

Coaching for brave leadership: an action research study

Mike McLaughlin (2012)

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Coaching for brave leadership: an action research study

by

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Abstract

Even though there is a plethora of leadership training and coaching available worldwide, there appears to be a disparity between articulated best practice and some of the reported negative experiences of individuals within organisations. There appears to be a gap between the behaviours of leaders and the expectations of followers. This gap may be due, at least in part, to an absence of brave leadership, and also perhaps due to a lack of one to one coaching for leaders. In this study a small group of leaders helped develop and explore a coaching model designed to enhance bravery. An action research approach was undertaken with six leaders who undertook to help evolve and also be coached using this particular coaching model. The action research took place over a six month period in various locations within the U.K. The data was analysed using a retroductive and thematic approach. The use of this model appears to indicate that it can assist in decision making and that bravery may be enhanced, at least from a subjective perspective. It would also appear that the idea of brave leadership may complement other leadership theories. However, more work should be done to adapt and refine the model for use in different circumstances. Furthermore, it should also be explored more thoroughly in a purely coaching environment rather than one where research into the model is also being conducted.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

There is a plethora of leadership training and coaching available worldwide, indeed some organisations and individuals specialise exclusively in the area of leadership coaching, and there are even academic institutions such as INSEAD (Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires – European Institute for Business Administration), which offer qualifications in the area. In addition there is a wide range of leadership texts. For example, an internet search for books on leadership from an online supplier which was undertaken during September 2012 revealed close to 72,000 titles. Despite the availability of these resources, there appears to be a disparity between articulated best practice and some of the reported negative experiences of individuals within organisations. It could be argued that whilst an absence of effective leadership development may account for some less than desirable behaviours from leaders, there does appear to be a gap between the behaviours of leaders and the expectations of followers even when some form of leadership development has been made available (Burke, 2006). Indeed, Lipman-Blumen (2005) discusses the pitfalls of being in the thrall of toxic leaders, although Van de Vliert and Einarsen (2008) suggest that what constitutes constructive or destructive leadership can vary from society to society and country to country.

The relatively recent cases of company failures such as Enron and Arthur Andersen seem to point to a malaise within the very fabric of business. Companies such as these will have had their own particular set of systemic issues which led to their public demise, but what caused this, is probably far from simply a failure of a process or a policy. More recently, there has been a global economic downturn. At the time of writing, this appears to be being exacerbated by a combination of a lack of confidence from investors and consumers alike, and also the very real threat of whole countries defaulting on their debts. Such examples seem to support the old Chinese proverb and more recently Garratt's claim that the 'fish rots from the head' (Garratt, 2011), i.e. organisations begin to deteriorate from the top. In fact, in the three years taken to undertake this research, there appears to have been one leadership 'scandal' after another, culminating in the recent resignation of a high ranking executive in connection to the apparent fixing of the lending rate between UK banks (The Wall Street Journal online, Schaefer Munoz & Colchester, July 4th 2012).

Whilst there can, of course, be a veritable smorgasbord of reasons for organisations having a toxic quality to them, for example, the physical working conditions, poor wages, long hours, hostile customers; one of the biggest influencers of the emotional temperature comes from the leaders within those organisations. Just as clocks with pendulums placed in the same room and which are all swinging to and fro in random timing to each other, will eventually synchronise together (Czolczyński *et al.*, 2011) thus it can be with leadership within organisations. The leader's 'internal metronome' or 'moral compass' will often have a profound effect on those around them. Metronomes tend to synchronise with the largest metronome, and in an organisation the 'largest metronome' tends to be the leader, for it is she or he who sets the beat and pulse of an organisation.

The fish rots

The rot can set in, or perhaps not be eradicated, due to the conditioning of potentially excellent managers and leaders by others in influential positions within the organisation, a type of Pavlovian Leadership 'Group Think' (Neck and Moorhead, 1995). Coercive and other destructive behaviours can show up, and this can have the effect of having individuals and often teams of people jumping at their own shadows and responding to a nether-world of intrigue, innuendo and subterfuge, which may well not actually exist. In these cases morale can be destroyed, staff churn increased, innovation stifled and stress heightened. In my experience, this land of shadows exists at its murkiest and most debilitating at the level directly below that of the CEO and often extends to some middle management levels. The aim of this research is therefore to explore whether a coaching model can be designed which might ultimately help counter some of these unfortunate behaviours, by aiding the enhancement of bravery in leaders.

Working as an executive coach and also as a senior manager, I have met many leaders in many industries who are dedicated, honest, inspirational and trustworthy. They are also often incredibly courageous. On the other hand, I have met others who seem to lack the very traits which should, on a close reading of the leadership research, have been a prerequisite for them ever having been chosen to be considered for a leadership position. There are several reasons why this can happen, and one, which I have seen all

too often, is that individuals are chosen because they are in some way technically gifted, or they are likely to be able to 'achieve targets'.

The sometimes catastrophic combination of the less than ideal choice of candidate for a role and a lack of an effective development programme is sadly quite common. Whilst there are always likely to be challenges in making the correct appointments, it does seem that there is a genuine disparity between effective leadership and the amount of leadership training, development and coaching offered. However, perhaps I am confusing quantity with quality and effectiveness here. I have observed over several years that many of the clients with whom I engage have had particular challenges with the behaviours of managers and leaders, and the damage that these 'leaders' can inflict, either by accident or design, on others. And yet these same companies have often access to relatively well funded training budgets. Although their research is focussed specifically on bullying, Mumford *et al.* (1993) illustrate that the toxicity of a particular type of leadership may have little to do with intellect or traditional development. It should be noted, however, that there may in some instances be borderline personality disorders at play, and that specialist help and support may be required. I would suggest, however, that we may in some cases be in danger of pathologising what is simply an inherent lack of awareness, which can in itself be improved by coaching.

It could be argued, therefore, that the disparity between available training and some leadership behaviours might be due to a lack of one to one coaching for leaders. This may well be the case, and coaching is often cited as being a relatively new profession (Tobias, 1996). Furthermore, leadership coaching is not employed as widely as it probably should be, and there is no consensus of opinion about what leadership coaching should consist of. What is certainly the case is that there are several burgeoning leadership 'schools of thought' which maintain that they have strategies and ideas which will improve the leadership and follower experience, but a review of the literature suggests that these have not translated into coaching models.

There also is much in the academic literature which has been written about ethical leadership (Brown *et al.*, 2005) or its close cousin authentic leadership (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). Indeed, authentic leadership and

ethical leadership are two examples of leadership 'schools of thought'. And whilst these stimulating ideas about leadership are to be applauded, it is questionable what change they can ultimately bring, particularly if they exist mainly as frameworks and concepts which do not always agree with each other.

In relation to the aforementioned Enron company, Green and Odom (2003, p.66) state that, "the lack of ethical leadership at Enron has harmed thousands of employees, undermined the credibility of brokerage services, consumer confidence in the US stock market and will result in more expansive regulation by the Securities and Exchange Commission". Since then we have seen changes in regulations, not just in securities and exchange, but in banking and insurance, amongst others. However, there still seems to be a malaise – a malaise which lies in the region between outright corruption and the corporate Valhalla as promised by 'expansive regulation' and/or the latest and best-ever leadership course. This missing element is, I believe, something which requires more than introducing leaders to ideas and concepts. It is also more than simply plucking out the apparently salient points from a leadership development program and parachuting them into a one to one coaching session. These approaches in their own may do little to nourish the leadership-led toxic landscape.

Leadership models

Despite the ideas contained within the theoretical enclaves of authentic leadership, transformational leadership and ethical leadership, there is a danger that, whilst organisations can point to being ethical or authentic, the day to day experience of its inhabitants belies whatever grandiose phrases may appear on the end of year reports. It would suggest that a similar disparity can be observed when organisations wax lyrical about corporate social governance whilst treating it simply as a public relations exercise (Frankental, 2001).

Whilst ethical, transformative and authentic leadership do not have as their main foundation the requirement to move away from the norm, there is an implicit assumption in each of these schools of thought that this may from time to time need to be the case. The term 'positive deviance' (Spreitzer and Sonenshein, 2004) has been used to describe a situation where an

individual may decide to purposefully move against or away from their societal or other norms.

There is a distinct overlap between positive deviance and authentic leadership. Staw and Boettger (1990) discuss 'deviance' from norms in relation to the work role whilst Robinson and Bennett (1995) describe deviance as being those behaviours which differ from policies, rules and procedures. The essential ingredient appears to be that 'deviance' is defined as travelling away from the norm. Intriguingly, Eagly (2005) suggests that authentic leadership may overreach itself in situations where leaders who have openly behaved in a way which was congruent with their stated core values, might fail to reach what she describes as 'relational authenticity' with followers, perhaps because these particular values do not match those of the followers. Thus there is a correlation and also a possible distinction between authentic leadership and positive deviance. I was intrigued by this distinction. It seems logical to assume that standing up for our values may mean that from time to time, people have to deviate from the norm. However, if the values which are held up by the authentic leader are inappropriate for the leader to reinforce in a particular situation, then it is likely that there would be some internal conflict. It could also transpire that due to some extenuating set of circumstances, these values were actually incompatible with an ethical path, or a humanitarian path. In both these cases, the deviation may need to be in a direction which moved away from the organisational values. And so in being 'authentic' the leader may not actually be being authentic, with the potential concomitant outcome that the leader may be perceived as being inauthentic.

I believe that we must look towards the leader to become much more context sensitive, to perhaps really wrestle with values; what they actually mean and what weighting they should be given in a particular situation. I suggest that they must become more considered, braver, more courageous. The idea of the Brave Leader came to me as a direct result of my observations of these recent corporate behaviours, and also from the destructive behaviours which I have observed taking place over the years within some organisations. This has partly been because I have from time to time dealt directly with individuals who had been affected negatively by some of the actions of leaders. Brave Leadership may come to be one of

the answers to the short term, greed and profit at all costs mentality which many of us have seen over the years.

