants into two groups, those participants who have at least a full Self-Authoring mind, and those who do not. Stages with at least a full Self-Authoring mind include stages 3/4 and above. Below that level are SOI scores 3 and 3(4). This divides the participants into two groups, those with a Self-Authoring mind fully developed and those who have not yet developed a full Self-Authoring mind. To test for a relationship, I set up a two by two contingency table shown in Table 9. Using Fisher's exact test (Sirkin, 2006), the two-tailed p value equals 0.1409. This result is not statistically significant in that the test indicates a 14% chance that this outcome was due to chance while for significance the likelihood should be at least less than 5%.

Table 9

#### *SOI and Engagement in Contemplative Practice*

SOI Score	Engaged in Contemplative Practice	
	Yes	No
≥3/4	9	1
≤3(4)	5	4

*Note.* The two-tailed p value equals 0.1409. Created by author.

In the first analysis above, I accepted all forms of self-reported contemplative practice as valid. Certainly the form of contemplative practice

chosen by the participant is important and meaningful for the participant.

However, I wondered if taking a more restrictive view of contemplative practice to only include forms of meditation would provide a different result. I set up Table 10 showing the forms of contemplative practice, with one column showing meditative practices and the other column showing all other forms of contemplative practice, if any.

Table 10

*SOI and Engagement in Meditation by Participant*

Name	SOI Score	Contemplative Practice Type	
		Meditation	Other
Roberta	4(5)	Meditation	
Jane	4(5)	Entrainment	
Ruth	4		Chanting, <i>Lectio Divina</i>
Nick	4(3)		God's Presence, Prayers
Barry	4/3	Meditation	
Sally	4/3	Mindfulness	
Barbara	3/4	Meditation	
Peggy	3/4	Vipassana	
Elaine	3/4	Vipassana	
Michael	3/4		Goethean Phenomenology <sup>a</sup>
Amy	3(4)		Prayers
Sharon	3		Prayers
Lori	3	Visualization	
Jennifer	3		Chanting
Larry	3		Dream Interpretation
Janet	3		None
George	3		None
Susan	3		None
Michelle	3		None

*Note.* Created by author.

<sup>a</sup> Not currently practicing.

I set up a two by two contingency table as shown in Table 11. Using Fisher’s exact test, the two-tailed p value equals .0198, which is statistically significant.

Table 11  
*SOI and Engagement in Meditation*

SOI Score	Engaged in Meditation	
	Yes	No
≥3/4	7	3
≤3(4)	1	8

*Note.* The two-tailed p value equals 0.0198. Created by author.

The first finding in this study is that participants who have a meditation practice tend to have a full Self-Authoring mind operating, even if not in the primary position. Just having the Self-Authoring mind available changes the meaning of the engagement in contemplative practice such that the individual is more likely to see the value in and be willing to prioritize the practice of meditation. With the Self-Authoring mind operating, meditation may be a richer experience drawing the practitioner naturally to the engagement with the practice. Further, contemplative practice, as opposed to meditation in particular, does not have a relationship to developmental level. Of interest are the anomalies such as Lori at the Socialized mind level who meditates, and Ruth and Nick at Self-Authoring levels who do not have a traditional meditation practice. I will explore these anomalies in a later theme.

### *Theme Two: Consistency and Duration of Practice*

The participants who scored at levels in which a full Self-Authoring mind was operating while a fully Socialized mind was no longer operating, that is, levels 4(5), 4, and 4(3), all engage in a contemplative practice daily. Although the sample size was small, especially at the high end of the development spectrum, it is noteworthy that the three participants at the highest stages in this study engage in contemplative practice every day. Further, most of the participants with a full Socialized mind operating, that is, below the 4(3) level, engage in contemplative practices less than 7 days a week. One participant at the 4/3 level, Sally, meditates daily, but only for 10 – 15 minutes a day, much less than the participants who scored at the highest levels in this study. The only other participants who engage in contemplative practices on a daily basis were three who scored at level 3 – Socialized. Comparing the contemplative practices of these three participants with those who practice daily at the highest levels will be of interest in the exploration of significant qualitative differences between these two groups.

I will begin with the participants who scored at the highest level of development in this study. The excerpts from their interviews will include not only comments about their frequency and duration of practice, but also about their approach to practice.

Roberta, at the developmental level of the Self-Authoring mind with Self-Transforming mind emerging, level 4(5), articulates her feelings about contemplative practice:

I love the practice. It's like a dear friend now. That's how it feels today. And I miss it if I am traveling and I can't find a spot that feels good to

meditate. When I come back to it, I'm like, "Oh, gosh, I missed you so much."

Jane, also at the 4(5) level, utilized her newspaper route as her contemplative practice. This insured that she would practice every day:

There are two things about it. One was, there was no choice, I had to show up. No matter how late I stayed up, no matter what, I had to show up. It was a grounding discipline that no matter what, this is a given.

Jane no longer has a newspaper route, but listens to a brain wave entrainment CD as her practice, of which she says:

I can't even imagine...it doesn't even occur to me not to stay present and challenged. I certainly fall down on my ass daily with it. But in terms of it being a priority in my life, it's a non-negotiable.

It is that type of prioritization that results in a daily contemplative practice, a practice that rarely skips a meditation. The two participants who scored at the highest level both have that regularity of practice.

Ruth, at the fully Self-Authoring mind level, 4, described her frequency of practice this way:

Typically I do reading of scripture, and kind of come to something and I'll do some prayers, sometimes it's chanting sometimes it's rosary type prayers. Either way, that sort of thing – it is a structural, ritualized way for thirty minutes or so in the morning. So the *lectio*, maybe 15 minutes of scripture reading, then you kind of take that with you all day. I try to do the chanting every day, and the *lectio* at least two or three times a week. That's a little fuzzy because sometimes a passage will stick with me and I'll be thinking about it for a week or two weeks before I really internalize whatever it is I need at that moment.

Ruth is very consistent with her practice. However, she might not be as consistent as Roberta and Jane, who put a high priority on engaging in their respective forms of contemplative practice so that they practice every day. Ruth on the other hand

uses the word “try” (“I try to do the chanting every day”) indicating that she might let a meditation slip every now and then.

At level 4(3), Self-Authoring mind with a vestige of the Socialized mind, Nick, being a priest in a contemplative Christian order, engages in contemplative practice every day. He considers himself in a constant state of contemplative practice. Although he leads prayer three times a week, and prays every morning for 15 minutes, more important to this study is that he spends “two or more hours each day simply being present to the experience of God. This is the wordless boundless openness to God and the other.” Needless to say, Nick gives a high priority to his contemplative practice while the domain of the contemplative order within which he lives supports his practice and development. In its highest form, the environmental surround of a contemplative order provides the challenges and support for the facilitation of developmental growth. Similar to Winnicott’s (1987) dictum about a baby, we can say that there is no such thing as a priest. A priest does not exist without his environmental surround including his fellow clergy and the lay people he supports in his work. This domain supports Nick’s developmental level of 4(3), a developmentally complex level.

Barry, at level 4/3, full Self-Authoring mind primary and a full Socialized mind secondary, has a contemplative practice ritual that he engages in five times a week, for 40 minutes. He has been engaged in this practice for 15 years. Sally, also at the 4/3 level, engages in a sitting meditation practice that evolved over 28 years. When she began the practice it would be for an hour or two at a time. Her practice over this time has included concentration, mantra, and mindfulness



meditations. Currently, she meditates every day for 15 minutes. At this level we still see a strong commitment to practice. Although Barry does not meditate every day, Sally does. However, the duration of her meditation is less than the participants at the highest level.

Four participants are at the next level, 3/4, a full Socialized mind primary with a full Self-Authoring mind secondary. Barbara describes her frequency of practice, saying, “I would like to do it everyday, but I’m not. Let’s say I do it three times a week and slowly increasing the numbers. I would like to do it everyday.” She has a regular routine of practice using a “sensing” practice for 10 – 15 minutes, followed by a *kath* meditation. *Kath* refers to energy center two inches below the navel, more commonly called the *dan tien*. Barbara does the sensing, then focuses on her *kath* for a total of 30 minutes. Although she would like to meditate everyday, she does not.

Peggy is also at stage 3/4 and is part of a spiritual community. She consistently meditates for 30 – 45 minutes, five days a week. She has made meditation a priority, and aspires to meditate daily, but “life and trying to be a doctoral student and working” get in the way.

Elaine is the third participant at the 3/4 level. She practices Vipassana meditation between five and seven days a week, however, there are times when obligations such as her doctoral work take on a greater priority than meditation. This may be indicative of the 3/4 level. Also, her motivation to meditate is that she feels a responsibility to engage in practice since she is a spiritual teacher. This

too may be an outcome of her Socialized mind—how would it look if she was a workshop leader, but did not walk her talk?

Well, I feel like I have a responsibility to do it. I lead these groups that are about moving towards wholeness and so I feel like I have to do that myself every day if I'm going to be teaching it so that's a big motivation.

She also meditates for the sake of the meditation: "Another is the feeling of centeredness. But it's funny how that one doesn't always work." At the level of the Self-Authoring mind, the feeling of centeredness itself might lead to a strong motivation, and Elaine remarks how it is funny that the feeling of centeredness is not enough to motivate her. Instead, she says,

So the responsibility one is my ace in the hole. Because I can talk myself out of how good it makes me feel. That almost seems like a selfish motivation. Then when I think it's my responsibility to do it, then I begrudgingly often will say ok.

Michael is the last participant at this level, and is currently "not doing a lot of meditative practice. It's more of an ad hoc thing. So, my meditative practice is also not particularly strong right now." In the past he engaged in practice more regularly.

All four participants at the 3/4 level know about and practice meditation. With the exception of Michael, they are diligent with their practice, but report that the busyness of life draws them away from practice. At times, they will attend to activities they consider to be more important than meditating due to deadlines or responsibilities. Someone more committed to a contemplative practice might not let even those obligations get in the way of his or her practice.

The next level is 3(4)—a fully Socialized mind with an emerging Self-Authoring mind. The one participant at this level is relatively new to

contemplative practice, wondering if prayer could be included. She expressed the desire to meditate regularly, “But I don’t think I...I don’t make the time to do it.”

She goes on to say:

But one thing I do try to do, especially in the morning when it’s a little quiet, the baby is still sleeping, and my husband’s just left, I try to make sure I have the opportunity to just sit and reflect and be kind of thankful for everything I have and everything that’s going on in my life.

Of the eight participants who scored at the level of the fully Socialized mind, stage 3, only four have what they described as a regular contemplative practice. Of the four, two have practices with no set time during the day, only when they happen to think of it, while the other two have greater form and regularity of practice.

Sharon engages in the practice of prayer. Although she attended a ten-day Vipassana retreat two years ago, and continued that practice until a year ago, she can no longer find the time to engage in that type of meditative practice due to family responsibilities. Although she no longer engages in Vipassana meditation, she indicated in her interview that she prays every day. However, her response to the questions on frequency of practice indicated vagueness:

That is difficult, I mean there may be some days I find myself in prayer more than other days, or I’m just having this conversation, so it would be very hard to give it an exact number but I could say 10 - 15 minutes a day. I’m quite sure I’m praying at least every day, but throughout the day in shorter bursts.

She does not set a particular time for this practice, or a set number of minutes. As a result, her practice, at this point, lacks a certain level of discipline or regularity. Engaging in prayer on the fly, so to speak, although a wonderful practice, may not be as effective as engaging in a practice in a disciplined way.

Lori has had a meditation practice for four years, and meditates once a day for 45 minutes. She follows the meditation instructions she learned at the spiritual center to which she belongs, and appears very devoted to this practice.

Jennifer has been engaged in a chanting practice for 29 - 30 years, and is very devoted to the practice. When asked about the duration of her chanting, she said,

I'm trying to break through something, so I'm doing two to three hours a day. It is less now, an hour to an hour and a half. I get up really early, so that makes a difference too. I practice every day, twice a day, without missing.

Her regularity and discipline of practice is very strong. In a subsequent section I will compare her practice to those with a disciplined practice at a higher stage of development to discover any qualitative differences in practice.

The last participant at the Socialized mind level of development who has a contemplative practice is Larry. He described his practice as dream interpretation. Regarding the frequency of this practice, Larry shared that he engages in dream interpretation five or six times a week on average and for about 20 to 30 minutes per session. He indicated that this is not a formal practice, but is something he does as things come up.

The other four participants at the third order of consciousness, the Socialized mind, do not currently have a contemplative practice. Some have had a practice in the past while others are just becoming aware of meditative practice.

Table 12 summarizes the data generated from the interviews on the theme of consistency and duration of practice. The table lists the participants in order of their level of development with the highest at the top of the chart. The four

participants at the top of the list who are at least at stage 4(3) practice everyday. The participants whose scores ranged from 4/3 to 3(4) practice less than daily with one exception. In the group that scored at stage 3, three out of eight practice daily. Ignoring those at stage 3 who do not currently have a contemplative practice, three out of four participants practice daily.