This was the starting point for this research: the current state of corporate affairs; the plethora of leadership texts; the apparent discrepancy between the brave new academic leadership world and the behaviours of some; the (in my opinion) underuse of professional coaching for leaders. The question this research explores then is 'can a coaching model be designed which could help to enhance bravery in a leader?' And the objectives of this research were as follows:

- To undertake a critical literature review relating to leaders, leadership coaching and concepts related to 'bravery', such as courage in leadership.
- To design and implement a brave leadership coaching model.
- To collect data from six leaders who have been coached using the model in order to critically review their experience during and after having been coached
- To critically analyse the results of data collection to produce an original contribution to knowledge and professional practice via an enhanced brave leadership coaching model.

As I considered the area of leadership coaching as a potential area of study, it seemed to me that a common thread which was running through much of the literature about authentic leadership, ethical leadership and transformational leadership but which was not commonly and overtly alluded to, was bravery. I concluded that the only way to be consistently ethical, authentic and transformational, was to be able to be brave when the situation dictated it, to consider all the factors and to make the right choice, despite potentially feeling fear, and despite the consequences. This was at the core of what authenticity and ethical behaviour required. In choosing the word 'brave', I was keen to contrast bravery with potential weakness rather than cowardice. Cowardice is far too emotive a word and would not adequately describe the sometimes very subtle nature of events as they unfold within an organisation. It is often not a question of running

away, or hiding, but it can be a question of buckling under pressure, or remaining in a comfort zone, or falling into group think (Neck, 1995), or simply of wanting to be liked.

Peterson and Seligman (2004, p.232) describe courage as an emotional strength, 'that involves the will to accomplish goals in the face of external or internal opposition' and a sub-set of courage, and bravery as, 'not shrinking from challenge or pain; speaking up, standing up for convictions'. The brave leader is the opposite of the weak leader. The brave leader is likely to be ethical, but may not be seduced into assuming that, because some ethical 'process' was being followed, they were being ethical. The brave leader may well be authentic but might eschew company values to do what was right. A further suggestion that a more powerful form of leadership may be based in a more contextualised response is put forward by Dutton *et al.* (2002) who suggest that during times of trauma, leaders who demonstrate compassion and humanity may help promote personal and organisational healing. This implies an element of self-sacrifice in the sense that the leader may be emotionally 'exposed'. Self-sacrifice is also, I believe, inherent in transformational leadership. Bass (1990) describes one aspect of transformational leadership as where leaders bring deep change to their organisations by encouraging others to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of others. Quinn (1996) notes that transformational leaders are able to turn even scandalous organisations into virtuous ones by demonstrating courage. The concept of courage is perhaps closest in meaning to bravery, but similarly little has been written about courage in relationship to leadership, with the one notable exception being Hybels (2004).

The lack of explicit reference to bravery suggests also that there is a gap in our knowledge about bravery in business and an understanding of what bravery might mean, particularly in relation to leaders and leadership coaching. This led me to believe that this would not simply be a useful area to explore, but that it was an essential area to explore. Much of leadership development, whether delivered by training or coaching, appears to consider ideas and concepts which seek to enhance the leader's visionary and inspirational capabilities, but has not generally focused on the concept of 'bravery' and how and where this can be enhanced and developed.

Definition

To define bravery, it is probably best to compare it to another word which is often used interchangeably with it: courage. The Oxford Dictionary online (2012) defines courage as 'the ability to do something that frightens one'. The origin of the word courage is given as 'middle English, denoting the heart as the seat of feelings, from old French, *corage*, from the Latin, 'cor', 'heart'. Courage, it would seem, is closely connected to how we feel; specifically to overcoming fear. Courage does not necessarily mean that any action is taken, but rather that a change in feeling is generated; that the 'ability' is there.

On the other hand, 'brave' is defined as 'ready to face and endure danger or pain; showing courage: endure or face unpleasant conditions or behaviour without showing fear'. The origin of the word 'brave' is given as late 15th century; from French, from Italian *bravo*, 'bold' or Spanish *bravo*, 'courageous, untamed, savage', based on the Latin 'barbarous'.

Brave is also connected to action, to confronting a situation, to 'face', to 'endure'. It could be argued, therefore, that courage is a subset of bravery and/or that the internal change from a state of fear to that of managing this emotion is courage, and that courage is a precursor to a brave action, or indeed a brave action through inaction.

My view was that the forum which might provide the most fertile ground for honest reflection and consideration of action by a leader was likely to be found within the coaching relationship, and therefore generating a coaching model which helped facilitate such thinking might in some way compensate for this apparent shortfall in leadership behaviours.

A research approach that seemed appropriate, given the lack of evidenced based coaching research available in the area and the lack of case study material, was Action Research. Action Research has as one of its central premises the requirement to respond to feedback, adapt and evolve. This meant that a coaching model had to be devised which was linear enough to be potentially used without adaptation, and robust enough to survive the potential malleability required as the feedback from co-researchers arrived. The pragmatist in me was attracted to using Action Research as it seemed to be the most expedient way to understand if and how a model could

evolve, and to what extent it might be useful. I enjoy the cut and thrust of real-time interaction, and the opportunity to work in a stimulating environment with leaders who were likely to want results and be relatively demanding was also appealing. The suggested number of co-researchers was six, each taking part in six sessions. This number was arrived at after some discussion and reflection, and was essentially derived from finding a balance between the practical limitations on the number of sessions deemed essential for meaningful data collection, but feasible in the time available, and the likelihood of some session/co-researcher attrition during the time period.

The methodology

The proposed methodology was also influenced by my epistemological position, which is that of Critical Realist (Houston, 2001). Bhaskar (1978) suggests that critical realists maintain that progress is possible and that the enduring structures of reality and process can provide a point of reference against which theories can be tested.

In essence, I believe that there must be an answer to the unsatisfactory situation described above. My motivation for conducting this research was heavily influenced by the fact that whilst I may never uncover the answer, I may at least move closer to it. I believe that humans are inherently problem solvers, that we seek answers. This instinctive need to understand what the answer is drives me as well. The objectives of this study flowed from these thoughts. The objectives were to undertake a critical literature review relating to leaders, leadership coaching and concepts related to 'bravery', to design and implement a brave leadership coaching model, to collect data from six leaders who have been coached using the model in order to critically review their experience during and after having been coached, and to critically analyse the results of data collection to produce an original contribution to knowledge and professional practice via a brave leadership coaching model.

I believed that the 'testing' from an objective ontological position would best be conducted via Action Research. Reason and Bradbury (2001, p.1) describe Action Research as 'a participatory worldview ... it seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions'. It was important for me that the

research was not sterile, that it was messy, frustrating, challenging and surprising; in essence, that it was as real as it could be, in the field, in real-time, with real issues and real deadlines. I realised that I would be exposed to potentially very different worldviews but that also there was the possibility of moving collectively towards some answer.

The six co-researchers were drawn from four separate organisations, which ranged from engineering to health retail. They were all managers who had a leadership role, a role which involved both people management and generating vision and strategy. In terms of experience, they ranged from being relatively recently appointed to having had more than five years in their current role. Their ages ranged from late twenties to late thirties. Their employment sectors were FMCG (fast moving consumer goods), engineering, electronics and retail.

Data Collection and analysis

Data collection was primarily gathered through six one to one sessions with each of the co-researchers. These sessions lasted up to an hour in length and took place over a period of approximately six months. The sessions involved feedback from the co-researchers about the model and coaching based on the use of the model. The co-researchers were also encouraged to keep a reflective journal. I also kept a journal. This journal contained my thoughts and feelings, which I recorded immediately after each of the sessions.

The Action Research process had at its core the feedback element from the co-researchers and also a possible feed-forward element of this feedback into the model's evolution. There were potentially six different adjustments of the same core model to be made after each of the six separate sessions had taken place. This approach required 'real-time' monitoring and combined the coach's and the co-researchers' reflections. The approach was an adaptation of Kolb's (1984) Learning Cycle. In this case the co-researchers' feedback would inform the Reflection and Abstract Conceptualisation (the potential adjustment of the model) and any feed-forward element (i.e. one co-researcher suggesting an adaptation to the model might subsequently impact another co-researcher's session) might influence the Active Experimentation and Concrete Experience of the model. Once all of the coaching sessions were complete, individual

reflective interviews were conducted with each of the co-researchers to understand more about their experiences.

The data was analysed by reading the written material from the co-researchers and from my journal, and also by reading the transcripts of the sessions, as well as listening to the audio recordings of the sessions; and a retroductive approach was used to understand what the key stages were for the co-researchers and the model during their journey and its evolution. The findings from the retroductive approach were also compared with themes which had emerged from the reflective sessions which took place with the co-researchers after the initial six sessions.

I envisage that the contribution to knowledge of the study will be twofold; (i) that a clearer understanding of what constitutes bravery in business leadership will be gained, and (ii) that a coaching model which seeks to enhance bravery will be developed. It is also possible that using a retroductive approach in action research may be viewed as a useful strategy for future researchers.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature review. The areas explored include leadership theory and leadership and executive coaching models. This review suggests that no model of brave coaching has been developed or studied before, or has indeed been contemplated. The research to date seems to go as far as suggesting some leadership traits and behaviours which might be construed as being, for example, courageous, but does not go to the extent of exploring exactly how these might manifest via the catalyst of the coaching session. The literature does, however, indicate that there are several 'schools of thought' about leadership, but they could be construed as being slightly nebulous, and again not readily empirically connected to coaching. Chapter 3 explores the methodology used for the research and the rationale which informed the choices for the approach taken. It also illustrates in detail the steps followed in the action research sequence which was at the core of the methodological approach. Chapter 4 describes both the model design and the one to one sessions. As the evolution of the model was influenced by the one to one sessions with the co-researchers, the adaptation of the model to each of the co-researchers is also discussed. Chapter 5 describes the findings from the six sessions,

and the way in which these findings were derived. The approach to the particular use of retroduction in the analysis is illustrated and explained. Chapter 6 highlights the findings from the reflection sessions which took place after the six one to one sessions had concluded. The themes which emerged from these sessions are discussed. The conclusions from the use of the model and the overall conclusions are discussed in Chapter 7, which explores the potential limitations of the model and the research, and contains suggestions for future research in this area.