As the SOI score is decreasing, the frequency of practice is generally decreasing until stage 3 when it goes back up to daily practice for some of the participants at that level. Instead of continuing to decrease, some participants at that level are very diligent in their practice. A similar relationship exists with respect to the minutes practiced per week. The frequency and minutes per week form a u-shaped curve as the stages of development vary from most to least complex.

I decided to check for a relationship between developmental level and minutes per week of practice using simple linear regression. For the purpose of the data analysis, I capped the daily practice of the participants at 60 minutes because two participants would sometimes practice for many hours per day, and had I not capped the time the analysis would not reveal some of the relationships that might exist. The two participants affected in this way are Nick and Jennifer who at times have spent over two hours per day in their contemplative practices. At 60 minutes, their minutes of weekly practice are still the highest in the dataset. Lastly, I did not include those who do not have a contemplative practice in the regression analysis because I was interested in the relationship between

developmental level and practice per week in those cases in which a participant had a practice.

Table 12

*SOI and Amount of Contemplative Practice by Participant*

Name	SOI Score	Weekly Freq.	Minutes per		Years of Practice	Child at Home
			Day	Week		
Roberta	4(5)	7	30	210	10	
Jane	4(5)	7	60	420	19	
Ruth	4	7	45	315	5	
Nick	4(3)	7	60	420	20	
Barry	4/3	5	40	200	15	
Sally	4/3	7	15	105	28	
Michael	3/4	0	0	0	30	
Barbara	3/4	3	30	90	4	
Peggy	3/4	5	40	200	5	
Elaine	3/4	6	30	180	5	
Amy	3(4)	3	15	45	8	Yes
Sharon	3	7	15	105	25	Yes
Lori	3	7	45	315	5	
Jennifer	3	7	60	420	30	Yes
Larry	3	5	25	125	20	
Janet	3	0	0	0	0	
Michelle	3	0	0	0	0	Yes
Susan	3	0	0	0	0	Yes
George	3	0	0	0	0	

*Note.* Created by author.

A two-way ANOVA,  $F(1,12) = 1.64$ ,  $r^2 = .12$ ,  $p = .224$ , demonstrated no statistical significance between developmental level and minutes of practice per week. This is not surprising given the u-shaped minutes per week data. I repeated the analysis without the level 3 participants with the results of  $F(1,9) = 8.83$ ,  $r^2 =$

.52,  $p = .018$ . This result was statistically significant indicating a relationship exists between participants' developmental levels and minutes of practice per week above the third order of consciousness.

For participants above developmental stage 3, 52% of the variance in their weekly minutes of practice can be explained by their level of development. The fact that including the participants at level 3 results in an insignificant finding indicates that there might be qualitative information regarding the processes of contemplative practice employed by those at that level that can shed light on this anomaly.

I also looked to see if years of practice correlated with developmental level, and found that it did not. A two-way ANOVA indicated an  $F(1,12) = .26$ ,  $r^2 = .02$ ,  $p = .614$ , no relationship at all. Since the regression of minutes per week and developmental level without those at stage 3 was significant, I also ran the years of practice regression without the stage 3 participants. That, too, was insignificant.

Lastly, I looked at the relationship between practice and having one or more children at home. Having a child at home made finding time to practice difficult for Amy, Sharon, and Susan. Jennifer's child is older and is less of an impediment. Michelle has four children, but is not seeking a practice at this time. None of the other participants have children at home. It is interesting to note that of those who have children at home they are all at stages 3 or 3(4), the less complex stages. Might raising children be an obstacle to developmental growth? I checked to see if there was an age variation between those with children and those

without. The average age of the participants with children at home was 42 years, while the average age of participants without children at home was 46, not significantly different. However, it is reasonable to suggest that if these participants were at a more complex level of development, then the meaning they would make of their meditation practice would have given them a richer and more complex way to organize their lives. Having young children at home might be the challenge that either creates a disequilibrium that prompts the rise to a level of greater complexity or discourages development if the gap is too great between the task complexity of having children at home and the individual's capacity for complexity. If the individual does grow in complexity, then she has awareness of more options, perspectives, and alternatives from which to organize her life.

As we have seen, many of the participants at the Socialized mind stage have consistent and high duration practices including Jennifer, Sharon, Lori, and Larry. As a result of the high duration of practice of this group, the linear regression of duration of practice vs. developmental level was significant only when analyzed without the Socialized mind group. Although a relationship exists between weekly minutes of practice and developmental stage above the Socialized mind order of consciousness, this does not imply causality. Whether a greater amount of contemplative practice leads to a higher development level or if being at a higher developmental level leads to more practice can not be determined from this study. In addition, the relationship might be interactive with contemplative practice and an individual's subject-object relationship creating a



positive feedback loop leading to higher stages of development and contemplative practice sessions of greater frequency and duration.

### *Theme Three: Impediments to Practice*

In looking at the details of the participants' self reporting on their contemplative practice, I noted a difference in the impediments to their practice, which may be a corollary to the participants' consistency and duration of practice, and may shed light on the anomaly of the stage 3-practicing participants. First I will report on the impediments that the participants identified, then note differentiations amongst the participants at the various SOI levels.

In the cases of the two highest scoring participants, I note that they have a daily contemplative practice. Roberta, knowing herself, realizes that she can meditate more easily in the morning than the evening when she finds it more difficult to allow her mind to settle down:

No impediments to doing it. I find it best for my world to meditate in the morning...I've tried to meditate in the evening before I go to bed, I can't quiet my brain. The impediment is that if my day gets twirling around before I've sat quietly then it's difficult for me to find that again.

Jane identified "just my own laziness, fear, or places where I get stuck" as the impediments to her practice. That may be why she has found practices in which she has little choice in participating such as the newspaper route, "there was no choice, I had to show up. No matter how late I stayed up, no matter what, I had to show up. It was a grounding discipline that no matter what, this is a given." Jane does not deliver newspapers anymore, and so cannot rely on the unforgiving nature of the assignment. Instead, she now sets a high priority on her contemplative practice:

I can't even imagine...it doesn't even occur to me not to stay present and challenged. I certainly fall down on my ass daily with it. But in terms of it being a priority in my life, it's a non-negotiable...My only self-perception is of someone here to participate in this unfolding...It would just be like walking away from myself completely.

Ruth, at the level of the Self-Authoring mind, stage 4, reports her impediment as time and health, and has developed a strategy:

Everything's a balance and trying to get that. I'm blessed, I don't have a lot of external distractions per se, it's just making sure I have the time and energy to get up in the morning and get it done.

Nick, at level 4(3), Self-Authoring with a vestige of Socialized mind, indicated that "Being tired, overworked, not taking care of myself, those sorts of things become impediments." In all these examples of impediments reported so far, time and health are the major themes with the participants indicating that they have strategies to insure that they engage in their contemplative practice anyway. Nick, however, is the first participant who did not make some statement indicating how he overcomes the impediments. As a priest, he probably has ample time to engage in the contemplative practices he discussed. In addition, his is a contemplative order, so Nick orients his life towards contemplative practices.

Barry, with a full and primary Self-Authoring mind and a full and secondary Socialized mind (4/3), indicated that at times his embeddedness in his life can be detrimental to his practice:

Well, the only impediment is me and it gets really easy to get too involved in what I'm doing and like I notice it in school when we are getting toward the end of the semester. There's just this one classic example, and I'm so busy writing and doing all those things that I'll forego the times I need to spend on myself, because I'm so busy. And then usually, it's days later and I'm really on the edge and I'm a nervous wreck and I think wow man, and I have left myself off and behind again. Which is what I'm experiencing right now. Been having some feelings in the last couple of days, just things that I've put on the shelf to get through school.

Sally, at the same level of development as Barry, has a similar response:

Busy, busy days and getting caught up in that chaotic busy life. When I am feeling ill sometimes I just can't seem to come out of that place and even attempting the practice. I've structured it so often now, that it, you know, I seem to find the time. The body knows it has to floss it's teeth and meditate and it happens during the day. It also is very connected with prayer and I have a noontime practice of prayer. So on a regular day without too much chaos, I will pray around the noontime hour then practice meditation after that.

My sense is that both Barry and Sally know how to deal with the busyness of life, but at times their busy lives overwhelm their motivation to practice. Busyness itself may be a term that we use when an individual is at a level of meaning-making such that one has difficulty organizing the tasks that are showing up within one's domain. Having a lot to do and being busy are not the same thing. The label of busyness is an interpretation based on the meaning-capacity of the individual. With greater complexity in meaning-making, an individual improves his or her organizational capacity and is able to see alternative options more clearly, allowing one to deal more effectively with complex tasks. But we can see that at this complex level of 4/3, meditation has a deep meaning for Barry and Sally and so busyness intrudes only temporarily.

Sally compares meditation to flossing the teeth, an indication of the meaning and priority it has in her life, and that it is now a natural part of living. Barry gets caught up in his life for a few days before suddenly realizing his need to return to practice.

The next group of participants was at the 3/4 stage of development—a full Socialized mind primary with a full secondary Self-Authoring mind. The previous participants reported on in this section, all had a full primary Self-Authoring mind

operating: stages 4/3, 4(3), 4 and 4(5). Now for the first time, we look at the impediments for those participants who have a Socialized mind in the primary position. In this group, although the Self-Authoring mind is fully developed, the Socialized mind is predominant.

Barbara meditates three times a week, but would like to meditate every day. When I asked her what was stopping her from meditating every day, she said:

That's a very good question (long pause). I haven't found the real reason, but the thought comes that I'm busy, there is something else I need to do, I'll do it later and I haven't been able to go beyond that.

Peggy meditates five times a week. When asked what her impediments to practice were, she replied:

Life. And trying to be a doctorate student and working. Things like that. I think I'm fortunate enough that I have made it a priority for so long that feels like a natural state than not practicing, not meditating. The motivation to get me back onto the cushion is very strong because I have a reference point for the difference.

Elaine meditates five to seven times a week with six average. She engages in meditation out of a sense of responsibility. It seems to make her feel good to meditate, but then she feels it is a selfish act, and it becomes less motivating. Elaine makes meaning through the lens of service to others, so meditation appears selfish to her. This is indicative of the Socialized mind taking the primary place in her thoughts. Her trump card to overcome impediments is the sense of responsibility she has towards her students, in which case the meaning she can make of meditation is that she is doing it for the benefit of others, again a Socialized mindset. When asked specifically about impediments to her practice, she said:

It's basically anything the ego can use as an excuse not to practice. And busyness is probably it's main mode for me. Now that I'm in this doctoral program, and I've got this paper due, that has to take priority. And I just have to have a conversation with myself about it. And that's where the responsibility thing comes in. Yes, I have a responsibility to do my homework, but I also have a responsibility to my clients. So, that's my trump card.

Michael is not engaged in a formal contemplative practice at this time, but does pursue various exercises recommended by the teachings of Rudolf Steiner.

His impediment to practice is different from all others mentioned thus far:

The most serious impediment for me is the sense that I am really on my own in doing it. It would be very gratifying if I could work with others more intimately, it seems like the community that is doing this kind of work is pretty fragmented. There is a lot of difficulty establishing language that is the same.

This view may be due to the socialized aspect of his developmental level. Perhaps if his Self-Authoring mind was primary, working with or without others would not be an issue for him. Practicing with a community can be important, but even without a community, a person with a full Self-Authoring mind in the primary position would not let a lack of community inhibit him. He goes on to say:

The other impediment is really just sitting down and doing it. But the sense of being alone is the hardest part of it. I don't have a great sense of direction, so when I'm working on a particular problem or something, then I can make use of it, but I'll go for long periods of time where I am not really applying it at all. The fact that I don't have an ongoing dialogue makes it really difficult to carry on.

Acknowledging his lack of a great sense of direction may be indicative of the developmental stage of the Socialized mind. Unlike all the other participants, it is not the busyness of life or health issues that impede his practice, but the idea of doing the practice alone.

In the group of participants just reviewed, we see that the impediments may be playing a role in preventing their daily practice. In the levels above 3/4, in which level 4, Self-Authoring mind is primary, we see that with only one exception, the participants engage in their practice daily despite the impediments that they face.

In the 3(4) category, Socialized mind with Self-Authoring mind emerging, Amy engages in contemplative practice three times a week. She described her impediments to practice as follows:

Just time. I have an 11-month old now, and sometimes it is just she and me. I have an issue with time. I'm going to make time for everything else and I don't make time for myself. So one thing I've tried to do is to make time in the morning regardless of what happens, and sometimes that doesn't always work out. So even before I take a shower, even if two minutes, just to sit and think about the day before, or just offer thanks and just be grateful and that works – sometimes just having to squeeze it in. But that's pretty much the biggest issue, making sure that I have the time or make the time to do that.

This is not unlike the participants in the stage just above 3(4) in which the impediments of daily life cut into the regularity of daily practice.

The last group of participants is at the level of the Socialized mind, level 3. Of eight participants, three engage in daily, regular contemplative practice, one practices five days a week and the remaining four do not currently have a practice.

Sharon attributed the impediments of her practice to the changes in her family life which occurred about a year ago.

I found that when I was by myself, I was practicing much more with yoga and meditation and my own prayer time but in my living situation I do not have the same time for many things and I think it's gotten better. Right now, my family life is an impediment to some degree unfortunately.

Sharon had been engaged with a lot of meditation practice in the past. She attended a ten day Vipassana retreat which included twelve hours of sitting meditation per day. She continued with Vipassana meditation for approximately two years. But a year ago she began a new relationship which includes taking care of a young girl. As a result, finding time to meditate has proven difficult.

Lori, when asked if she had any impediments to practice simply said, “No.” She is dedicated to the teachings of an Indian guru, and spends much time at the local center and volunteers for projects that are a service to the community.

Jennifer, who has been chanting for 30 years and at times chants many hours each day, follows the teachings of a Buddhist leader, and is very dedicated to the organization. She responded this way to the question of having any impediments to practice:

Well, yeah, because [one’s problems] can make you so despondent at times that it is hard to get up and get in front and have the confidence and the faith that it’s going to change. We even call it the fundamental darkness because some of these things that happened to me recently are so tailored made to the very thing that would bother Jennifer the most, so that it would suck the very life force out of me because I’m so discouraged by it...Sometimes you’re too complacent. That sometimes can happen. You start to feel a little too good about everything and you don’t need to chant that much. Things are going swimmingly and then suddenly, it was really that arrogant side, that moment that you let things slacken for a moment. Those demons are right there, so to speak.

Since Jennifer chants to help with the challenges and difficult issues of life, the impediment she noted was that without the confidence that the chanting is going to work, one might stop chanting. The other impediment she noted was that if one’s life is going well, one can get complacent and as a result not chant. These impediments are not the more typical busyness or health reasons, but are contingency impediments. The impediment is that one may stop engaging in the

practice if one is too discouraged, or if one’s life is going so well that one no longer feels the need to chant. There seems to be a *quid pro quo* to this practice.

The last participant in this group with a practice is Larry who engages in dream interpretation approximately five times per week. When asked about impediments to practice he said:

Well, being busy; busy work is an impediment. Just being busier than you want to be is an impediment. But I think that’s sort of the state of living in the 21st century, so to speak. I think that would be the primary one for me, being able to find the time to be as contemplative as I want to be.

The remaining four participants do not have a contemplative practice. Of these four, one had been engaged in a practice at one time, two consider running or walking as their practice, but are not currently active in those activities, and one occasionally does yoga. Typical impediments for these four participants are childcare, schoolwork, and busyness.

Table 13

*SOI and Impediments to Practice*

SOI Score	Freq Days	Impediments to Practice	How Overcome or Practice Reduced
4(5), 4	7	Busy Mind; Laziness; Time	Prioritization
4(3)	7	Time; Health	Lifestyle
4/3	6	Busyness of life	Self-awareness
3/4	5	Busyness; Practicing alone	Practice Reduced
3(4)	3	Busyness, taking care of child	Practice Reduced
3	6	None; Low expectations of rewards	Devotion
3	0	Childcare, Busyness	No Practice

*Note.* Created by author.

I summarize the impediments to practice by SOI score in Table 13.

Included is a column with the average number of days per week of practice. Note



the decrease in weekly practice as the SOI score decreases, then the jump back up amongst some at the third order of consciousness.

The level of the Socialized mind is one in which the beliefs of other individuals and the cultural surround are internalized. In the case of contemplative practice, at the level of the Socialized mind, the person will be embedded in either the teachings of a spiritual teacher and have a consistent practice or in his daily life and hardly practice at all. In the former case, the person may experience no real impediments to practice as is seen with Jennifer and Lori because of their devotion to the movement. In the latter case, the busyness of life will impede contemplative practice, as seen in Sharon and Susan who both are caregivers to young girls. This may be why participants at the Socialized mind level either have a disciplined regular practice or no practice at all.

As the Self-Authoring mind begins to emerge, the individual becomes aware of and begins to question her assumptions based on societal beliefs. This can lead to deviating from the precise instructions given by a spiritual teacher and reducing the fervor with which she had approached practice. This fervor had maintained disciplined, regular practice, thereby overcoming impediments to practice. Without the fervor, the practitioner may decide for herself how often to practice. As the Self-Authoring mind strengthens, the individual's intrinsic motivation to practice increases. The Self-Authoring mind overcomes the impediments to practice through lifestyle choices and prioritization, until finally a practitioner, such as Roberta, will say, "I love the practice. It's like a dear friend now. That's how it feels today."

#### *Theme Four: Self-Directedness in Practice*

The fourth theme that emerged in the interviews was the amount of self-directedness in the participants' approach towards their contemplative practice. How does one know how to engage in the most appropriate form of contemplative practice for oneself? Some seek appropriate practice through experimentation with methods of their own design, others by taking workshops from experienced teachers, while still others join spiritual movement to which they become very dedicated. We will begin with the most complex participants.

Roberta indicates that her primary form of contemplative practice is meditation and yoga. Although she has a yoga teacher who has introduced her to many forms of meditation, Roberta has set up a meditation room in her home where she decides which meditation she will practice.

I'm not agile with all the different kinds of meditation there are. I sit quietly, and I use visualization. Sometimes I use practices that I've learned that are simply about clearing your mind. I don't know what the names of all of them are. It's through my reading and through my meditation teachers that I attend yoga classes with.

I have a meditation room in my home. And I sit in there – a lot! There's only a couple of things – there's my books in there. It's the room where I write all my ideas on the wall. And then I have a place to sit. I have a little altar, I light candles – I have a little ritual when I sit, which is daily.

Usually I do begin [with a breathing exercise] because that a way to just center myself and my body. Yes, nothing very complicated though. My yoga instructor taught us alternate nostril breathing. Mostly, I just count my breaths to even them out. That's what I'll do at the beginning and also at the end as well, to bring myself back again.

Roberta learns meditation and breathing techniques from her teacher, then decides on the practices that suites her at the time of practice, taking a proactive approach.

Jane also scored at the 4(5) level, and engaged in a non-traditional, self-created form of contemplative practice of delivering newspapers, reviewed

earlier. She also indicated her independence when speaking about working with a teacher. When I asked if she works with a teacher, she replied:

Many over the years. But no one in any sort of teacher role, guru mentor type since I left the orthodox church. And that's fairly intentional at this point in my life, because the development of my awareness and practice is on groups coming together, where specifically it's moving beyond that deference to an outside teacher. So that's fairly intentional and not easy....It feels to me we are at a place on the planet where there's a movement away from that deference to a guru, teacher, or priest.

Her last comment on being "at a place on the planet where there is a movement from that deference to a guru" indicates her view that at one time obedience to a spiritual master was appropriate, but with the evolution of consciousness in our culture and society, that relationship does not make sense anymore. This view may be indicative of the shift from a Socialized mind to a Self-Authoring mind.

At the level of the fully Self-Authoring mind (4), Ruth explored various practices before selecting chanting and *lectio divina* as her primary form of contemplative practice.

One of my overarching themes in ministry is my desire to help people reclaim their faith tradition and in my case that's Christianity and to figure out ways. You know, people say, if you want to meditate, you have to pull out your mat and sit and do zazen and whatever, and I said there's ways of doing it in my tradition. So I started to explore different ways and this one appealed to me because it is fairly unique to Christianity. There isn't a practice like it that I could find in other religions and I did like the fact that it's something you take with you. So some days you have a lot of time so you can read through the scriptures and immerse yourself in them and become a part of that and other days you don't have a lot of time. You just read a verse hurriedly and just think about it all day. Either way, you're still engaging in your daily life but you are bringing into your daily life this spirituality. You don't have to retreat to a mountain top and not get the laundry done. It kind of brings a sacredness to the ordinary, which I'm really attracted to.

Instead of finding a guru to tell her what to do, she explored various traditions and various practices within her birth tradition, finally selecting two that appealed to her. Ruth is a minister with a rich contemplative practice. Aside from the chanting and *lectio divina*, she also engages in centering prayer and sitting meditation daily and walking meditation almost daily. In addition to her Christian practices, she also engages in Pagan rituals indicating a very eclectic approach to her practices. This is the kind of richness one finds in a Self-Authoring mind. We see the options and alternative modes of practice that she has developed for herself.

At the next stage, 4(3), is Nick, a priest and church leader in a contemplative order. He described his contemplative practice as one that is both quiet and active:

So we are always engaged in some kind of contemplative activity. Contemplation is very much a part of our life. So there is the quiet time that would be part of it, but also it's constantly reflecting on events on what's happening in the world, in the ministry and the scriptures as well. So while there is quiet time for prayer and contemplation there is also a lot that happens in terms of process. We are always sifting through and reflecting on things.

Although he participates in traditional prayer, in fact he leads a congregation in traditional prayer, he also engages in self-directed self-reflection which Nick describes as going on most of the time. He describes a process he calls "stepping back from":

Actually, the silent time is the busy time. Sort of "stepping back from"...because it happens in the busy time, stepping back from it is the time to say aha, in this moment this incredible thing happened, and, without paying attention, without being able to step back from it, it could just be another moment that just went by.

This stepping back from time for self-reflection is a very mindful and self-directed practice. We see the richness and complexity of the activities that Nick engages in at his level of meaning-making.

At stage 4/3, Barry and Sally have developed their own practices. Barry described his practice in this way:

Primary – I had my own little ritual. I adapted it after sweat lodge, which I've done hundreds of. I draw an extremely hot bath, and then I darken the room and then I get in the water, and in my own mind I do a sweat lodge ceremony with a medicine wheel. I pray in the four directions. And then I just observe - that's part of it. The other part of it, I get my mind silent. I can just be in the moment and drift off into visions without words – try to watch my words and not focus on the words let them slip by. Of all the things I do, that's the thing that will get me grounded and centered better than anything else.

Clearly, Barry is authoring his practice. Sally described her practice this way:

I would say it is a sitting practice. And it evolved over the years. I have experience with a concentration form. A mantra association that I've adapted to my own Bahá'í beliefs, so I use words that are sacred to the Bahá'í faith. And I did a lot of research into mindful meditation. It's mindfulness that I do most of the time. I'd say that is at least daily if not more. And I must say that that practice has been lifesaving to me. I'm not saying that dramatically. It really soothed my thinking and my heart. I guess I learned first when I was about early 30's in a serious way. Although as a kid, I read Lobsang Rampa and tried to find out all I could about meditation and dressed myself up in a black robe with a candle. My poor mum thought I was going out of my mind, in this Methodist Canadian prairie environment. The serious practice came in my early 30s.

Sally is also authoring her practice by adapting mantra meditation to her Bahá'í faith, using sacred words of her religion as mantras.

At the next stage of development, 3/4, the Socialized mind is primary while the Self-Authoring mind is secondary. Four participants scored at this level. Barbara engages in meditations and chants that she learned from the teachings

known as the Diamond Approach, a method of spiritual growth developed by A. H. Almaas.

My primary form of meditation, it's called *Kath* meditation. Focusing on two inches below the navel...I sit on a chair, the key is the knee needs to be below the hip. Then I put my right thumb in my right palm then close my left palm around it. Then I place both hands on my belly. Then I maintain my focus in my *Kath*. Sometimes I switch to circular meditation starting from the sacrum imagining energy moving behind my spine all the way up to my head then I inhale, then exhale, energy is flowing from my forehead to my belly. Circulating like this. Then I move my focus and I go back to *Kath*. And then I go back to circulation....I learned this technique from the Diamond Approach.

Note the adherence to a particular technique taught by the leaders of her group. Unlike those with more complex minds who deviate, improvise, and create their own processes, Barbara follows her group's processes. She makes meaning of contemplative practice through the internalization of her teacher's instructions. As a person at this level develops a more complex mind, she will naturally experiment and open herself to more possibilities.

Peggy's main form of practice is Vipassana meditation and she is part of the Shambhala Buddhist movement, living in a community of adherents. Peggy works with a meditation instructor:

I have a meditation instructor who I meet with fairly regularly. I would say every couple of months. We'll practice together and then talk about things that have arisen in my practice or questions about that. I'm part of a tradition that has a teacher who I don't see very regularly. Maybe once a year I go to a talk or teachings and practice in community. And then I'll encounter various different teachers if I go to programs on weekends at the local Shambhala center.

Elaine is the third participant at the 3/4 level. She also engages in Vipassana meditation in addition to a led meditation on a CD. She has a meditation teacher, of whom she had this to say:

I have a spiritual teacher who discerned that I was using Vipassana meditation to keep myself from myself. Meaning that I was relying on this hour of meditation every morning to keep myself in line, to keep away the shadow parts of myself, and so he suggested that I lighten up a little bit on that because he thought that my attitude towards myself was not friendly. And so he was suggesting that I trust myself more.

Interestingly, the advice that the meditation teacher is providing sounds like advice for moving from the Socialized mind to the Self-Authoring mind by suggesting that she trust herself more.

This new meditation is something he created for me which is a heart opening meditation and it's basically guiding me to link up with the unconditional love that is always available and to trust what is innately there.