This chapter has outlined the research problem and a rationale for conducting the research. The next chapter contains a review of the relevant literature in relation to the question, in order to inform the study further.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review was carried out to gain an understanding of what research has been conducted into leadership coaching within business, and specifically into the area of brave leadership. The literature was initially searched using the following key search criteria:

Leadership, leadership coaching, leadership coaching model, executive coaching model, executive coaching, leadership development, leadership theory, bravery, courage, braver leader, braver leadership, brave leadership, strong leadership.

Figure 2.1 below illustrates the three main areas of leadership where the literature searches revealed some tangible results. The remainder of this chapter is organised around these areas.

Figure 2.1 - Overview of Literature



It appears from the literature search that there are no leadership coaching models which seek to elicit, enhance or even consider bravery. There are some publications which refer to bravery or courage and leaders, although these tend to be concerned with either historical military figures, or it is alternatively the case that the courageous and brave reference is in relation to an anecdotal decision made by a leader or a leadership group within an organisation. This finding was both surprising and intriguing. Further exploration of the literature revealed that not only was there nothing to connect leadership coaching and bravery, but also that there was very little written academically about leadership coaching models. It is worth making a distinction here. My definition of a leadership coaching model is that of a construct which could assist the coachee (the leader) during, between and after coaching sessions to perform their role more effectively. The definition of what 'effective' might actually be is not discussed in this chapter, beyond that the use of any such model would be construed by the leader and/or part or all of the organisation to have benefitted some or all of said organisation in some way. This definition of a model is distinct from what tends to appear in the literature, and which I would consider to be simply a flow-diagram e.g. – source a coach, engage a coach, get feedback from the coach.

Therefore, by defining a brave leadership coaching model as something which has been designed to be used to potentially enhance the bravery of a leader, and one which has been considered in an academic setting in some way, allows for the conclusion that no such model exists.

What a literature search does uncover, are several models of how programmes could be devised to enhance a leader's effectiveness; however, many of these tend to be in the form of a physical experience, for example Gager *et al.* (1998) explore some of the issues surrounding wilderness-based leadership development programmes. Whilst the benefits of this form of leadership development may well be significant, I have focussed more on the cognitive area in the Leadership Development section which can be found later in this Chapter. It is also at this juncture worth noting that in general, business (not simply leadership) orientated evidence-based coaching models are also in short supply.

Peltier (2001) states that there are many approaches to executive coaching; however, the distinction between what constitutes executive coaching and what is leadership coaching is at best blurry. What is clear is that many proponents of the evidence-based executive coaching movement are convinced that the translation of empirical research into concrete practice will lead to more favourable results (Wampold and Bhati, 2004). This view is also supported by, amongst others, Stober and Grant (2006).

It is important to explore what does exist in abundance, however, and in far greater abundance than 'coaching models'; and these are the multitude of leadership approaches which have been bundled together to form one organising idea or another. Although most are not specifically designed to assist in the process of coaching, it could be argued that their very existence and simply the consideration of their ideas may lead to improvement in leadership behaviours. I have included what I consider to be the main organising ideas below.

Leadership Theories

In my analysis, there are six distinct leadership theories, or 'schools of thought'. My approach to calculating this number has been to note what overarching headings seem to appear more frequently in literature searches. The six leadership theories/schools of thought are: situational leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership, ethical leadership and relational leadership theory.

1. Situational Leadership

According to Graeff (1983), Hershey and Blanchard built on Reddin's (1967) 3-D leadership framework which they renamed as Situational Leadership Theory. Hershey and Blanchard developed the Leader Adaptability and Single Inventory (LASI) which Blanchard later renamed as the leader effectiveness and adaptability description instrument. This instrument was originally designed to provide insight into three aspects of leader behaviours; style, style range and style adaptability (Hershey and Blanchard 1977, p.225). Hershey and Blanchard (1982) argue that a leader's task behaviour and relationship behaviour interact with subordinate maturity to significantly influence leader effectiveness.

Graeff (1983) further suggests that Hershey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory makes only minor contributions to the leadership literature. Indeed, Graeff (1983, p.290) argues that, 'their recognition of the subordinate as the most important situational determinant of appropriate leader behaviour is a perspective that seems justified and highly appropriate'. This view is echoed by Yukl (1981) who claims that the most important part of Hershey and Blanchard's contribution to leadership literature is that of the truly situational nature of leadership.

In a similar vein, Fernandez and Vecchio (1997) question the validity of situational leadership and go so far as to state that '...the theory is difficult to advocate...until this evidence can be produced, it is perhaps wise to remain, at best, uncommitted concerning its utility, and at worst, highly suspicious' (p.82). Correspondingly, in testing Situational Leadership theory, Goodson *et al.* (1989) observed that their study appeared to support the majority of past research, as opposed to Situational Leadership Training.

The idea of a situational component in leadership is also reflected strongly in contingency theory, which suggests that the context of a situation should determine how leaders respond. Fiedler (1967) and House and Dessler (1974) propose that the leader's response is greatly determined by the situation.

However, Grint (2005, p.1470), posits that contingency theories are predicated on a naïve assumption, 'I am suggesting that contingency theories, whatever their complexities, and there is little more complex than House's (1996) reformulation of his Path-Goal theory...is a naïve assumption because it underestimates the extent to which the context or situation is actually constructed by the leader, leaders, and/or decision-makers'.

In discussing Path-Goal theory, Fry (2003, p.700) suggests that it was initially derived from expectancy motivation theory (Vroom, 1964) and that 'the path-goal theory of leadership attempts to explain how leaders can extrinsically and/or intrinsically motivate followers to simultaneously attain personal and organizational goals by achieving fit or congruence between the characteristics of subordinates and the task'. Fry goes on to suggest that leaders can increase the motivation of the 'followers' by making explicit

the follower's path to available rewards or by increasing the value of reward. He further suggests that leaders can then create a context for employee motivation by selecting their particular leadership behaviours. These behaviours are defined as directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented. The suggestion is that these can provide 'what is missing' for employees in a particular work setting (Northouse, 2001). And so it would seem that in Path–Goal theory, the onus is on the leader to motivate 'subordinates' to reach their goals by directing, guiding, and/or coaching them along the way.

Fry's description highlights the situational component of Path–Goal theory on which contingency theory is based and which Grint finds limited. Kezar (2004, p.112) summarises what may well be at the root of some of this debate; he notes that 'almost every text written on leadership notes that definitions vary by the primary assumptions brought to examine the phenomena' explaining that 'trait theorists define leadership as a set of traits while behavioural theorists identify it as a set of skills'. He also suggests that 'researchers from a social constructivist perspective tend to define leadership as a process and relationship'.

Despite Kezar's observation, I believe that situational leadership should be considered relevant at perhaps a fundamental level in terms of leadership development. I would suggest that whilst Situational Leadership may at some point have been considered more relevant to leadership development than it is at present, it is likely that it has much more to offer than a cursory glance would imply. This is not to suggest that giving consideration to the situation and context is the only thing of importance; as in any given situation, and as suggested by some of these authors, there is more to consider.

2. Transformational Leadership

According to Judge and Bono (2000) more research has been conducted on Transformational Leadership than all other leadership theories combined. Bass (1985) suggested that Transformational Leadership would result in 'followers' producing greater than expected results due to the

influence of Transformational Leadership. Bass and Avolio's (1989) definition of transformational leadership has four dimensions:

1. *Charisma*. The leader provides vision and a sense of mission; instils pride, faith and respect; excites, arouses and inspires subordinates.
2. *Individual consideration*. The leader provides coaching and teaching; delegates projects to stimulate learning experiences; provides for continuous feedback; and treats each follower as an individual.
3. *Intellectual stimulation*. The leader provides subordinates with a flow of challenging new ideas; motivates followers to think in new ways; emphasizes problem solving and the use of reasoning before taking action.
4. *Inspiration*. The leader acts as a model for subordinates; behaves in ways that motivate and inspire followers by providing meaning and challenge; communicates a vision.

Schneider and George (2011, p.61) state that 'transformational leadership is the ability to motivate and to encourage intellectual stimulation through inspiration (Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Dvir *et al.*, 2002)'. They cite McColl-Kennedy and Anderson (2005, p.116) as further defining transformational leadership style as 'guidance through individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence'. Barling *et al.* (2002, p.489), in discussing idealised influence, highlight the role model aspect of transformational leadership, 'with its emphasis on managers becoming role models by doing what is moral or right rather than what is expedient, idealized influence encourages managers to shift their focus'.

However, Rafferty and Griffin (2004) viewed vision as the main characteristic of transformational leaders, and Roberts (1985) also suggests that transforming leadership empowers those who participate in the process to generate hope, optimism and energy. They conclude that transforming leadership is a type of leadership which can redefine an individual's mission and vision, renewal of their commitment, and restructure their systems for reaching their goals. It is interesting to note that Barling *et al.* (2002) discuss a sense of doing the 'right' thing, but also the range of meanings ascribed to transformational leadership.

Widening the scope of transformational leadership further, Singh and Krishnan (2008), in discussing self-sacrifice (which is interestingly also one of the components of servant leadership), note that the other-orientedness (altruism) of a manager enhances transformational leadership, which in turn leads to higher collective identity and perceived unit performance. A connection between transformational leadership and the seminal work by Goleman (1995) is proposed by Duckett and MacFarlane (2003) who suggest that there is a strong correlation between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. Additionally, Gill *et al.* (2006) maintain that if employees perceive that their managers are using transformational leadership, job stress is perceived as less than if it is perceived as not being used. Given the costs associated with employee replacement, reduced burnout means a reduction in those costs. Also, the social and economic cost to society of treating employees who are 'burned out' is reduced.