First, his bringing my attention to that awareness was useful. With my work with him, I've been trying to be increasingly friendly to the shadow part I had and tried to repress before. When I do Vipassana now, and I encounter a tight spot in the body or a feeling or a thought that maybe before I would use my will force, I'm friendlier about it, more embracing. A friendlier stance toward whatever is in me that...whereas before I would have said it was unacceptable, it was something to be removed or something to be worked on, and now it is something to be embraced.

Elaine's relationship with her meditation teacher may be indicative of a level of development in which the Socialized mind is in the primary position. She values the work with the mediation teacher, and appreciates the meditation that he created for her. Participants with full primary Self-Authoring mind tend to create their own meditations or decide which meditations are best for them, even if they have a teacher of meditation.

The last participant at the 3/4 level is Michael. He does not have a practice currently, but has had many years of various contemplative practices, based on the teachings of Rudolf Steiner. Steiner's teachings are known collectively as Anthroposophy. Michael noted on his contemplative practice questionnaire that,

“There are a whole suite of Anthroposophical meditations I have practiced over the years.” He is not currently practicing due to a lack of a community with which to practice:

The most serious impediment for me is the sense that I am really on my own in doing it. It would be very gratifying if I could work with others more intimately, it seems like the community that is doing this kind of work is pretty fragmented....But the sense of being alone is the hardest part of it. I don't have a great sense of direction so when I'm working on a particular problem or something, then I can make use of it, but I'll go for long periods of time where I am not really applying it at all.

His dependence on a community may be indicative of a Socialized mind still in the primary position.

At the 3/4 level, we see Barbara, Peggy and Elaine working with teachers in a way that those with a Self-Authoring mind in the primary position do not. Those at the 3/4 level have a stronger affiliation with spiritual schools or teachers. They learn meditation techniques from their teachers which they internalize. In comparison, for example, Sally, of the Bahá'í faith, at the 4/3 level, experimented on her own with words sacred to her faith, developing this practice rather than consulting with a meditation teacher. All of the participants at the 4/3 level and above do not have the affiliation that we see with those at the 3/4 level. Of course, Nick has a strong affiliation as a priest in a Catholic order, but his leadership position within the institution may be indicative of his 4(3) developmental level.

At the next level of Socialized mind with Self-Authoring mind emerging, 3(4), Amy engages in prayer practice. She does not have a formal meditation practice or well defined prayer practice such as *lectio divina* but engages in a self-directed gratitude practice. However, this has been a practice rooted in a



traditional religious approach. When she was at the Ph.D. intensive, she began to learn about other types of practice:

I am working towards making time to meditate. When I went to the intensive in the fall, I had an opportunity to attend a chant session with some of my fellow students, and it absolutely—I loved it. I absolutely loved it. It's kind of sporadic. Every now and again I'll have the opportunity to sit and do the Buddhist chant. I haven't quite gotten to the point where it's regular. It hasn't gotten to the point where I'm appreciating it like I was when I was at the intensive, but it is something I am striving towards.

Amy is beginning to open to the more formal types of contemplative practice than her current practice of traditional prayer.

The last stage to review is the Socialized mind order of consciousness.

Within this group, one person engages in traditional prayer, one focuses on dream interpretation, two are very dedicated to the contemplative practices taught by spiritual movements, one is very dedicated to a spiritual movement but does not have a practice and three are neither involved with spiritual movements nor do they have a contemplative practice. The three participants who are very dedicated to spiritual movements are much more dedicated to their groups than the participants at the 3/4 level who also work with teachers or are affiliated with a spiritual school or movement. Although we might think that a greater dedication to a spiritual group is indicative of greater spiritual, personal, or developmental growth, in this study those with the greatest dedication to a spiritual teacher or movement are those who scored at the stage of the Socialized mind.

I will begin the individual analysis of those at the level of Socialized mind with Sharon. Sharon went on a ten-day Vipassana retreat in 2009, but due to

childcare and a new relationship, she no longer finds time to practice. In lieu of meditation, she prays during the day. She acknowledges that,

It's nothing that's scheduled. I don't say this is my prayer time. I incorporate that into doing other things, like when I'm driving my car. If there is a routine to my prayer time it's in the evening when I'm going to sleep.

Sharon does not engage in a disciplined contemplative practice the way she practiced Vipassana meditation. Instead, she now engages in traditional prayers.

Lori is committed to a movement begun by an Indian guru, engaging in meditations taught by him. I did not detect any innovation in the meditations, and she describes her participation in the group as “very much involved” and “very active within the organization.” She acknowledges spending “a lot of time at the center.” Each center has a manager, but not a teacher because “all the chants and hymns are already there. They came from the text that [the Indian guru] has presented, so you'll do discourse studying, and those are based on his talks. It has a very structured format.”

Jennifer is a member of a particular branch of Buddhism that emphasizes chanting. She has been a member of this spiritual movement that follows the teachings of a Buddhist leader. She is very dedicated to this movement, writing and receiving letters with the head of the movement. In her interview, many of her responses were paraphrases of the leader's teachings.

Janet is also dedicated to a spiritual movement. She does not have a contemplative practice at this time, but for 25 years has been devoted to an Indian spiritual teacher whom she believes to be God. Her dedication to this spiritual movement is profound. At age 22 she joined a spiritual group in California

dedicated to the Indian spiritual teacher and led by a spiritual teacher who had direct lineage from the Indian teacher. Regarding the local teacher, Janet said “We looked at him as being a perfect master—our understanding of his role.” Those in this spiritual movement believe a perfect master to be infallible and must therefore be listened to and obeyed. The relationship with her teacher was one of love and obedience. Another follower once said to Janet that the teacher would “marry you to a fichus plant if he thought it would advance your spiritual life.” Janet went on to explain, “And of course no one had to explain to me how this works. When you come to a guru, the thing is, you have to do what they ask you. That is the deal.” The deal that Janet entered was to obey her guru and not to make her own decisions based on her own thoughts and feelings. In fact, the deal with her teacher leads to a distrust of her internal compass. Here Janet describes how she resolves a request from her teacher that she was resistant to:

Yes, usually those times when I was asked to do something that I didn’t want to do. I’m not talking about being asked to do something that would be inappropriate. Being asked to do something that you have some kind of inner resistance to that’s irrational, because there isn’t a reason why you shouldn’t do it. And somehow dealing with that resistance and moving through it, I would say that’s one thing that’s been very helpful and it becomes easier over time, you know, the first time you deal with this it’s pretty intense.

That moment was the moment that I had to kick it in, in terms of here I am with my guru, and how am I going to do this. And I was always able to deal with that internally and say, yes, I would love to do that. Then go in a room, lock the door and scream.

She believes that her own thoughts and feelings would lead to spiritual problems. The only way forward to achieve spiritual growth is to obey the teacher. She told this teaching story about the extent of the obedience:

Henrietta [a friend in the movement] actually told me a story—this was a more intense thing—she was married and divorced and her husband sued her for custody of the children because she was a member of what he was calling a cult. Her children were everything. She did not want to sign these papers. And she went in to John and she fell on her knees in front of him and she said, “Please, please, do not make me do this” and he looked at her and he said, “Henrietta, sign the papers.” And she said she was dead inside for a year.

And I’ve had moments like that too. I had moments not that he told me to do something but because, I mean, I knew he would anyway, and you just have one of those things. And you know, even though it is the last thing in the world you want to do, you have to do this, period. And that’s your contract. Your contract is, my responsibility here is to be cleaning all of this up, not to be adding to it, so even if this is something incredibly painful, I have to do the right thing.

Janet’s saying, “I knew he would anyway” is a clear statement of internalizing the view of an important other, indicative of the level of the Socialized mind. In spite of 25 years of engagement with the spiritual teacher and group, she is at the stage of the Socialized mind. This spiritual relationship of obedience between the guru and the student, common in eastern traditions, does not appear to promote developmental growth, at least not in this case. The very essence of the relationship fits the Socialized level of development—internalizing the norms of the culture and the dictates of a dominant person. In Janet we see the extreme side of the Socialized self, complete socialization to the culture and leader of a spiritual movement.

The spectrum of directedness of contemplative practice ranges from strict obedience to a guru to self-directed, eclectic practice. Other approaches to practice fall between these two extremes and correspond to levels of development. Table 14 shows the continuum of directedness in practice: obedience to a guru, dedication to a movement, traditional prayers without strong dedication to a

movement, learned techniques, self-created methods, and self-directed and eclectic practice. Each level is more open than the previous level.

Table 14  
*SOI and Spectrum of Directedness by Participant*

SOI Score	Participant	Currently Practicing	Directedness in Contemplative Practice
4(5)	Roberta, Jane	Yes	Self-Directed, Eclectic
4	Ruth	Yes	Minister, Eclectic
4(3)	Nick	Yes	Priest, Self-Directed
4/3	Barry, Sally	Yes	Self-created Methods
3/4	Barbara, Peggy, Elaine	Yes	Learned Techniques
3/4	Michael	No	Learned Techniques
3(4)	Amy	Yes	Traditional Prayers
3	Sharon	Yes	Traditional Prayers
3	Lori, Jennifer	Yes	Dedicated to Spiritual Movement
3	Janet	No	Obedience to Guru
3	George, Susan, Michelle	No	Other
3	Larry	Yes	Other

*Note.* Created by author.

Table 15 summarizes the directedness of practice by SOI groupings showing the sequence of directedness in practice that corresponds with adult development. The correspondence between directedness and development is remarkable.

Table 15

*Summary: SOI Groups and Spectrum of Directedness*

SOI Score	Spectrum of Directedness in Contemplative Practice
4(5) — 4(3)	Self-Directed, Eclectic
4/3	Self-created Methods
3/4	Follows Learned Techniques
3(4) — 3	Traditional Prayers
3	Dedicated to Spiritual Movement
3	Obedience to Guru

*Note.* Created by author.

The correspondence between SOI score and the directedness in practice does not imply causality. Leaving a spiritual teacher and devising one’s own meditation technique may not necessarily lead to developmental growth. Instead, it may be the case that individuals are attracted to a certain level of directedness as a result of their developmental level. For example, an individual at the level of Socialized mind may be attracted to a school that demands obedience while an individual at the level of Self-Authoring mind may feel the inner authority to develop his or her own method of practice or engage in a variety of types of practices. The level of directedness that the individual engages in may be the most appropriate for the individual at this time based on her level of development. At some point, however, if the individual grows, the current level of directedness may feel constrictive and the individual’s practice will grow in directedness. A person does not need to leave a spiritual movement but may be able to express this need for an increase in self-directedness by taking more of a leadership role within a spiritual movement. This, for example, may be how Nick has grown in

his priesthood. However, if the leader or guru of a spiritual movement does not permit self-expression, the individual may need to leave the organization to develop his or her own ideas.

### *Theme Five: Quieting the Mind in Practice*

All of the participants in this study indicated their belief that their contemplative practice led to personal growth. When I asked the participants how that occurs, the answer given most often was that it was the deep silence of their practice. The fifth theme explores the role of silence in contemplative practice. Not all practices lead to the silencing of the mind. Some practices invoke lofty thoughts, but thoughts nevertheless. In this section I categorized two types of practices, those that quiet the mind and those that are word oriented.

The two participants who scored at the highest level of the SOI in this study both noted that deep silence played an important role in their contemplative practices. Roberta indicated that through visualization and other practices she first clears her mind. In order to create the environment for establishing deep silence, Roberta will do a few practices to settle down.

One of the first things I do just to settle down. I find that if I don't settle myself, I'll be fidgety. Even in my meditation, I don't even notice that I'm doing it. The first thing I do is check in with my body as I'm sitting quietly with my eyes closed, in a comfortable seated position. I will check in with my body just to feel it grounded so I'll imagine energy flowing from my tip toes to the top of my head. And then I'll often create some kind of energy flow. This might happen during the meditation, after I've been it for a while. Or I'm imagining energy flowing through my chakras.

When I asked her if there came a time that she lost awareness of the body, she stressed the importance of knowing how to quiet her brain down, as she puts it:

Yes. I don't notice it until I begin to view myself coming out of the meditation. And then I realize I don't even feel my body. That doesn't happen every time. Because if I'm not in a deep level of meditation...monkey brain...mind going all over...and all you are doing is just trying to quiet your mind, I don't drop into that deep level of meditation where I lose my body. All I'm doing then is just attempting to quiet my brain down. I'm often thinking about, you know, sit upright; I'm trying to open up any blockages, because I'm thinking that the reason my mind is going is because I'm not completely open. Something has closed down. It's not letting me be in a total meditative mode. So I'm more sensitive to my body than...and when your mind is jumping around it is hard not to think, "my knee is kind of sore." When you can let go of all that, then you completely let go of anything in your body.

I asked about any process she had when she noticed she was thinking.

Well, Pema Chödrön says, "Don't beat yourself up." She says notice you are thinking and let it go; release it. I often will visualize clouds in the sky and that they are very active and moving around and those represent my thoughts. I'll use a visual like that to say let it go, and try to imagine it just leaving. I guess you would call that visualization.