Precisely what constitutes transformational leadership appears to vary, although Pavar (2003, p.398) identifies distinctly contrasting perspectives between it and transactional leadership, suggesting that research into transformational leadership shows that this leadership style converts followers into leaders, which can result in the motivational and moral elevation of both followers and leaders. In Burns' (1978) work, transformational leadership is also viewed as being distinct from transactional leadership. This suggestion is based on the view that transformational leaders raise followers to a higher level of needs and aspirations, whereas transactional leaders identify the existing needs and goals of their followers and provide rewards for the fulfilment of these needs and goals. Bass (1985, p.22), however, notes that, 'Burns and I differ ... he sees transformational leadership as the opposite end of a single continuum from transactional leadership'.

This statement of Bass (1985) outlines the existence of two views. One view suggested and reflected in Burns's (1978) work which regards transformational and transactional leadership as two ends of a continuum differs from that put forth in Bass (1985) which regards transformational

and transactional leaderships as two distinct processes but acknowledges the possibility of varying relationships between them.

Kelloway and Barling (2000, p.356) question whether transformational leadership can be taught and suggest that indeed it can. 'In two published studies (Barling *et al.*, 1996)...we have used rigorous research designs to assess the effectiveness of leadership training in two different organizations. In both cases, we have found statistically significant changes in transformational leadership resulting from the training'. Kelloway and Barling (2000, p.358) propose that one approach is to make small changes, and that these small changes involve a sense of 'rightness' in decision making. '...leaders who are seen by their employees as people who can be counted on to "do the right thing" epitomise idealized influence, and in return are justly rewarded with their employees' trust'.

At this juncture I believe that it is useful to consider positive deviancy, which was briefly discussed in Chapter 1. Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2004) suggest that positive deviancy may be facilitated by transformational leadership, and also because of the suggested relationship between courage, positive deviancy and the engagement against established social order. According to Cameron *et al.* (2003) Positive Organisational Scholarship puts its energies and focus into that which is the most positive within organisations. According to them, one of the constituent parts of Positive Organisational Scholarship is positive deviance. Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2004, p.217) suggest that transformational leadership may be a contextual facilitator towards positive deviancy. They reference Quinn (1996) who suggests it requires 'walking naked into the land of uncertainty', and confirm how 'most people do not want to leave the path of least resistance. We seem to want to stay in our comfort zone, the place where we are in control and where we initially experience the least pain'. Spreitzer and Sonenshein go on to suggest that positive deviants are not necessarily rewarded by, and are often punished by, traditional organisational systems essentially because they go against the established social order. This potential engagement against established social order via positive deviancy and courage has a distinct resonance with the coaching model which is discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

3. Servant Leadership

Whilst Situational Leadership could be considered to be comprised of specific compartmentalised behavioural suggestions, the initial ideas behind Servant Leadership were broader and more idealised. Greenleaf (1977) suggests that self-interest should not motivate servant leaders and proposed that the servant leadership approach should be adopted widely, including in institutions such as education, the Church and business. Greenleaf suggests that the servant leader should be responsible for generating a strategic vision, and this view is shared by others including Block (1987), Covey (1990), Kouzes and Posner (1995), Senge (1995) and Turner (2000). However, Northouse (1997, p.245) criticised Servant Leadership for a lack of 'well-designed, empirical research'.

Russell and Stone (2002, p.146) describe nine functional attributes of Servant Leadership (classified as functional attributes due to their repetitive prominence in the literature) as being, Vision, Honesty, Integrity, Trust, Service, Modelling, Pioneering, Appreciation of others and Empowerment. In this same paper Russell and Stone also discuss two servant leadership models. These models are essentially descriptive in nature and not designed specifically for use in the coaching environment.

Stone *et al.* (2003, p.8) compare Transformational and Servant Leadership and suggest they can both 'bring about real change in organizations, albeit through different means'. They go on to note what they consider to be the similarities between the frameworks of servant leadership and transformational leadership, '(a) influence, (b) vision, (c) trust, (d) respect or credibility, (d) risk-sharing or delegation, (e) integrity, and (f) modelling' (p.4), and they suggest that these theories are probably most similar in their emphasis upon consideration of the individual and appreciation of followers.

4. Authentic Leadership

The use of the word 'authentic' has become extremely popular within management and leadership books and papers. The word itself, however, is ill-defined, or not defined at all, just simply applied to one of the ideals to which leaders should aspire. George (2003, p.11) states that 'authenticity is being and acting consistent with who you hold yourself to be for others, and

who you hold yourself to be for yourself'. He goes on to contrast his belief about leadership with that of others, 'I believe that leadership begins and ends with authenticity ... this is not what most of the literature says, nor is it what the experts in corporate America teach. Instead they develop lists of leadership characteristics one is supposed to emulate. They describe the styles of leaders and suggest that you adopt them. This is the opposite of authenticity'.

In discussing the origins of Authentic Leadership, Avolio and Gardner (2005) argue that Authentic Leadership has a rich ancestry suggesting that the conceptual roots of authenticity can be traced to Maslow (1968, 1971) and Rogers (1959). In essence they are acknowledging, at least partly, the need for the positive regard of others and the emotional element of our existence. They claim that their discussion extends prior work and suggest that Authentic Leadership can be integrated into other areas of leadership theory and psychology.

Brown and Trevino (2006, p.599) highlight the self-awareness aspect of Authentic leaders, suggesting that they are 'individuals who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values/moral perspective, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and high on moral character'.

In discussing the development of the moral component of Authentic Leadership, May *et al.* (2003) propose that a guiding framework which includes authentic decision making, authentic leadership development and authentic behaviour be used as an enabler for this development. However, one important caveat which they include in the use of this framework is that 'Our model of the authentic moral leader presumes an organisational climate that is developed to support ethical behaviour'. They argue that 'such behaviour is reinforced and not discouraged by the organisational reward system' (p.255). It is interesting to note that their version of the authentic moral leader requires an aligned organisational reward system and that the ability of the leader to do the 'right thing' (discussed in Chapter 4) is also contingent upon certain factors. They go on to suggest that for authentic leadership to flourish, 'constraints do not generally exist with regard to resources or technology to inhibit authentic leaders from doing

the right thing and hearing the voices of others who are trying to do the same'. As shall be discussed in later chapters, these organisational prerequisites may well not exist, and so whilst authenticity might, according to the definition of May *et al.* (2003), wither, bravery may flourish.

Wong and Cummings (2009, p.525) note that 'Authentic behaviour involves acting in accord with one's values and needs rather than to please others, receive rewards, or avoid punishments'. To be truly authentic, they claim leaders must align their core and espoused values and actions. However, one criticism levelled against the definition of authentic leadership is that it is too broad, ambiguous, and multidimensional (Cooper *et al.* 2005, p.478).

Shamir and Eilam (2005) suggest that authentic leaders do not fake their leadership and do not lead for status or honour, and are leaders whose actions are based on values and convictions. Garger (2007), in discussing Samir and Eilam, concludes that they are indicating that their conceptualization of authentic leadership does not include a particular leadership style, rather that authentic leadership involves the way in which leadership behaviours are delivered. Importantly, Garger concludes, 'Clearly, the authentic leadership literature has a long way to go before it becomes a viable domain of knowledge from which development programs can be developed' (p.15) echoing a gap indicated in Chapter 1. He also goes on to say, 'at this early stage of its development, it is best to approach authentic leadership with caution until some concrete measure is available'.

Wong and Cummings (2009) also criticise authentic leadership for a lack of conceptual clarity, claiming that one of the major challenges with authentic leadership is that self-awareness is difficult to measure in observable terms. Self-awareness or self-reflection has long been considered an important attribute of effective leadership, and various leadership models include it (Bass and Avolio, 1994). However, Cooper *et al.* (2005) claimed that there were no existing measures of self-awareness, making its validation difficult, although a self-awareness cluster exists in the Emotional Competency Inventory (Boyatzis *et al.*, 2000).

It is interesting to note the parallels with authentic leadership and the idea of 'rightness', which will be explored in Chapter 4 more fully as the development of the brave leadership coaching model evolves. However, with the introduction of possible barriers to authentic leadership, such as a

lack of resource, and an inhibiting organisational climate, there is already a distinction between bravery and authenticity.

5. Ethical Leadership

According to Ciulla (2004) ethical leadership is essentially the art of leading others in such a way that those being led, 'the followers', feel that their rights are being respected and that they are being treated with dignity. Gini (1997) promotes the idea that as leaders are normally in a position which allows them some social power and influence, ethical leadership should focus on the use of such power, the actions they take and how they influence those around them. Resick *et al.* (2006, p.346) note the lack of evidence-based research into ethical leadership, 'to date, we are aware of only two studies that have empirically examined ethical leadership'.

Brown and Trevino (2006) suggest that having an ethical role model in one's career is likely to contribute to the development of ethical leadership. At around the same time Weaver *et al.* (2005) interviewed individuals who had been influenced by an ethical role model at work, with characteristics such as caring, honesty, and fairness being important to them. It is interesting to note that the idea of a 'role model' is discussed here. The consideration of a brave individual is discussed in Chapter 4.

Thompson *et al.* (2010, p.115) note that, 'The positive social impacts from ethical leadership include community support, environmental responsibilities, and increased employee morale'. They also note the slightly ephemeral nature of ethics, in that often the ethical standards for organisations can change over time, perhaps because of public reaction to particular corporate practices, with the result that behaviours which were acceptable in the past may not be acceptable in the present or the future. This may mean that what defines ethical leadership, unlike other forms of leadership, is more readily influenced by the vagaries of public opinion.

Whilst this research is concerned with bravery in business, it is interesting to briefly compare a leadership situation which may require psychological bravery to a situation which may require physical as well as psychological bravery. In discussing leadership in physically dangerous environments Campbell *et al.* (2010, p.10) note that '...in dangerous environments, followers place enormous significance on the ethical choices of their

leaders'. They suggest that a leader's actions in morally intense contexts have the ability to enhance trust among followers and also help shape the ethical decisions of these individuals in the future. And just as a sense of 'rightness' appears to permeate some of the thinking around authentic leadership, we can see here how at least some of the thinking about ethical leadership recognises the influence of the leader as a 'role model' either directly or indirectly.

Whilst not perhaps as common a phrase as Ethical Leadership within the business community, at least in the U.K., I believe that the term Spiritual Leadership is worth including in this section. Reave (2005, p.663) states that spiritual leadership can be seen as 'occurring when a person in a leadership position embodies spiritual values such as integrity, honesty, and humility, creating the self as an example of someone who can be trusted, relied upon, and admired'. She goes on to say that it is also demonstrated 'through behaviour, whether in individual reflective practice or in the ethical, compassionate, and respectful treatment of others'. This description could be relatively easily used to refer to ethical leadership, authentic leadership and servant leadership, and may also have relevance to the brave leadership coaching model.

6. Relational Leadership Theory

Uhl-Bien (2006, p.667) in describing her Relational Leadership Theory suggests that it 'is offered as an overarching framework for the study of the relational dynamics that are involved in the generation and functioning of leadership'. Contrary to other studies of leadership, which focus on leadership effectiveness, Uhl-Bien claims that Relational Leadership Theory 'focuses on the relational processes by which leadership is produced and enabled' (p.667). She explains how it does not define leadership as holding a managerial position, nor does it use the terms manager and leader interchangeably, but rather sees leadership as able to occur in any direction. She also suggests that, 'it may result in the breakdown of the distinction between who is leading and who is following (Rost, 1995), instead reflecting a mutual influence process (Hollander, 1978; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1991; Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2000)'.

Uhl-Bien further suggests that Relational Leadership Theory draws from both entity and relational ontologies and methodologies to more fully

explore the relational dynamics of leadership and organising. The entity perspective is perhaps best illustrated by the Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) theory which has been promoted by, amongst others, Gernster and Day (1997). According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) the central concept of LMX theory is that leadership occurs when leaders and followers are able to develop effective relationships (partnerships) that result in incremental difference.

Dachler and Hosking (1995) emphasise the relational process of meaning making and the entity perspective of leadership. This is suggestive of LMX theory, which could be viewed as employing an entity perspective as it focuses on the properties and behaviours of individuals as they engage in interactions with one another. The entity perspective assumes ‘individual agency’, that organisational life is viewed as a result of individual action (Hosking *et al.*, 1995). Individuals are thought of as entities with some form of clear separation between their normal selves and the external environment, and that leadership consists of a two-way influence between leader and follower primarily aimed at attaining mutual goals.

Charismatic relationships are also considered to be entity driven. Weierter (1997) suggests that objective social forces define and set the potential for charismatic relationships and provide the framework within which subjective relationships are possible. Howell and Shamir (2005) build on this and propose that followers’ self-concepts influence the type of relationship they form with the leader – this includes responses to charismatic influence and susceptibility.

One relationship-based approach to leadership is that of ‘Idiosyncratic credit’ (IC) which is provided by Hollander (1992, pp.72, 73) who in describing IC states, ‘The essential part of the IC model is that leadership is a dynamic process of interpersonal evaluation: individuals earn standing in the eyes of present or eventual followers’. Hollander then suggests that this ‘standing’ then allows for ‘latitude’, ‘including innovations associated with the leader role, that would be unacceptable for those without such status’. This ability to earn ‘credit’ and ‘standing’ could be seen as having similarities to the altruistic approach of the transformational leader.

Whilst Hollander talks about a form of relationship currency, Uhl-Bien (2006, p.662) concludes that the relationship is a unit of analysis, ‘the key

difference between relational and entity perspectives is that the relational perspectives identify the basic unit of analysis in leadership research as relationships, not individuals. However, relationships have quite a different meaning from entity perspectives'. This viewpoint is echoed by Murrell (1997, pp.35–37) who regards the leadership as shared responsibility; 'Leadership is a social act, a construction of a "ship" as a collective vehicle to help take us where we are as a group, organisation ... more parties to the process than just the leaders ... more than just the leader–follower exchange relationship'. Murrell is suggesting that by studying leadership that occurs relationally, we would have the opportunity to account for many more of the social forces which work to influence group and social behaviour.

Just as Relational Leadership is concerned with the social interaction in leadership, Distributed Leadership is less concerned with the leader as 'the personality' and more the Interaction between individuals. And so I believe that it warrants inclusion here as a sub-set of relational leadership. As Barry (1991, p.4) notes, 'Distributed leadership requires that attention be given not only to the type of leader behaviour required at a given time, but also to the interrelatedness and availability of leader behaviours'. Harris and Spillane (2008) suggest that Distributed Leadership exists when leadership is distributed throughout a given community and that it is especially prevalent and popular in education – although Mayrowetz (2008) argues that there is no strong link between the two primary goals in the education leadership field, namely, school improvement and leadership development. Also, Woods and Gronn (2009) suggest that distributed leadership may actually promote what they call a democratic deficiency.

There are, I believe, no overt elements of distributed and relational leadership in the braver leadership coaching model; however, there is a distinct part of it which directs the leader's attention to the more humanistic element of a particular situation (and so it could be argued that it has a resonance with relational and distributed leadership).

Synthesising the different leadership theories

Indeed, I believe that it could be further argued that a certain synthesis exists between bravery and the different leadership theories.

I think that it is important to look for commonality between the six main leadership theories and to be able to understand where brave leadership may or may not fit into these existing theories. I would also suggest that due to the wide range of both the literature and opinions therein (sometimes differing) about each of these various 'schools of thought', simply offering a 'tick box grid' of apparently similar phrases as a way of differentiating between or connecting them, would at best be limited and at worst misleading.

I believe that a valid and alternative approach is to attempt to uncover the core theme of each of the theories. And having considered each leadership theory in turn, it appears to me that they are each, in a sense, promoting or perhaps even 'selling' an idea of what is important about leadership. I also believe that the core theme for each of the leadership theories is in many ways illustrated in the title of each.

Ethical Leadership promotes a sense of ethical duty to the followers, to ensure that they feel that their rights are being respected and that they are being treated with dignity. Relational Leadership promotes the idea that relationship between leader and follower is key, and that the role of leader may shift between individuals. Authentic Leadership promotes the alignment of the leader's core and espoused values, and thus his/her authentic actions. Situational Leadership promotes style and style range and the need to adapt one's style in different situations. Servant Leadership promotes the idea that self-interest should not motivate the servant leader; rather that the leader should focus on creating the best environment for the followers. Transformational Leadership advocates the encouragement of intellectual stimulation through inspiration of the follower, and so any transformation which takes place is likely to take place within the follower.

It could be argued that transformational leadership requires acuity from the leader about the situation at hand, flexing approach appropriately and paying attention to the importance of relationships; and that the inspiration of the follower may be gained not only by intellectual stimulation but also by adopting, where suitable, an ethically authentic and/or servant stance. In other words, it is possible to link some of the key concepts from each of the theories. I believe that by looking at these leadership theories from what I consider to be a 'core theme' perspective and perceiving that their essence

is hidden in plain view in the title, a more fundamental synthesis can be achieved.

From a 'core theme' perspective it appears that each of the leadership theories is 'selling' the idea of considering doing things differently, in essence, change. Fundamentally they are promoting the idea of leaders changing themselves or the organisation, or being resistant to change – or a combination of these, or all three. Below I consider each of these main leadership theories viewed through the lens of change.

Situational Leadership – In relation to the situation, leaders must consider changing their style.

Ethical Leadership – In relation to the perceived ethics of the situation, the leader must consider changing their approach, or the culture, or being resistant to change based on the current espoused ethical values of the organisation.

Authentic Leadership – In relation to what they perceive as being authentic, which is often linked to values, leaders must consider challenging their approach, or the culture, or being resistant to change.

Relational Leadership – In relation to the dynamic of relationships, leaders must consider changing the role they play from leader to follower, allowing leaders to take the leadership role.

Servant Leadership – In relation to adopting what is perceived as being a servant approach, which is often a consideration of what generates the best environment for the followers, leaders must consider changing their approach, or the culture, or being resistant to change.

Transformational Leadership – In relation to being transformational, the leader must consider changing their approach, or the culture, or being resistant to change.