Roberta's focus in her meditation practice is deep inner silence, and encourages this state in her practice through bodily techniques and letting go of thoughts.

Jane engages in many contemplative practices including sitting, drumming, and journal writing. Before she moved a year ago, her newspaper route provided her with an opportunity to be engaged in activity on the outside while maintaining a deep inner silence on the inside. She no longer engages in this unusual and self-developed practice since moving away from the location of her paper route. Now she engages in a sitting practice that incorporates a brain wave entrainment audio program which quiets the mind. The purpose of the audio program is to quickly bring the person to a deep meditative experience. Jane explains her reason for her various contemplative practices by saying "the focus is definitely using different things to help me focus staying out of my head." Staying



out of one's head is a colloquial way of indicating a diminishing of thoughts as part of the practice:

I've experimented with meditations over the years. I have found that moving meditation is more effective for me than a silent sitting meditation. Movement seems to be more key or more important or more useful in getting to that space where I can get out of my head and be more receptive to what is coming at me.

Jane's approach provides a good distinction from Roberta's. It is not the sitting with eyes closed that is important as much as the quieting of the mind.

Ruth, at the fully Self-Authoring mind level, engages in chanting, silent prayer and *lectio divina*, as her primary practices. Through these practices she engages in deep silence:

*Lectio*, you are trying to put your attention onto the scripture, really, just try to internalize it to the point that it is resonating in you and it becomes a connection, whether it is a phrase or a story. So that's very active where you are focusing your attention on a particular scripture. But the chanting practice and silent prayers is much more a time where I am trying to turn off the thinking. Both of them are trying to get you out of your ordinary chatterbox stream that I tend to have running through my brain at any moment. But they do it in different ways. The *lectio* is focusing and giving you something to think about whereas the chants and prayers are trying to get you to stop having an active conscious thought process and just be in the moment.

Here we notice two approaches to diminishing the "ordinary chatterbox stream" of thoughts, one through focusing on thoughts, the other through diminishing thoughts altogether. In the participants at level 4(5), we notice that their practices were of the kind that solely diminished thoughts, while Ruth takes a two pronged approach of focused thoughts on scripture and repetitive practice designed to quiet the mind.

Nick is at the Self-Authoring mind level with a vestige of Socialized mind. Being a priest in a contemplative order provides many hours each day engaged in

contemplative practice. He is engaged in prayers, reflection, and other silent times. It was not clear from his interview whether his practices were word oriented or thought reducing leading to the quieting of the mind. The Christian tradition uses two terms to make this distinction, apophatic practice and kataphatic practice. Apophatic refers to practice that quiets the mind or “detaches from thought” (Luhmann, 2011, p. 161). An example is the practice of centering prayer in which one quiets the mind in order to experience God directly. Kataphatic practice uses thoughts and language to enhance the imaginative process through scripture and other means. I asked Nick if his practice was more apophatic or kataphatic. Nick intertwines the two in his practice:

In my life there is a harmony between the two. A good deal of my time is engaged in public prayer with the liturgical practice that is usually associated with words and images. So celebrating mass, or leading prayer services would be seen as kataphatic experiences.... Within that experience is the apophatic dimension of being present to people in their experience of prayer and the silent absence of words and images that creates the space for the person to experience prayer. The kataphatic is empty without the apophatic dimension.... I do not engage in significant traditional meditative "time out" experiences. I do spend two or more hours each day simply being present to the experience of God. This is the wordless boundless openness to God and the other.

Given the amount of time Nick engages in the “wordless, boundless openness to God,” he spends more time in a quieting of the mind mode than word-oriented prayers.

Two participants were at the 4/3 level. Barry, who developed his own form of sweatlodge in his home, describes his process of entering silence:

The first thing is to get really conscious of the thoughts I’m throwing out—the conditioned mind. The second part is detaching from the thoughts trying not to get caught up in it—that’s when I get the break

through. It's kind of hard to explain. It's an energetic place of relaxing into some space that isn't like thinking.

The other participant at the 4/3 level, Sally, described her practice as one using a mantra she adapted based on her Bahá'í faith.

The mantra is more sporadic, it's really mindfulness. I mean I really just do breathing and no thinking kind of...I try to encourage that state of mind in myself.

When asked what she does when a thought does come up she said: "I watch it, notice it and then focus again on my breathing." This process is typical for practitioners engaged in quieting their mind.

The next group is those who have both level three, Socialized mind, and level four, Self-Authoring mind, operating with a full Socialized mind primary (3/4). In this group of four participants, three engage in contemplative practice, while one is not currently practicing.

Barbara describes her process of reducing thoughts this way:

I don't try to stop my thoughts. If thoughts come, I gently try to come back to my *Kath*. Sometimes I do this like a metronome movement. If thoughts are really busy and I can't come back to my *Kath*, I can't focus then I do that metronome movement like to the left, the right very slowly and then I slowly come back to the center. And it helps me come back.

She learned this method from the spiritual movement she belongs to.

Peggy engages in Vipassana meditation:

I do Vipassana through the Shambhala community....It's a form of meditation where focusing on the inbreath and just coming back to the breathing, relaxing with any thoughts that come up, noticing them and them letting them fall away again, coming back to the breath. And usually, depending on the day, I'll do some contemplation, so contemplating a slogan or a phrase and then the basic following the breath technique.

In Vipassana meditation, the observation of thoughts eventually leads to a diminishing of thoughts until all thoughts are gone. Vipassana also has a

contemplative component in which one contemplates a principle or insight of Buddhism.

Elaine first listens to a meditation CD, then engages in Vipassana meditation. I asked her how she deals with thoughts:

Thoughts—I kind of see them as ticker tape, and they try to take over, lead me away from my focus. So I just try to view them as ticker tape on Wall St. There's this running monologue, I can put them aside for this time I am meditating and that usually works. I can then refocus on that relationship between them. It is more of a witnessing. It used to be will, but now it is more of a witnessing, more of a friendly "there you are, yes, I see you, but you'll have my attention later, I'm focusing on this."

Michael cited Goethean Phenomenology as his practice although he is not practicing at this time. However, he indicated that he "sometimes practice[s] an exercise of recapitulation where I work through looking back over the events of the day, and trying to objectify my actions." Both Goethean Phenomenology and the recapitulation exercise are word-oriented practices. In the practices he described in his interview, he did not describe a practice that quiets the mind.

Amy, at the 3(4) level, engages in prayer as a word-oriented practice.

Sharon, at the Socialized mind stage, engages in prayer. She attended a Vipassana retreat three years ago and then practiced Vipassana meditation for two years, ending about a year ago due to new responsibilities at home. Although the prayer practice is word oriented, her experience with Vipassana seems to bring her to a place of inner silence.

I think of my Vipassana meditation and the empty place that I got to there and actually since that time, and that was such a powerful experience, the spaciousness was incredible. I think I carried that into my prayer state and yes, even though I can't say definitely that this happens to me all the time, I do think there is a space that is very silent and very spacious.

Because of her background in Vipassana, and her description above, I will categorize her practice as one of quieting the mind.

Lori engages in a “light meditation,” a form of visualization. She describes the mediation as follows:

Basically you look at a candle or a light in front of you for maybe a couple of minutes or a couple of seconds and then you imagine the light within the center of your forehead in your mind and then you allow that light to travel down to the center of your heart. You imagine your heart to be a flower that is blossoming, embracing the light, accepting it, and the petals are opening up, and then you allow the light to travel to your different limbs, your arms, your legs, your feet. Then you make it come back up and it goes to your mouth, your tongue, your ears and your eyes. Then you charge yourself with that light and expand it out into your environment, into your community, and you allow that light to expand first to your loved ones and then you take it out to your greater community and then to the whole world and the whole universe. That is covering each animate and inanimate being.

In addition Lori combines thoughts with the visualization:

When you charge yourself within the light you are saying, let the light be in my feet so my feet can travel to good places and do good work. When it comes to my heart, that it is always loving, open, receptive, non-judgmental and loving all. If it comes to your tongue, then you are saying, let it speak loving words, and soothing and consoling words and sweet words. To your eyes, only see the good in others. Let it only hear good, not participate in gossiping. Let your mind be at peace. Being loving to yourself and being loving towards others.

Visualization can be tricky to classify between thought reducing and word oriented meditation. In some visualizations verbal thoughts can diminish, however some consider visual imagery a form of thought nevertheless. In this case, Lori is indicating that she has thoughts related to the visualization; consequently I categorized her practice as word oriented.

Jennifer, at the Socialized mind level, practices Buddhist chanting. The practice of chanting can reduce thoughts or be word oriented, depending upon the

process of the person chanting. I asked Jennifer what is happening internally while she is chanting.

That is difficult. I become more hopeful, more energetic. I have a stronger conviction for the things I'm determining to change in my life, to overcome the challenges that are facing me. As I continue to chant I have more compassion for myself and for others, more appreciation, what we call overall generally higher life state, greater wisdom and courage... I'm just focusing on the sound and the rhythm. As you chant more and more you find your thoughts being elevated. So where I was worrying about even a physical condition or something like that, suddenly I'm not, there is a higher or loftier thing I'm thinking of. Or, I start to think about goals for others as opposed to just my own thing, you know, my own egocentric world.

Clearly, Jennifer is engaged in thoughts. She employs chanting to develop stronger convictions and to elevate her thoughts. Or, she thinks of good outcomes for other people. Because of this focus on thinking, albeit lofty thinking, her practice is word oriented. I followed up by asking Jennifer what she does about random thoughts that arise.

I just fight them. I fight them by really chanting...lately one of the prayers that I've had is to understand that I am perfectly endowed. I am the Buddha so to speak. I am part of what we chant. As I am, I have this great expansive potential, equivalent to the universe. But, especially when something is going on in my life, I start to think, "Am I deserving of that"? That I am not worthy, I am not that entity. So, I really chant to conquer that, lately that's been my goal.

Her concern is that her mind will wander, and she fights thoughts that would distract her from the lofty thoughts she prefers. Her practice is to repress the unwanted thoughts of worry or unworthiness, and to then chant to bring in thoughts about herself or others that are life affirming.

The remaining participant at level 3 who has a contemplative practice is Larry. His practice is dream interpretation, clearly a word-oriented practice. The

remaining four participants at level 3 do not have a contemplative practice at this time.

Table 16

*SOI and Type of Contemplative Practice*

SOI Score	Participant	Quieting the Mind	Word Oriented or No Practice
4(5)	Roberta	Meditation	
4(5)	Jane	Entrainment	
4	Ruth	Chanting	
4(3)	Nick	God's Presence	
4/3	Barry	Meditation	
4/3	Sally	Mindfulness	
3/4	Barbara	Meditation	
3/4	Peggy	Vipassana	
3/4	Elaine	Vipassana	
3/4	Michael		Goethean*
3(4)	Amy		Prayers
3	Sharon	Prayers	
3	Lori		Visualization
3	Jennifer		Chanting
3	Larry		Dream Interpretation
3	Janet		No Practice
3	George		No Practice
3	Susan		No Practice
3	Michelle		No Practice

*Note.* Created by author.

\* Not currently practicing.

Table 16 summarizes the type of contemplative practices of the participants between contemplative practices that quiet the mind and those that are thought oriented. We see that participants who scored at the higher stages of development engage more in practices that quiet the mind than those who scored

lower. For a cutoff point to compare the participants with a more complex mind from those with a less complex mind, I used at or above 3/4 and at or below 3(4), the same cutoff point used previously in Table 9 and Table 11, in which I compared contemplative practices and meditation practices in the two groups. In the group at or above 3/4, nine participants engage in a practice that quiets the mind, while one uses a thought-oriented practice. In the group that scored at or below 3(4) one participant is engaged in a quieting-the-mind practice while four are engaged in a thought-oriented practice and four do not engage in a practice.

This is a striking result that differentiates the two approaches (mind quieting and word oriented or no practice) between the two groups of higher and lower complexity almost exactly. There is only one exception in each group. In Table 11, there were three anomalies in the more complex group and one anomaly in the less complex group. Two of the anomalies in the more complex group are resolved by the finding that although Ruth and Nick do not engage in a traditional meditation practice, an important part of their practice is to quiet the mind. Ruth uses chanting while Nick experiences the presence of God. The third anomaly was Michael who engages in Goethean phenomenology, which is thought oriented. He is the one person in the more complex group that does not have a practice that quiets the mind. He is also not practicing at this time.

In the less complex group, Lori was the one anomaly. She has a regular meditation practice of visualization. As indicated above, Lori's visualization meditation is thought oriented. Although this resolves the one anomaly from Table 11, a new one emerged with Sharon, whose prayers bring her to the place of



silent spaciousness. However, even with these anomalies, the relationship correlating the more complex mind with quieting the mind practices is very strong.

For statistical confirmation of a significant relationship, I applied Fisher's exact test to the data in Table 16. The contingency table shown in Table 17, resulted in a two-tailed p value of .0011, which is highly significant.