And this may ultimately be one way to form an organising idea around the six leadership theories; the idea here being that the leader is an agent of change. The leader may deliberately set out to change the environment, or indeed to be a fixed point in time and space whilst change rages all around. And whilst each 'school of thought' might promote the idea of change

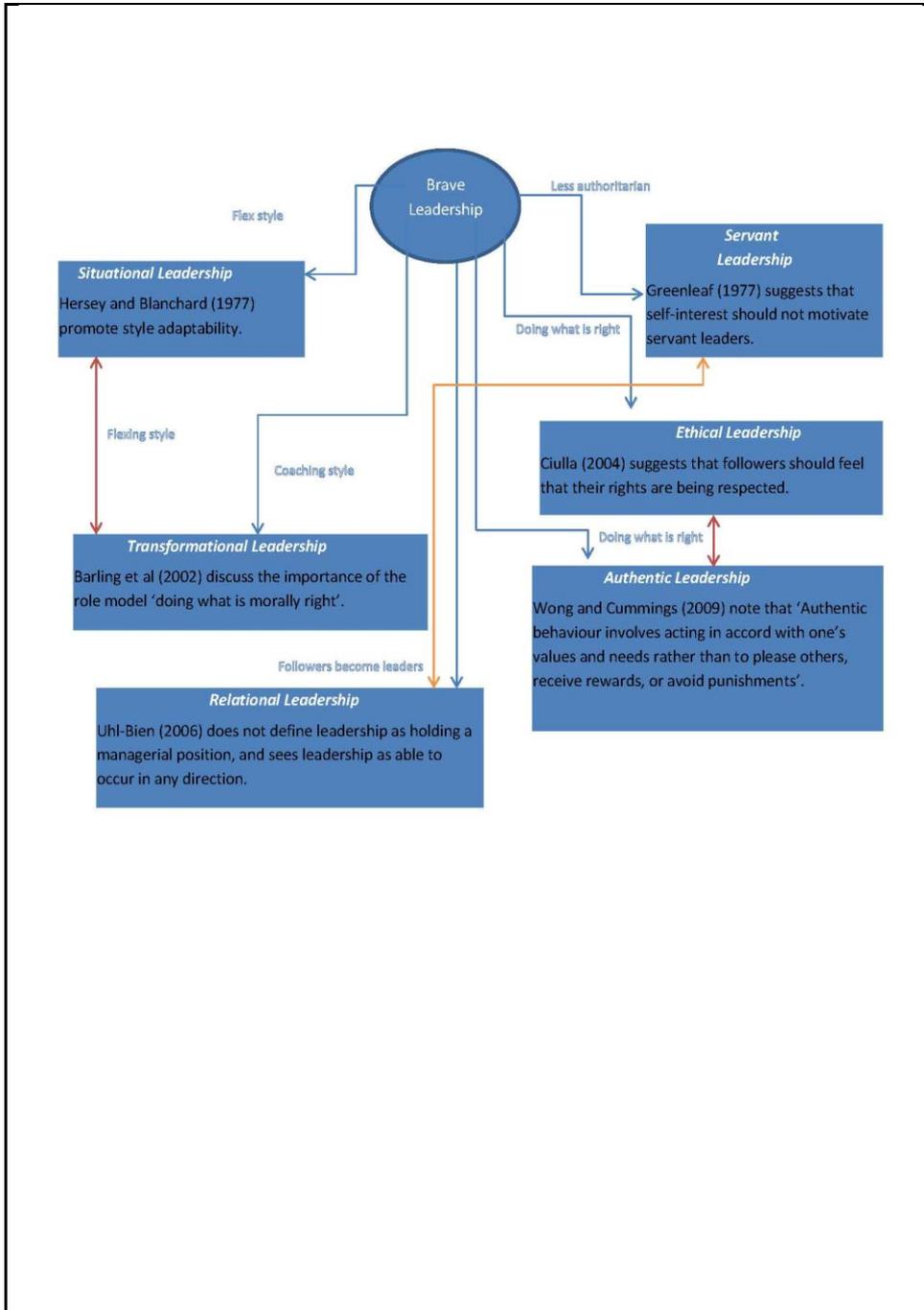
based on its own value set, they all promote change, or the resistance to it. They are promoting an idea, an idea which they believe demands attention and where applicable, appropriate action.

I believe that this perspective on the six leadership theories then allows the idea of brave leadership to be linked conceptually to each of them.

I would argue that bravery must exist from time to time within each of the six approaches to leadership if the leader adopts the suggested approaches. For the situational leader it may be the brave step of moving out of the comfort zone to flex his/her style. Relational leaders may also have a comfort zone challenge as they allow followers to become the leader. Similarly transformational leaders may have to make the brave move to adopt a coaching style. The ethical and authentic leader may need to be brave in standing up for what she/he believes is right and the servant leader may have to take the brave step of adopting a less authoritarian approach. Although these are generalised examples, in essence for any of these leadership theories to be realised in an organisation, the leader is highly likely, at some point, to need to do something which requires bravery. It is likely that there would be periods of time within an organisation where there is little change. However, the corporate environment of market forces, the demands of shareholders, economic conditions and politics, both organisational and governmental, are unlikely to allow any status quo to exist for long.

To highlight how the idea of brave leadership might link to each of the six leadership theories, a concept map (Figure 2.2) is shown below in which brave leadership is the common denominator.

Figure 2.2 – Concept map: How the concept of bravery is relevant to the six leadership theories



I do not consider that the six leadership theories are mutually exclusive, and in reality there is likely to be an interplay between them and some overlaps in philosophies. And so not only are links from brave leadership to the other leadership theories shown, but also what I consider to be the important similarity between Transformational Leadership and Situational Leadership. I believe that the idea of flexing style or approach is common to both, albeit that Transformational Leadership sounds more far reaching and visionary in nature and Situational Leadership more transactional. I have also shown links between authentic and ethical leadership, as they both tend to promote the need to do 'what is right', albeit in relation to values and the perceived rights of the individual, respectively. A link between servant and relational leadership is also illustrated as both approaches suggest a less authoritarian stance should be adopted in certain circumstances.

As mentioned previously, there is a considerable, although perhaps subtle interplay between each of these theories, and it would be possible to have the concept map reflect these subtle dynamics.

For example, an ethical or authentic consideration might need to be given to a transformational, situational, relational or servant approach. However, this ingress of leadership philosophy from one 'school of thought' to another has not been undertaken at a theoretical level, although in practice, synergy is most likely occurring in the work of individual leaders. I believe, therefore, that the idea of bravery has necessarily to be subsumed within each theory rather than be posited as a new philosophy. Its consideration as a common element or catalyst might even encourage a broader reflection of what other leadership ideas and approaches might be applicable in any given situation.

Chapter 4 illustrates how such a model suggests that leaders might explore various factors in their environment and consider the brave thing to do.

Leadership Development

Leadership development can take many different forms. The idea of peer, subordinate and managerial feedback to improve leadership development is quite popular and has become prevalent in many different organisations and cultures; indeed, Sones (2009) discusses the merits of a bespoke 360

degree feedback and assessment tool for Army Captain level development, and Hill and Stevens (2005) describe how they undertook to design a programme for leaders in medical education. The programme appeared to offer, amongst other things, team-building exercises and exposure to change management theory. Their approach appears to have been informed, at least in part, by the theory of relational leadership (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Intriguingly however, Van de Valk and Constan (2011) suggest that the social aspect of leadership (one of the main ideas behind Uhl-Bien's leadership theory) and in particular social capital (Balkundi and Kilduff, 2006) may not be as enhanced by some existing leadership development programmes as was first envisaged. Similarly, Thornton (2009) reports that ethical leadership development is fraught with difficulties because, amongst other reasons, the definition is unclear; it is a moving target and it is often company specific. In many ways, this sums up why leadership development is so diversified and sometimes so ineffectual. On one hand we have leadership theory, which may work well in an academic setting, but unless a pragmatic approach is adopted, it can be diluted to become simply a molecular veneer applied over the current paradigms and behaviours, in the vague hope that some uptake of situational, transformational, authentic, ethical, relational or servant leadership is attained through, presumably, osmosis.

Interestingly, there is little in the way of academic research (which is publicly available at least) into bravery within the armed forces, the police or the fire brigade. However, Rachman (1995) does compare courage and training in military personnel, but the background against which this is set is very specific to life or death situations and distinctly removed from a business environment.

Leadership and Executive Coaching

There is very little in the way of robust, empirical research in the area of leadership and executive coaching. However, De Hann and Duckworth (2010) note six important research studies (Figure 2.3). Thach (2002) discusses a 'best practice' model which includes the use of 360 degree feedback leadership effectiveness and succession planning. Thach also suggests that the success of this approach lies not only in the use of 360 degree feedback, but also on getting the support of the CEO and the top

executive team. Correspondingly, Ferreira (2011), in discussing problems with a coaching intervention, suggests that the lack of involvement from two executive directors hampered the process.

In discussing coaching research, Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2011) quote a study by Peterson (1993) which indicated that a 0.85 standard deviation improvement in effectiveness was noted as a result of coaching programmes. They also, however, note a wide range of quality in case study papers, which makes it difficult to identify which factors contribute to successful coaching outcomes. Indeed, De Hann and Duckworth (2010) argue that most empirical research into executive coaching is concerned with the value of the coaching, but from the perspective of the client. They suggest that there are only six studies (interestingly, Peterson (1993) and Thach (2002) among them) which look at the effectiveness of coaching other than from the perspective of client satisfaction. I have constructed a table (Figure 2.3) which illustrates their conclusions, below.

Figure 2.3 – Six studies that explore the effectiveness of coaching

Researchers	What was researched	Findings	Control group?
Olivero <i>et al.</i> (1997)	Managers who received 3 weeks training then 8 weeks coaching	An increase in productivity, mainly due to coaching	No
Thach (2002)	Leadership effectiveness	Average increase in leadership effectiveness, from the perspective of leader and others	No
Ragins <i>et al.</i> (2000)	The effect of formal and informal mentoring on 1,162 professionals from many organisations	A more positive attitude towards themselves and work, but this was contingent upon satisfaction with the mentoring relationship	Yes
Peterson (1993)	Longitudinal study, 370 co-researchers over 5 years, at least 1 year per participant	Change in coaching 'items' v. control group substantially larger	No, not co-researchers, but 'items' e.g. orderly workspace
Evers <i>et al.</i> (2006)	Self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations of 30 managers	Objective evidence of a positive outcome of the coaching intervention	Yes
Smither <i>et al.</i> (2003)	Same multinational company, 120 senior managers	Managers who worked with coach, more likely to set specific goals, solicit ideas from superiors, obtain higher ratings from reports and superiors.	Yes

Source: De Hann and Duckworth (2010) with additional annotation about Peterson (1993) from the author of this research study.

As stated in the introduction, whilst there are many organising ideas of what leadership is, and what leaders should aspire to become, there are fewer coaching models which have been designed for the coaching of executives and leaders. And I believe that it is important to note the cautionary tale from Spence (2007) who in emphasising the need for an evidence-based approach to coaching practice, draws a parallel between coaching and what he considers to be the main factor in the demise of the Human Potential Movement, viz. the disconnection between practitioners and solid research.