Table 17

*SOI and Thought-Reducing vs. Thought-Oriented Practice*

SOI Level	Type of Contemplative Practice	
	Quieting the Mind	Word Oriented or No Practice
≥3/4	9	1
≤3(4)	1	8

*Note.* The two-tailed p value equals 0.0011. Created by author.

Once again, the data do not imply causality. It is possible, for example, that those at a higher stage are attracted to a practice that quiets the mind rather than a quiet mind leading to higher stages.

Another possibility is that the Ph.D. students in this study are more likely to be familiar with eastern meditation traditions than the general population. Other samples of Ph.D. students may not be familiar with contemplative practices and do not engage in practices that quiet the mind, yet may have a similar percentage of students at the level of Self-Authoring mind. A study of that group might result in the finding of a different set of factors that differentiates those at a more complex level from those at a less complex level.

In the two-by-two contingency table, Table 11, that separated meditators from non-meditators, the p value of .0198 was significant. In the contingency table, Table 17, that differentiated quieting the mind practices from thought-oriented practices, the p value equals .0011. This finding of greater significance is due to understanding the importance of quieting the mind in contemplative practice. The factor of quieting the mind was the most salient factor found in differentiating a quality of practice that has a strong relationship with a more complex mind. Quieting the mind may be one of the most important aspects of a contemplative practice.

## CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

The discussion section will focus on three overarching explorations into the five themes of this study. I consolidated the themes into three areas of inquiry. The first area of inquiry explores the correlation between adult development and mind quieting practices. The second area of inquiry discusses the relationship between developmental stages and both the amount of practice and impediments to practice. The last area of inquiry explores the correlation between adult development and the self-directedness of practice. Before I begin these three inquiries, I will review the participant selection process.

In this study, I recruited and accepted participants without knowing their stage of developmental or the nature of their contemplative practice, if any. Although I wanted a cross section of developmental levels and variance in the type of practice engaged in, I did not know what I would find regarding these variables. However, all of the participants were Ph.D. students studying transformative processes at a school that emphasizes spirituality in many of its programs. The field of transformative studies is wide and encompasses many forms of transformation of self and society, so it was likely that many of the participants either had a contemplative practice or knew about contemplative practices, and that proved to be the case. Therefore, the participants could have been at any stage of development and could have had any relationship to contemplative practices. The volunteers in this study comprised approximately half of the entering class of Ph.D. students. I asked all of the students in the entering class to participate, and the participants were those who volunteered to

be part of this study. Self selection occurred in this process. The students who did not volunteer might have had different characteristics from those who did volunteer. The participants in this study, relative to historical studies, had a higher weight in the Socialized mind levels and lower weight in the Self-Authoring mind levels (see Table 8). This could have been the result of the self-selection process, or due to chance. All but four participants engage in some form of contemplative practice and so the dataset generated was rich.

### ***Relationship Between Adult Development and Contemplative Practice***

The first conclusion arrived at was that engaging in a contemplative practice did not correlate with developmental levels. As shown in Table 9, although 9 out of 10 participants with a score greater than or equal to 3/4 had a contemplative practice, 5 out of 9 participants below the 3/4 score had also had a contemplative practice, indicating a lack of significance in the different groups. This led me to the question of whether qualitative differences existed in the forms of contemplative practices between the two groups.

I noticed that participants at higher developmental levels engaged in various forms of meditation. Therefore, I differentiated contemplative practices between meditation and all other forms of practice. In this study, meditators tended to practice mindfulness, Vipassana, and other forms of stillness, as shown in Table 10. Those with practices other than meditation tend to engage in prayers, chanting, dream interpretation, and other forms. The results, as shown in Table 11, indicate a significant difference between the two groups. Those whose SOI score was equal to or greater than level 3/4 meditate in 7 out of 10 cases, while

those who scored below that level meditate in only one out of nine cases, a significant finding with  $p = 0.0198$ . This was an important finding, showing a qualitative difference between these two groups. However, I considered the anomalies with the idea that there may be another qualitative factor that plays a role.

In particular, I wanted to understand the practices of Ruth and Nick who were at levels 4 and 4(3) respectively, yet did not have a formal meditation practice. Instead, Ruth practiced chanting and *lectio divina*, while Nick, a priest, practiced prayers, and other ways of communing with God. One of the salient features of a meditation practice is the quieting of the mind. Although Ruth and Nick do not practice a formal meditation, their practices are ways in which they are able to quiet the mind. If the qualitative criterion of a contemplative practice is that it is mind quieting, then, as shown in Table 16, all but one participant at or above the 3/4 level is engaged in a mind-quieting practice.

The third anomaly of those at or above the 3/4 level was Michael who described his practice of Goethean Phenomenology, yet was not practicing at this time. Michael was scored at the 3/4 level which puts him at the border of the two groups. His practice is not mind quieting, and so he remains an anomaly. Of course he is an anomaly only in the sense that his practice did not match the others in his group, which one would not necessarily expect with a small sample size.

The fourth anomaly is Sharon who is at the third order of development, yet has a mind-quieting practice. Sharon had practiced Vipassana meditation for two

years, yet now finds that she is too busy to meditate. But she describes her prayer practice as mind quieting and engages in that practice seven days a week, and for at least 15 minutes a day. Although she now has many responsibilities, it is interesting that she, as a person at level three, gave up the practice. I will look at this point shortly when I discuss the implications of the correlation found between development and mind-quieting practice.

I will now discuss three possible reasons why mind-quieting practices correlate strongly with adult development. I have not proven any of these three explanations, but present them as possibilities with implications for future research. The first reason is very straightforward. Mind-quieting practices lead to developmental growth. Shapiro et al. (2006) present a theoretical model that explains how mindfulness meditation affects positive change, in particular the developmental process. In mindfulness, the practitioner focuses nonjudgmental attention on the contents of consciousness, strengthening a witnessing self. In addition, Shapiro et al. (2006) provide four additional reasons why mindfulness meditation contributes to development: “(1) self-regulation and self-management, (2) emotional, cognitive and behavioral flexibility, (3) values clarification and, (4) exposure. Inherent in all of these mechanisms are the three axioms of intention, attention, and attitude” (p. 380).

In addition to Shapiro, et al.’s (2006) theoretical study, Chandler (1990) showed a strong relationship between transcendental meditation and developmental stage growth. Therefore, mind quieting practice as a cause of developmental growth is plausible.

The second possibility is that people who have at least a full stage Self-Authoring mind operating (3/4 and higher) gravitate towards mind quieting practices, while those below that level tend to avoid that type of practice. In this study, 9 out of 10 participants at or above the 3/4 level had a mind quieting practice while only one out of 8 participants below that level had a mind quieting practice. Kegan (1982) points out that at the level of Socialized mind, the self is comprised of the internalization of voices of others. “There is no self independent of the context of ‘other people liking’” (p. 96). There may need to *be* a self independent of others that can support a practice that includes a quiet mind. This independent self is first available at a full stage 4, that is, level 3/4 and above. Prior to that stage of development, the internalized voices will not stop because there is no independent self to hold that space. At stage 3/4 and above, the individual has differentiated to some extent from the internal voices and now knows that those voices are not his own. He can now hold the internalized voices as content, which might be required for inner silence. By holding the internalized voices as content, the mind can now direct attention and intention towards an activity that does not include the voices. By not sending energy to those voices they naturally settle down. Then the attention of consciousness can be with the self in silence, allowing a generative, creative, compassionate state to emerge.

At the Socialized mind level, the internalized voices are part of the individual’s mental structure, and can not be held at a distance. Further, this person makes meaning through the internalization of external authorities. However, a mind quieting meditation practice involves a task that is developing

an interior life which is so foreign to the Socialized mind that it may be too difficult a task at this time. If a person at the stage of the Socialized mind *does* engage in contemplative practices, he might either chose one that does not incorporate inner silence, or engage in a practice that is meant to quiet the mind, but in his case never quite does. He may start a practice of mantra repetition meant to quiet the mind, but his mind never settles down. In this case the practitioner will either give up the practice, finding it boring, or continue with the practice due to peer pressure, and be satisfied with his mind wandering during most of the practice. The only participant in this study at the Socialized mind level who has a mind-quieting practice may be at the cusp of moving to the next stage of development.

Irwin (2006) presents a theoretical approach to the readiness of the individual for the benefits of meditation. He notes that meditation can help the practitioner relax or concentrate at any level of development, but for the practice to be developmentally helpful, the practitioner must have a developed ego to release. He believes that individuals at conventional levels or those just beginning to break through that level may be attracted to meditation and exotic teachings as a way to solve problems of identity, or they may be searching for an ideology or a creed. But, he points out, meditation will not help these individuals. Instead, meditation will help those whose self can be open and undefended, those at Cook-Greuter's (2005) stage of construct-aware, which is equivalent to a transition stage between Self-Authoring mind and Self-Transforming mind (Irwin, 2000, pp. 300-301). Irwin seems focused on transcendent states and believes one needs to



be highly developed to benefit from meditation, while I believe meditation is beneficial earlier in development, starting at the full stage Self-Authoring mind level, that is, level 3/4 and above. I believe this study showing that so many of those at the level of a full Self-Authoring mind have a mind quieting contemplative practice is indicative of that benefit. It is unlikely that these participants would sustain their practice if they did not find something of value in it.

If it is the case that those at the Socialized mind level find it difficult to reach a state of inner silence, then knowing their developmental level would be helpful in recommending a practice for them. Further research would be helpful in determining appropriate practices for individuals at the various levels of development.

The third possibility is a combination of the first two explanations. A person at the third order of consciousness, Socialized mind, may stay at that level engaged in practices that do not lead to a quieting of the mind either due to the form of the practice or due to the individual's limitations. At some point, for some individuals, the mind does begin to settle down. Over time, the quieting of the mind leads to differentiation from internalized voices, which allows the practice to lead to greater exposure to a quiet mind. This provides an iterative, circular explanation for the effects of meditation and developmental growth.

### ***Adult Development and Self-Directedness in Practice***

Participants in this study varied in the self-directedness of their approach to the teachers and teachings of contemplative practice. Part of the spiritual

landscape in the past few decades is the issue of cult-like guru worshipping. There have always been those who have actively sought a guru to provide the instructions and environment to “wake up” to a higher consciousness. The idea is that one can not wake up on one’s own, but that one needs a person already awakened to wake one up. There are many stories of seekers of wisdom who surrendered to their gurus in order to attain their current level of enlightened consciousness. Then there are others who are interested in spirituality and personal development, but will not surrender their opinions and discernment to another. They will respect and learn from a guru or teacher, but will not surrender to him or her. Spiritual movements vary from requiring total surrender to the guru or teacher to encouraging a commitment of participation to allowing the student to chart their own course in their spiritual education. The dilemma of level of devotion and commitment goes to the heart of the Socialized to Self-Authoring transition.

Highly esteemed developmental researcher Susanne Cook-Greuter (2000) writes, “Competence in ego-transcendent modes of reality perception requires a seeker’s conscious surrender to a guru and devotion to a specific spiritual path” (p. 238). While Buddhist teacher Segyu Rinpoche (Shaheen, 2012) takes a different point of view.

Most of the time I like to lead from behind the scenes. We can pay a price for the traditional guru model. In that model, one does nothing without consulting the teacher. Some become so narrow in their view and so dependent that they become dysfunctional. There’s no critical thinking. This is not healthy. I don’t like it because it blocks their creativity, independence, and growth, and so on. (p. 105)

Ironically, the developmental researcher who pioneered postautonomous stages is recommending surrender and devotion to a guru, while the Buddhist rinpoche is expressing concerns about how surrendering to a guru can lead to dysfunction and blocked growth.

The concept of surrendering to a guru is a romantic notion that entails projections of perfection onto the leader. In the history of human evolution of consciousness, the mythic period was one in which society was organized around kings, queens, lords, serfs, and slaves. Kings made laws that his subjects were to obey. From a subject-object relational point of view, feudal society was at the second order of consciousness, the Imperial stage. Spiritual teachers applied a feudal metaphor where the guru was king and the disciple a fortunate slave devoted to his master. As participant Janet said in her interview, “When you come to a guru, the thing is, you have to do what they ask you. That is the deal.” But that is the deal for Janet because that is the way she makes meaning of spirituality. As Segyu Rinpoche points out, that is not the only metaphor for a spiritual teacher.

In this study the way participants make meaning seems to influence their approach to spiritual teachers. Although this study has only 19 participants, trends in the relationship were very clear. But due to the small sample size, future studies with larger groups would be important to arrive at more meaningful conclusions.

Participants in this study who were at the Socialized mind level were devoted to a guru, dedicated to a spiritual movement, or engaged in traditional prayers of their religion. This may be the entry point into spiritual practice. At the

Socialized mind stage, individuals have internalized and are guided by the beliefs and opinions of the institutions that are important to them. Therefore, when they become interested in spirituality or contemplative practice, they seek an institution with the beliefs they can then internalize. Unlike those at a more complex level of development, they will take in the teachings as absolutely correct teachings or the best teachings available, and feel sorry for those who do not share those beliefs. If growth occurs such that a full Self-Authoring mind is operating, even at the level of 3/4, they will either leave the spiritual group they belonged to or their relationship to the group will change to reflect their growth. It is the growth in meaning-making capacity that drives these changes. A more complex mind no longer makes meaning in the same way that it made meaning when it was less complex. The choice of a particular guru or of even having a guru may no longer make sense to more complex minds. And it is this change in meaning making that compels those who have developed more complex minds to expand their practice or move on.

Participants in this study, who were at the stage 3/4, learn contemplative practice techniques from teachers. They have a full Self-Authoring mind operating, but not in the primary position. Perhaps their Socialized mind which is in the primary position prefers the instructions of an external teacher, but their full operating Self-Authoring mind precludes them from dedicating and devoting their life to an institution in a way that blindly accepts the teachings. If they do stick with a spiritual group or movement, they would probably be more evaluative and discerning than those at the fully Socialized mind level.

Participants with at least a full primary Self-Authoring mind, that is, 4/3 and above, are eclectic and self-directed in the development of their spiritual practice. They are willing to experiment and find what resonates with them. If they look for spirituality in their birth religion, they do so not as a traditionalist, but seek new meanings from old rituals. Spiritual teachers are consultants to them, not infallible gurus. If they belong to a spiritual group, they know that the group resonates with them but is not necessarily the best way for everyone or the one true way.

The feudal metaphor for spiritual relationships is changing with the evolution of consciousness. That is not to say there will not be master teachers of spirituality and contemplative practices, but that there may be less projection of infallibility thrust upon them. The evolving relationship between teacher and student may follow Kegan's (1994) descriptions of the evolution of consciousness from traditionalism to modernism to postmodernism. Traditionalism is associated with the level of the Socialized mind, modernism with the Self-Authoring mind, and postmodernism with the Self-Transforming mind. The traditionalist approach to spirituality is clearly present in the participants in this study at the level of the Socialized mind. Constructs of the traditional approach include believing in an infallible or close to infallible teacher, believing that one's path is the best, and trying to live one's life according to the principles and precepts of the group. A modernist approach to spirituality may look like the approach of those at the stage of Self-Authoring in this study. Kegan (1994) described self-directed learning in adult learning as an example of a fourth order or Self-Authoring demand of

modern life. At the third order, students learn facts and techniques from their teachers. At the fourth order, teachers expect students to be self-directed. Self-directed learners

may examine themselves, their culture, and their milieu in order to understand how to separate what they feel from what they should feel, what they value from what they should value, and what they want from what they should want. They learn to identify and value their own experiences in life. They develop critical thinking, individual initiative, and a sense of themselves as co-creators of the culture that shapes them...Self-directed learners set their own goals and standards - with or without help from experts. They use experts, institutions, and other resources to pursue these goals. Being independent does not mean being a loner; many independent learners are highly social and belong to clubs or other informal learning groups. (Grow, 1991, pp. 133-134)

This is the approach that the fourth order, Self-Authoring participants take towards their spirituality and contemplative practice.

No participants in this study were at the fifth order of consciousness, Self-Transforming mind. Two participants were at the level of Self-Authoring mind with Self-Transforming mind emerging. In spite of a lack of data, I wonder what a fifth-order approach to spirituality and contemplative practice would look like. The first step in developing a fifth-order spirituality would be to differentiate from the fourth-order self-directed spirituality.

Three hallmarks of postmodernism are the (a) rejection of absolutes, (b) perceived role of power and domination in social and political discourse, and (c) celebration of difference (Kegan, 1994). Through these three hallmarks, the differentiation from modernism begins. In the case of spirituality and contemplative practice, a practitioner may realize that (a) his view of spirituality is not complete nor is any systemic spiritual ideology complete, (b) inherent in teacher and student relationships is an element of power and domination, and (c)

many spiritual paths are equally valid. However, these views are how the individual differentiates from a modern spirituality. The step after differentiating from a modern spirituality is integrating a new form of spirituality into a fifth order of consciousness.

The basic aspect of the fifth order of consciousness is that the individual no longer sees herself as a self-form that is whole or complete, but as the process of self-form creation that includes all other self-forms and processes (Kegan, 1994, p. 313). Applying this to spiritual relationships, the Self-Transforming individual no longer sees herself as a self-form meditating. Instead she sees her self being meditated. The process of meditating is primary to the self who is being meditated. Since the process of meditating is primary, there can be no personal goal involved. At the fourth order, the self has a goal even if it is to just be in the process of meditation. It is the Self-Authoring mind directing the practice. At the fifth order of consciousness, meditation happens without a goal. The Zen Buddhist teacher Shunryu Suzuki (1970/1999) said

When there is no gaining idea in what you do, then you do something. In zazen what you are doing is not for the sake of anything. You may feel as if you are doing something special, but actually it is only the expression of your true nature; it is the activity which appeases your inmost desire. But as long as you think that you practice zazen for the sake of something, that is not true practice. (p. 47)

The individual at the level of the Self-Transforming mind now knows that a complete theory or ideology does not exist. All teachings are incomplete. Neither the teacher nor the student knows it all, and they realize that they cannot know it all. They work together across self-systems to take the next step. There is recognition that wisdom resides in all, including the teacher and the student, and

that it is the relationship between them that reveals this inner wisdom. The teacher is the teacher based on the virtue that she knows how to guide the process without knowing with certainty where the process is going. The boundary between the student and teacher is fluid. They are both aware of the interconnectedness of all life.

### *Exposure to Contemplative Practice*

Of the participants who have a contemplative practice, exposure to practice varied from 90 minutes a week to over 400 minutes a week. If exposure to contemplative practice correlated with levels of development, one would expect a monotonically increasing amount of practice as developmental level rises. Instead, those with at least a primary Self-Authoring mind (4/3 and above) practiced for an average of 278 minutes a week; those with a full Self-Authoring mind but with a full Socialized mind primary (3/4) practiced an average of 157 minutes a week; and those at the Self-Authoring mind emerging and below practiced an average of 202 minutes a week. When I disregarded the data of those at the third order of consciousness, a regression showed a relationship between minutes of practice per week and developmental level with  $F(1,9) = 8.83$ ,  $r^2 = .52$ ,  $p = .018$ . Now, I will address why time practicing may be higher for those at the Socialized mind level than those at the 3/4 level.

Those with a third order of consciousness internalize the beliefs and opinions of the institutions and others they value. In the case of contemplative practice, participants at that level practice diligently, perhaps because they have internalized the teachings of the group to which they belong. In the case of this



study, the high average weekly minutes of practice in this group was the result of two out of five participants, Lori and Jennifer, who belong to eastern spiritual groups that promote either meditation or chanting. With such small numbers of participants, generalization is difficult. But for the purpose of understanding the data in this study, the relatively high average time of practice seems to be due to the Socialized mind prioritizing the engagement of practice as taught in their spiritual groups.

The next group had the lowest minutes of practice per week. This group has both a full Socialized mind operating along with a full Self-Authoring mind operating, with the Socialized mind primary. Their Socialized mind might be telling them that they ought to be practicing, and so they do. But their Self-Authoring mind might be telling them that they have other priorities in addition to contemplative practice and they will decide how much time they have to devote to this practice. And so the amount of practice for this group might be lower than the first group due to their Self-Authoring mind determining for themselves how much time to spend in contemplative practice.

The last group includes those with a Self-Authoring mind primary, which includes the remaining participants in this study. I believe that at this level of development, these participants engage in practice for its own sake and with a high priority that they themselves have established. They engage in contemplative practices because their own inner voice, and not an internalized voice, lets them know that that is what they want to do. This group practices more than the other two groups.

### *Recommendations for Future Research*

This study with only 19 participants is not generalizable to a larger population, but the implications of this study are tantalizing. In conducting an exploratory study, I sought qualitative correlations between contemplative practice and developmental levels, and even in this small group the study revealed interesting relationships between them. However, more work needs to be done to confirm and extend these findings.

Future research would benefit from larger sample sizes and more diverse participants. This study drew from a group of students who were likely to know about and engage in contemplative practices. I would recommend a similar study in other graduate institutions in which students would be less likely to know about contemplative practices to see if the more complex minds among those participants engage in some mind quieting practice such as golf, or if there is some other way to distinguish between people at different levels of development.

Another question that arises from this research is regarding the inner practice of people at the level of Socialized mind who have a mind-quieting meditation practice. Does the mind-quieting meditation quiet a third-order mind as much as it quiets a fourth-order mind?

One major finding in this study was that the participants with a more complex mind, in all cases but one, had a mind-quieting contemplative practice. Future research could try to discover the causal direction, if any. That is, does mind-quieting practice lead to growth in development as some empirical research has shown (Alexander, et al., 1990; Chandler, 1990) and theoretical papers have

speculated (Irwin, 2002; Shapiro et al., 2006; Wilber, 2006) or, does an advanced stage of development cause the interest in and practice of mind quieting practices?

Researchers began to focus on the link between meditation and adult developmental growth in the 1990s, although almost exclusively using practitioners of TM. Studies that focused on other types of meditation reported on changes of states of consciousness rather than growth through the adult stages. In general, I recommend considerably more research be conducted that includes a variety of mind-quieting processes such as meditation and mindfulness and people from all levels of stage development. In this way, we can continue to learn the important characteristics of practices that quiet the mind and how mind-quieting practice interacts with adult development.

### *Conclusion*

At the start of this project, I did not know if any of the finding would be significant. My concern was that those at or around the Socialized mind level would have practices that were indistinguishable from those at or around the Self-Authoring level. Unlike other studies, I did not select participants who were all postconventional or postautonomous, for example. Nor did I select participants who all had the same practice such as Buddhist meditation, mindfulness or TM. In a sense, I rolled the dice hoping that something significant and useful would emerge.

I suppose I should not have been surprised. Prior to the start of the project, I had been stuck on the design of the study. There were a number of possible approaches, but none of them seemed right. I knew I wanted to use Kegan's

constructive-developmental theory but was not sure of using an intervention in a longitudinal study or somehow doing a cross-sectional study. One weekend in October, 2010, I was on a meditation retreat. The weekend facilitator asked us to share any frustrations or blockages in our lives. I shared with the group my frustration in finding an appropriate study design. That night, I had dreams about the study, and in the morning while I was halfway between dreaming and sleeping, the study design came to me almost as a revelation. I quickly got out of bed and wrote it all down lest I forget this information. And that is how the study design was formulated.

Throughout the process, from the timing of the certification program in the Subject-Object Interview to the findings of the study, I have felt supported by forces that seemed to want this study done. If Alexander et al. (1990) are correct that when we meditate we experience pure consciousness, then the intuition and inspiration for this project may have manifested from that source.

This study showed a strong correlation between mind-quieting practices and higher developmental stages. It did not show that mind-quieting practices lead to higher developmental stages, but interestingly, a number of researchers have developed theoretical models of mindfulness (McGarvey, 2010; Shapiro et al., 2006) or TM (Alexander et al., 1990; Alexander, Heaton, & Chandler, 1994) leading to higher stages, often using a constructive-developmental theoretical framework. Although I recommend that adult developmental researchers investigate causality and the characteristics of effective practice, I think the results of this study are strong enough so that meditators and non-meditators will see the

value in mind-quieting practices, and not only mind-quieting practice but also consistent practice and a practice that resonates with the practitioner. I believe that quieting the mind on a regular basis is an important skill, not only for physical and mental health, but also for promoting developmental growth.

Lastly, I would like to express appreciation to the participants in this study without whom this project would not have been possible. Each person, enrolled in a demanding Ph.D. program, found the time to share a part of his or her life with me. The participants were all engaged in their transformative studies of the Ph.D. program and were involved in their own process of transformation and personal growth. I was very impressed by their accomplishments and it was an honor to have interviewed them about their contemplative practices.

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**APPENDIX A: CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES QUESTIONNAIRE**

Contemplative Practices Questionnaire			
	<u>Times per Month</u>	<u>Years of Practice</u>	<u>Has this practice contributed to your growth?</u>
<b><u>Stillness Practices</u></b>			
Silence			
Centering Prayer			
Sitting Meditation			
Transcendental Meditation			
Insight Meditation			
Loving Kindness Meditation			
Zen Meditation			
Other _____			
<b><u>Movement Practices</u></b>			
Qi Gong			
Tai Chi			
Yoga			
Walking Meditation			
Martial Arts			
Ecstatic Movement			
Dancing			
<b><u>Written and Oral Practices</u></b>			
Chanting			
Journaling			
Calligraphy			
<b><u>Relational Practices</u></b>			
Dialogue			
<b><u>Ritual Practices</u></b>			
Attendance at House of Worship			
Sweatlodge			
Home Rituals			

## APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions on your Contemplative Practice (if any):

1. What is your primary form of contemplative practice?
2. Is there awareness of the body in your practice? Does the body play a role in your practice?
3. What is the role of attention in your practice? Does the concept of concentration or witnessing resonate with your practice?
4. Do you work with a teacher or mentor?
5. What do you think are the most important benefits *for you*?
6. What is the most important outcome of practice for you?
7. What motivates you to engage in contemplative practice? (Similar: Why do you practice?)
8. How has CP has contributed to your personal growth, if it has?
9. Has your practice increased your self-awareness? If yes, how do you think that has occurred?
10. What aspect(s) of CP do you think contributed most to your growth?
11. Have you experienced any type of loss through your practice?
12. Do you experience any impediments to your practice?
13. Has your practice led to any kind of altered consciousness or awareness? If so, has that contributed to your growth? If yes, how has it contributed?