Of the executive and leadership models that do exist, several, perhaps due to the influence of many therapeutic approaches, use a cognitively based approach. ACT, which stands for Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Hayes *et al.*, 1999) has been adapted for use within organisations, and further adapted as a leadership coaching model. It is one example of a cognitively based approach. It is suggested that ACT's framework, processes, and interventions are borne from a systematic, bottom-up approach, expanding upon psychological research and the evidence-based literature (Hayes *et al.*, 1999). The approach appears to use mindfulness and acceptance interventions in conjunction with behaviour change strategies. It is interesting to note how executive and leadership coaching makes no apology for focusing on therapeutic approaches, as if acknowledging that there may already be psychological issues present to deal with in this context.

Good *et al.* (2010 p.20) describe the CBEC (Cognitive Behavioural Executive Coaching) model 'an orientation to the CBEC model and an explanation of its collaborative and empowering structure'. They explain the process as helping the executive define an ideal future state as a leader. This, they say, can be accomplished through the use of visioning exercises, values assessments, and dialogue. They suggest that 'such assessments and the visioning exercise are standard practices among many well regarded executive coaching processes (e.g. Ideal Self portion of Intentional Change Theory; Boyatzis, 2006)'.

Relatively recently, another potentially major coaching model has emerged. Fusco *et al.* (2011, p.130) describe a coaching model which they believe

can help develop authentic leadership. They argue that nothing exists in the authentic leadership literature which offers ideas or guidance on how to coach at intrapersonal and developmental levels for increased authenticity. '...we used the GIVE model (Goals, Identity, Values, Emotions) as a framework'. They also indicate that the Values and Emotions part of their model employs Rational Emotive Behavioural Coaching. This appears similar to the Cognitive Behavioural Executive Coaching model mentioned previously.

It is also worth noting that whilst many of these models are implicitly designed for one to one coaching sessions, Kets de Vries (2005) suggests that leadership coaching should be conducted in a group setting, the implication being that the group is made up of leaders from the same organisation and that the group leadership coaching exercise should allow the executive team to reflect on each member's leadership style. De Vries argues that this may enable them to deal with personal issues that have been lying dormant for a long time and also to develop strong relationships based on trust and mutual respect. The de Vries model relies heavily on feedback as a catalyst for change.

Overview of the theoretical and philosophical influences on the coaching employed in the thesis

When I consider the perceived gap (mentioned in Chapter 1) between leadership theory, available training and some troubling leadership behaviours, I am intrigued by the role that coaching has to play but may not have properly played to date. My search of the leadership coaching literature suggests that this branch of coaching is still relatively new. I also think that the relationship between a leader and a coach is quite unique, and the potential impact (both good and bad) of coaching on the individual and the organisation should not be underestimated. The coaching space is somewhere within which the leader can reflect and converse in a way which may not be possible anywhere else (Brockbank and McGill, 2006). And so I believe that coaching has a bigger role to play in leadership development than is currently being realised.

As I am the coach in this action research study, it is important to explain the philosophy that underpins my coaching practice and that has informed the brave leadership coaching model introduced in Chapter 4. There are three main influences:

1. Humanistic Psychology

What underpins my approach to coaching is that it should be human-centric. This may initially sound like a rather obvious statement to make, in the sense that coaching normally involves the coaching of a human. However, this humanistic approach is more than simply using a questioning strategy, whether those questions are (as defined by Tomm (1988)) lineal, circular, strategic or reflective. This is not to suggest that questioning rather than telling is not a powerful coaching strategy, as this can sometimes of itself ensure that the focus of a coaching session is directed towards the coachee, and so be potentially more human-centric. However, a humanistic approach to coaching is both person-centred and connected to creating the right environment in which the coachee may flourish.

A humanistic approach to coaching is described by Stober (2006) as an approach which suggests that given the right environment, the coachee will tend towards improvement, to move towards Maslow's (1968) idea of self-actualisation, of reaching full capacity. Stober further suggests that coaches should be experts on the process of coaching, but that the coachee is the expert in the content of their experience. Joseph (2010, p.75), in discussing the benefits of a person-centred approach to coaching, states that 'clients move away from their organizational agenda towards a more personal agenda in a way which is actually beneficial to them in terms of self-understanding and developing social and emotional skills, which in turn has a knock-on effect in terms of decision-making and the ability to relate to others, which can benefit the organisation'.

The idea that coaching is an approach which can help facilitate change, and that it is coachee-centric, is hardly original. In fact it could be argued that the coachee being at the centre of the dynamic defines the major component of life or executive coaching. My suspicion is that Stober's description is an attempt to further delineate the relatively new profession of coaching from what may have been some earlier perceptions of what coaching actually entailed. The need to define some approaches to

coaching as 'humanistic' may well stem from the need to differentiate it from the vision of the football coach shouting from the sidelines, or coaching having some form of remedial connotation, or it simply being a question of having some skills, e.g. the use of a spreadsheet, transferred from one employee to another.

Stober does reference both Carl Rogers (1902–87) and Abraham Maslow (1908–70), and it is Maslow in particular who underpins much of the philosophical approach which has influenced the coaching in this research. The influence of Maslow should not be understated. Maslow's observation that not only did humans have an inherent desire to self-actualise, but also to have their innate emotional needs met, was revolutionary at the time of its introduction, and I believe that it is still valid today.

However, although Maslow's humanistic approach to psychology has been, as mentioned, very influential, he was certainly not the first or only person to suggest that humans were driven by needs beyond those of a simply biological nature. According to Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1964), Alfred Adler's (1870–1937) view that the drivers of humans were more emotionally complex than Sigmund Freud's (1856–1939) more animalistic perspective caused a philosophical and relational split between Freud and Adler which was never reconciled. Maslow was certainly heavily influenced by Adler's work, and indeed Wilson (2001) described Maslow as fundamentally an Adlerian.

Carl Rogers (1902–87) was also considered to adopt a humanistic approach, in particular to psychotherapy. Rogers (1959) proposed the then radical notion that humans have a basic tendency to strive forwards to reach their full potential. Maslow furthered this notion with his idea of self-actualisation and inherent needs both physical and emotional, and it is Maslow's approach to emotional needs which most clearly resonates with the Human Givens approach.

2. Human Givens

The idea of emotional needs as innate motivators forms a mainstay of the Human Givens approach. There are echoes of this in the coaching and business literature. Nicholson suggests (2003) that circumstances should be created where an individual's natural motivation is freed, and Skiffington

and Zeus (2003) claim that behavioural coaching is based on meaning-making and meaning-seeking, which Griffin and Tyrrell (2004) describe as being an innate need. Griffin and Tyrrell not only claim that our emotional needs are innate motivators, in the sense that we are compelled to have these needs met, but also that our emotional and mental health are dependent on these being met in balance. This idea of having emotional needs met in balance forms the basis of the Human Givens emotional needs audit (Human Givens Institute, 2006).

Glasser (1999) also discusses psychological needs, suggesting that humans are genetically programmed to attempt to satisfy four psychological needs; 'love and belonging, power, freedom and fun ... our genes motivate us far beyond our survival' (Glasser, 1999, p.28). Also, Strasser and Strasser (2002) claim that humans have ontological 'givens' such as existential anxiety. And in self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000) suggest that there are three inherent psychological universal needs, which are: autonomy – the need to be one's own agent of change, competence – the need to have a feeling of confidence in what is being undertaken, and relatedness – the need to have a sense of connection to others.

Seligman (2002), in discussing positive psychology, suggests that finding meaning and purpose in our lives is essential and that amplifying positive feelings is an important route to this outcome. And in relation to Positive Psychology and coaching, Kauffman (2006) proposes that the three pathways to happiness, viz. emotions, connection and personal meaning, can all be coached.

And so whilst Maslow (1968, 1971) is not unique in his observations about an individual's need for meaning and connection, he was certainly one of the first to make these observations and has been one of the most influential. His work has certainly influenced this research, although perhaps more indirectly than through direct lineage, and more from the impact his work has had on both the Human Givens (Griffin and Tyrrell, 2004) and Positive Psychology (Seligman, 2002) approaches.

I think that it is worth noting that I had not initially considered the emotional needs audit for use within the model, but was prompted to do so when one of the co-researchers suggested that the emotional state of the coachee may play an important role in their thinking and approach to the situation at

hand. This is discussed in some detail in Chapter 4. This element of the Human Givens approach suggests that if our emotional needs are not being met, or there is some emotional turmoil, our ability to think clearly will be diminished. The importance of the role of emotions and our ability to think critically is also highlighted by Brookfield (1987).

I believe that not only are there strong connections between humanistic psychology and both the Human Givens and Positive Psychology approaches, but also between Human and Positive Psychology. Indeed, Yates (2011) states that Positive Psychology is at the heart of the Human Givens approach.

3. Positive Psychology

The third main influence is that of Positive Psychology. In discussing Positive Psychology coaching, Biswas-Diener (2010, p.6) states, '...positive psychology coaching, as an endeavour distinct from other approaches to coaching, is fairly poorly defined. It is unclear who should reasonably call him or herself a positive psychology coach'. However, Driver (2011, p.17) considers that the understanding and utilisation of 'strengths' plays an important role in Positive Psychology coaching, '...so a crucial factor is that, when we use a true strength, we feel energised. As a coach, part of our role is to notice when what is portrayed as a strength is accompanied by the energy or not'. And Clancy and Binkert (2010), in discussing appreciative coaching, suggest that an individual's capacity to flourish can best be understood by looking at the Positive Psychology approach of focussing on the positive aspects of one's life.

The gravitational factors that form a key part of the coaching model which evolved during this research are adapted from a particular area of Positive Psychology called 'strengths', or 'character strengths' (Kauffman, 2006). These 'strengths' are alluded to by Driver (2011) above. They have evolved from a particular area of Positive Psychology known as Values in Action (Peterson and Seligman, 2004) and have been described as a classification of character strengths. Peterson and others conducted a wide consultation with whom they described as 'experts', from which they identified 24 strengths of character which they claim are valued by most of the world's cultures. These qualities include critical thinking, humour, spirituality, and hope. These character strengths can be used in coaching to help the

coachees move forwards by focussing on and utilising their strengths rather than getting bogged down in their weaknesses.