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

**Return of this consent form via e-mail reply to sender constitutes your informed consent to participate in this research and signifies that you have read and understand the contents of this consent form.**

*The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between contemplative practices and stages of developmental growth. The project director is Charles Silverstein, who is a graduate student of the California Institute of Integral Studies.*

### **Principal Researcher:**

Charles Silverstein

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### **Procedures:**

I agree to participate in a study about developmental levels and contemplative practices. I understand that I will be participating in an interview known as the Subject-Object Interview (SOI), which includes a 30-minute inventory of emotions and a 75-minute interview with the goal of learning how I think about things and make sense of my experience. I will be given 10 cards with prompts and I will jot down things regarding the prompts that we may talk about in the interview. The ten cards are for my use only, and will not be collected or shown to the researcher.

I understand that I will be asked to fill out a demographic form and a contemplative practices questionnaire.

I understand that in addition to the interview above, I will be interviewed regarding my participation, if any, in contemplative practices such as meditation or yoga.

### **Risks and Safeguards:**

*In this study, personal risks to you are minimal. The study has been designed to minimize risks, which are detailed below along with mitigants to those risks.*

I understand that:

1. My participation is voluntary.
2. The intent and purpose of my participation is research.
3. I do not have to answer any question I choose not to answer.
4. I can refuse to participate in any part of the study.
5. I have the right to withdraw from this study at any time.
6. I can discontinue participation at any time without any negative effects to me.
7. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. The recording will be stored on the researcher's personal computer and destroyed five years after completion of the study.
8. Transcriptions of the SOI interview and score sheets will be kept anonymously and indefinitely for future research.
9. The principal researcher may enlist the services of a transcription service or a second scorer for the SOI. Those persons will not be given any identifying information about you and will be requested to keep all information confidential.
10. Any excerpts taken from the interviews, written or spoken, will remain confidential with respect to my personal identity. Fictitious names will be used for the dissertation.
11. All information I give will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law.
12. Interview recordings, transcriptions and questionnaires will be stored as files on a flash drive that will be password protected and encrypted. When files are temporarily on my personal computer, those files will be password protected and encrypted.
13. During the interview I may be recalling a time of emotional upset which may be uncomfortable to me, and that I can refuse to go further with the interview at any time. In addition, if at any time I need assistance in coping with an issue that has arisen as a result of being a participant in this study, I can contact [REDACTED] LCSW, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, at [REDACTED]



14. If I have any concerns or am dissatisfied at any time with any part of the study, I may contact (anonymously, if I wish) the Chair of the Human Research Review Committee, California Institute of Integral Studies, 1453 MissionStreet, San Francisco, CA 94103, or by telephone at [REDACTED] or via email to [REDACTED]. You may contact the researcher, Charles Silverstein by telephone at ([REDACTED])

**Benefits:**

I understand that:

1. There can be no guarantee of direct benefit.
2. Participation in this study may spark an interest in the developmental growth approach to transformation. This interest may eventually result in my own growth, although not as a direct result of this study.
3. Results of this study may be of benefit to academics interested in this field of study, and those who advise clients in transformational growth such as life coaches.

**The researcher thanks you for your generosity in providing your time for this study.**

Consent of the Participant:

I have read the above information, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this study by electronically signing below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Electronic Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

**APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE**

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Circle: Male Female

Marital Status: Never Married Married Separated Divorced Widowed

Nationality \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you currently live? \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_

Do you practice any religion? \_\_\_\_\_ Which one? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you consider yourself spiritual but not religious? \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Education: B.A. M.A. M.Ed. Ph.D. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Highest Education: H.S. B.A. M.A. M.Ed. Ph.D. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Highest Education: H.S. B.A. M.A. M.Ed. Ph.D. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Current Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

In what field? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any previous familiarity with the Subject-Object Interview? \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E: SUBJECT-OBJECT INTERVIEW

### ADMINISTERING THE SUBJECT-OBJECT INTERVIEW

#### MATERIALS:

- Ten (10) subject cards (3” x 7”)
- Pencil
- Digital recorder, Batteries

#### PREPPING THE SUBJECT: Subject needs to know he/she:

- (a) Is participating in a 30 minute inventory of emotions and a 75 minute interview
- (b) The goal of which is to learn “how you think about things,” “how you make sense of your own experience,” etc.
- (c) Doesn’t have to talk about anything he/she doesn’t want to.

#### PART I: Generating Content: The Inventory

The subject is handed the ten (10) index cards.  
Each card has a title printed on it, to wit:

1. ANGRY
2. ANXIOUS, NERVOUS
3. SUCCESS
4. STRONG STAND, CONVICTION
5. SAD
6. TORN
7. MOVED, TOUCHED
8. LOST SOMETHING
9. CHANGE
10. IMPORTANT TO ME

The subject is told that the cards are for his/her use only, that you won’t see them, and that he/she can take them with him/her or throw them away after the interview. The cards are just to help the subject jot down things we might want to talk about in the interview.

The subject is told, “We will spend the first 15—20 minutes with the cards and then talk together for an hour or so about those things you jotted down on the cards which you choose to talk about. We do not have to talk about anything you don’t want to talk about.”

#### (1) “Now let’s take the first card” (ANGRY)

“If you were to think back over the last several weeks, even the last couple months, and you had to think about times you felt really angry about something, or times you got really mad or felt a sense of outrage or violation—are there 2 or

3 things that come to mind? Take a minute to think about it, if you like, and just jot down on the card whatever you need to remind you of what they were.” (If nothing comes to mind for a particular card, skip it and go on to the next card)

(2) (ANXIOUS, NERVOUS)

“...if you were to think of some times when you found yourself being really scared about something, nervous, anxious about something...”

(3) (SUCCESS)

“...if you were to think of some times when you felt kind of triumphant, or that you had achieved something that was difficult for you, or especially satisfying that you were afraid might come out another way, or a sense that you had overcome something...”

(4) (STRONG STAND, CONVICTION)

“...if you were to think of some times when you had to take a strong stand, or felt very keenly ‘this is what I think should or should not be done about this,’ times when you became aware of a particular conviction you held...”

(5) (SAD)

“...felt real sad about something, perhaps something that even made you cry, or left you feeling on the verge of tears...”

(6) (TORN)

“...felt really in conflict about something, where someone or some part of you felt one way or was urging you on in one direction, and someone else or some other part was feeling another way; times when you really felt kind of torn about something...”

(7) (MOVED, TOUCHED)

“... felt quite touched by something you saw, or thought or heard, perhaps something that even caused your eyes to tear up, something that moved you...”

(8) (LOST SOMETHING)

“...times you had to leave something behind, or were worried that you might lose something or someone; ‘goodbye’ experiences, the ends of something important or valuable; losses...”

(9) (CHANGE)

“As you look back at your past, if you had to think of some ways in which you think you’ve changed over the last few years—or, even months—if that seems right—are there some ways that come to mind?”

(10) (IMPORTANT)

“If I were just to ask you, ‘What is it that is most important to you?’, or ‘What do you care deepest about?’ or ‘What matters most?’ — are there 1 or 2 things that come to mind?”

## PART II

“Now we have an hour or so to talk about some of these things you’ve recalled or jotted down. You can decide where we start. Is there one card you felt more strongly about than the others? (or a few cards, etc.) ..“

(Now the probing—for—structure part of the interview begins...) (Subject keeps selecting the cards)

What the interviewer should keep in mind:

1. Don't worry about getting through all the cards; you never do. The idea is to let the subject introduce personally salient content, and for you to try to understand it. It doesn't matter how many cards you do. (Though it can be useful to know which cards most salient.)
2. The subject will give you the "whats" (what is important, what felt successful); you must learn the whys" (why is it important? why does that constitute success?) The answer to the whys helps you to understand how the person's subject—object construction is shaping real life, the goal of the interview.
3. Since you are probing for structure you need to keep asking "why?" (like any structural interview) but since you are probing real—life experience, often deeply felt, care must be taken to frame the "whys" in such a way that does not seem to suggest the person is somehow wrong to be caring so deeply. E.G. "I'm worrying that I might fail my statistics final." The interviewer wants to know what is at stake in this possible loss (e.g., maybe if he fails his father won't buy him an Alfa Romeo; or maybe if I fail I feel I will be letting down the family, or maybe, if she fails she feels she is letting down herself — all conceivably different structures). But we don't want to ask a question like "why are you so worried about that?" because it can unintentionally suggest we have doubts about the appropriateness of worrying about such a thing. Each interviewer must find his/her own way to convey that he/she is not trying to understand why it should be that the subject has this worry but in what sense it is a worry.
4. The interviewer must wear "two hats" in the conduct of the interview—that of empathic, receptive listener, and that of active inquirer. Ignoring the first on behalf of the second leaves most interviewees feeling grilled, and not well understood; the interview will become unpleasant at best, and unproductive at worst. Ignoring the second on behalf of the first leaves most interviews unscorable; people rarely spontaneously speak in an epistemologically unambiguous fashion.
5. The central activity in the interviewer's own head is the forming of hypotheses during the interview itself. The more familiar a person is with the 21 epistemological distinctions the interview can make the easier it is to generate hypotheses. One excellent way of becoming more familiar with these distinctions is the activity of analyzing (or "scoring") subject—object interviews.
6. Further information, advice, and sympathy about all these activities can be found in great quantity in *The Guide to the Subject-Object Interview: Its Administration and Interpretation*.

(Adapted from the above-mentioned *Guide* by Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan,

Goodman, & Felix, 1988)

**APPENDIX F: SUBJECT-OBJECT ANALYSIS – FORMULATIONS**

**PROCESS**

Formulations Process Sheet

Name or Code of Interview:

Analysis Page #:

Bit # / Interview Page #	Range of Hypothesis 1 1(2) 1/2 2/1 2(1) 2 2(3) 2/3 3/2 3(2) 3 3(4) 3/4 4/3 4(3) 4 4(5) 4/5 5/4 5(4) 5	Questions: 1. What structural evidence leads you to these hypotheses? 2. What evidence leads you to reject other plausible counter-hypothesis? 3. If you have a range of hypotheses, what further information do you need to narrow the range?

**APPENDIX G: SUBJECT-OBJECT ANALYSIS – OVERALL  
FORMULATION**

Overall Formulation Sheet

Name of Code of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Analysis \_\_\_\_\_ Page #: \_\_\_\_\_

A. Tentative Overall Hypothesis (minimum of 3 bits reflective of each hypothesis):

B. Rejected Tentative Hypothesis/Hypotheses and Reason(s) for Rejection:

1. Hypoth: \_\_\_\_\_ Why rejected?

2. Hypoth: \_\_\_\_\_ Why rejected?

C. SINGLE OVERALL SCORE (minimum of 3 bits reflective solely of this score)

(if interview not scorable with single score, enter range of scores\*)

D. Testing S.O.S. If you have not already justified your rejection of scores on either “side” of the S.O.S, do so here:

E. Interview “Power” (# of bits solely reflective of S.O.S):

\* If unable to formulate single score, explain what further information needed to reach single score.

## APPENDIX H: GLOSSARY OF MEDITATIVE TERMS

Chanting – the rhythmic speaking or singing, often of sacred phrases to bring about an elevated state of consciousness

Concentration – focusing the mind on an object, thought or image, keeping that attention through willpower and one-pointedness

Contemplative Practices – an overarching term denoting any process used to quiet or focus the mind and/or mind/body. Examples include meditation, chanting, prayers, and movements such as yoga or tai chi

Effortlessness – an attitude within meditation that precludes the use of willpower or one-pointedness

Entrainment – The use of sound embedded with certain frequencies delivered through headphones, intended to cause one's brainwaves to resonate with those frequencies leading to particular states of consciousness designed to replicate brain states during various types of meditation

*Lectio divina* – a Christian practice of divine reading that uses scripture to promote communion with God

Mantra Meditation – a form of silent meditation in which one repeats a sacred word or sound

Meditation – an internal practice designed to elevate one's consciousness, increase awareness, and provide insight or relaxation

Mindfulness Meditation – a form of meditation in which one witnesses feelings, thoughts and anything that arises, in a non-judgmental manner

Vipassana Meditation – A Buddhist form of meditation intended to provide insight into the nature of reality through a number of techniques such as mindfulness, body awareness or the breath. Also known as Insight Meditation

Visualization – The use of guided imagery to bring about certain states of consciousness, to relax, to provide insights, or to communicate with the divine or one's higher self

Witnessing – observing one's thoughts, feelings and sensations as they arise in a non-judgmental manner. One can engage in witnessing within meditation as a mindfulness meditation or during daily activities