In considering the structure of the model, I was aware that I wanted to have something 'human-centric', but I had puzzled at some length about what that might be. And so as I considered Positive Psychology to embody a considerable humanistic element, I looked towards it for inspiration. As I studied the Values in Action, it occurred to me that if these were valued by most of the world's cultures, then perhaps it was important that they be valued by leaders as well.

I believe that it should be emphasised that whilst these 'strengths' were originally conceived as a way for individuals to move forward successfully, and were derived from the research of Peterson and Seligman, which suggested that they were valued by various cultures, I have used some of the headings in the model to hopefully prompt a discussion by the leader about what might be worth considering (or indeed valuing) in any given situation. These strengths were not originally conceived for the purpose for which they have been utilised within the model. However, my rationale was that if they are human-centric values, or at least values which form a key part of a psychological approach which has been heavily influenced by humanistic psychology, then it is perhaps important for the leader to consider each of these values in relation to any given situation. (I also believe that it is important for the reader to note that the timeline of the model evolution places the appearance of the 'human-centric' gravitational factors before the appearance of the Human Givens emotional needs audit, and that I had not initially intended both the Human Givens and Positive Psychology approaches to have informed the model development).

This humanistic perspective, informed by the mix of Maslow, Griffin, Tyrrell and Seligman's theories, is, I believe, vital for individuals to thrive within organisations and so for organisations themselves to thrive. This approach to coaching encourages not only coachees to consider their own emotional state but also the potential cost emotionally of their actions on others. This more overtly humanistic approach may potentially form something of an antidote to some of the recent and on-going behaviours which are touched upon in Chapter 1.

How the theoretical underpinnings of this approach to coaching might relate to and support aspects of the leadership theories

As can be seen from the discussion of leadership theories earlier in this chapter, the idea of brave leadership can be extended to each of the six referenced leadership theories. Each of these theories contains, I believe, an inherent implication that at some level there is a need to engage the followers in a way which has, at least in part, been informed by a consideration of the impact on their psychological wellbeing. I would argue that one way to collectively view all these theories is that they are, at least in part, quite humanistic in nature. In each of the leadership approaches the drivers from which this consideration of the humanistic element is prompted may, of course, vary. It may, for example, emanate from genuine concern, or simply be a means to ensure greater productivity. Irrespective of this, I think that on one level at least, for each of the theories to manifest successfully in any given organisation, consideration of the humanistic component must play a key role.

My observations have led me to suspect that consciously, or perhaps in some situations subconsciously, the leader should regularly consider the emotional state of her/his followers; and also his/her own emotional state. And so my belief is that the theoretical humanistic underpinning of this approach to coaching and leadership should, and perhaps must, be adopted in the practical application of each of these leadership theories.

Additionally, to fulfil the criteria of each of these leadership 'schools of thought' a brave decision is likely to be required at some point. And so, for the humanistic element in each of these approaches to leadership to be fully realised, it is likely that a brave step must be taken at some point. Of course taking brave steps will not always have a humanistic element, but inevitably some will. I would suggest that this then links bravery with an underpinning humanistic element in each of the six leadership theories.

Summary

It became apparent during a review of the literature that very little had been written about business leadership and bravery, and that no coaching model

existed which had been designed to help the leader to become 'braver'. I believed that bravery was one of the main components which was missing from the 'mix' of leadership approaches as defined by the various 'schools of thought'. The ability to be braver could be a foil to the short-term thinking which seems to be quite apparent at the moment. It could be a foil to greed; it could be a foil to 're-election thinking'. It could, if considered at a coaching level, allow a leader to make some decisions which were authentic, ethical, transformational or simply humanitarian. However, these decisions may be unpopular, they may be risky and they may be costly, and this cost would not necessarily be financial. This is where I believe the gap lies; the gap not only in research, but also in behaviour. This gap is hinted at in the brief description of spiritual leadership.

The description of spiritual leadership illustrates one of the challenges surrounding the leadership development literature. In essence, it sounds good – but then what? Where is the 'demonstration through behaviour'? There are undoubtedly some very effective leadership development interventions from a facilitated and from a one to one coaching perspective. However, it would seem from an evidence-based research perspective that there is an element which is missing, namely the 'how to'. How does one make the ethical decision when things are pressured, or how can the leader hold onto those all-important values when there are forces propelling her or him in the opposite direction? How can we access that sense of what is 'right'? I would suggest that it is during these 'moments of truth' in the metaphoric 'Garden of Gethsemane' that the academic rhetoric is most easily dismissed, and that this may well be when effective coaching will be at its most powerful, particularly when aided by a model which can allow for the facilitation of braver decision making.

In the following chapter, Chapter 3, the research methodology which underpins this research is explored.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter explores the methodology used to explore the question, 'can a coaching model be designed which could help to enhance bravery in a leader'? It also explores the rationale behind the choices for the particular approaches taken.

As the aim was to answer a question which I considered would ultimately be subjective, I believed that the research approach at its broadest level had to be interpretivist in some way. On the other hand, I had never been entirely comfortable with a purely phenomenological approach. I was driven by a need to help to generate change in certain areas of leadership. I did not simply want to find out people's opinions en masse, or indeed, their world views. I was keen to help evolve a model which may, in some way, be able to challenge the status quo of what I had perceived to be 'weaker' leadership.

I had previously noted that the pragmatic researcher will not tend to be bound by methodology and that it also could be argued that the pragmatist is similar to the critical realist in the sense that they are both intent upon understanding phenomena as a precursor to suggesting change. However, I would consider myself to be a critical realist rather than a pragmatist, and I am entirely comfortable from an epistemological perspective that knowledge is constructed from our conditioning, beliefs, social groupings and even emotional state.

Bhaskar (1978) outlines what he calls three domains: the real, the actual, and the empirical; while Carlsson (2003, p.12) notes that 'critical realism was developed as an alternative to traditional positivistic models of social science as well as an alternative to postmodern approaches and theories and constructivism'. Archer *et al.* (1998) and Lòpez and Potter (2001) discuss different aspects of critical realism, ranging from fundamental philosophical discussions to how statistical analysis can be used in critical realism research. Critical realism can be seen as a specific form of realism. Its modus operandi is to appreciate the reality of the natural order whilst in a duality of thinking, recognise how formative and belief-making events of the social world can be. The relationship to this study is that the research is both seeking to understand if a coaching model can enhance bravery in a leader (implying that there is a tangible outcome of reality of bravery in a

leader and the ability to move more closely to, or reach this) and to explore the evolution of this model through the experiences of co-researchers (implying that there is a distinct (and important) constructivist element to the co-researchers' journeys).

Whilst believing that there is an underlying structure or code, and that there are answers, I am not disturbed by the idea that we may never find out what those answers are; and therefore I am also at ease with a type of ontological pluralism which intuitively suspects that there is a reality which is constant for us all, whilst accepting that at the same time we may never be able to actually comprehend it from anything but a position of obfuscation or separateness.

Pilgrim and Bentall (1999, p.262) suggest that, '...in a critical realist account it is not reality which is deemed to be socially constructed (the axiomatic radical constructionist position), rather it is our theories of reality, and the methodological priorities we deploy to investigate it. Our theories and methods are shaped by social forces and informed by interests. These include interests of race, class and gender as well as economic investment and linguistic, cultural and professional constraints in time and space'. And so it was imperative for me to understand the differing lived experiences of the co-researchers, whilst also believing that we could nudge ourselves forwards towards a more cohesive ontological understanding.

I believe that a methodological approach, which allowed for the vagaries of socially constructed theories of reality and potentially move towards 'an answer', was likely to be most effectively realised by Action Research.

Action Research

I was fairly convinced that critical realism provided a foundation for the research to evolve, and had also become more convinced that Action Research was the best way to understand and test the proposed model. The strong correlation between the critical realist's need to make change and Action Research, and particularly Participatory Action Research, is noted by Baum *et al.* (p.854) 'PAR (Participative Action Research) seeks to understand and improve the world by changing it. At its heart is collective, self-reflective inquiry that researchers and co-researchers undertake, so they can understand and improve upon the practices in which they

participate and the situations in which they find themselves. The reflective process is directly linked to action’.

I needed to understand what was the lived experience of co-researchers who were being exposed to the model. And once I had realised that there would be an iterative element to understanding the model, this, combined with the idea of the co-researchers as co-researchers, seemed to be a compelling rationale to use Action Research, as well as the fact that no-one appeared to be conducting any research into ‘brave coaching’.

However, PAR (Participative Action Research) is not without its critics. Walter (2009, p.6) notes ‘PAR has been strongly criticised by other social researchers. These criticisms tend to focus on how its participation, democracy and external ownership aspects can greatly reduce the validity of the research and the rigour of the methods used, and question whether PAR methods lead to good, scientific, valid, reliable, usable research outcomes’. However, I felt that the shared ownership and democratic elements were essential in the evolution of the coaching model and the understanding of its effectiveness.

Avison *et al.* (1999, p.94) note that ‘Action research combines theory and practice (and researchers and practitioners) through change and reflection in an immediate problematic situation within a mutually acceptable ethical framework’. Whilst recognising the ethical and reflective element, they also recognise that this reflective element is iterative, ‘Action research is an iterative process involving researchers and practitioners acting together on a particular cycle of activities, including problem diagnosis, action intervention, and reflective learning’ *ibid.* Baum *et al.* (2006, p.854) emphasise the unique positioning of the researcher and the co-researchers in action research; they advocate for power to be ‘deliberately shared between the researcher and the researched: blurring the line between them until the researched become the researchers. The researched cease to be objects and become partners in the whole research process’.

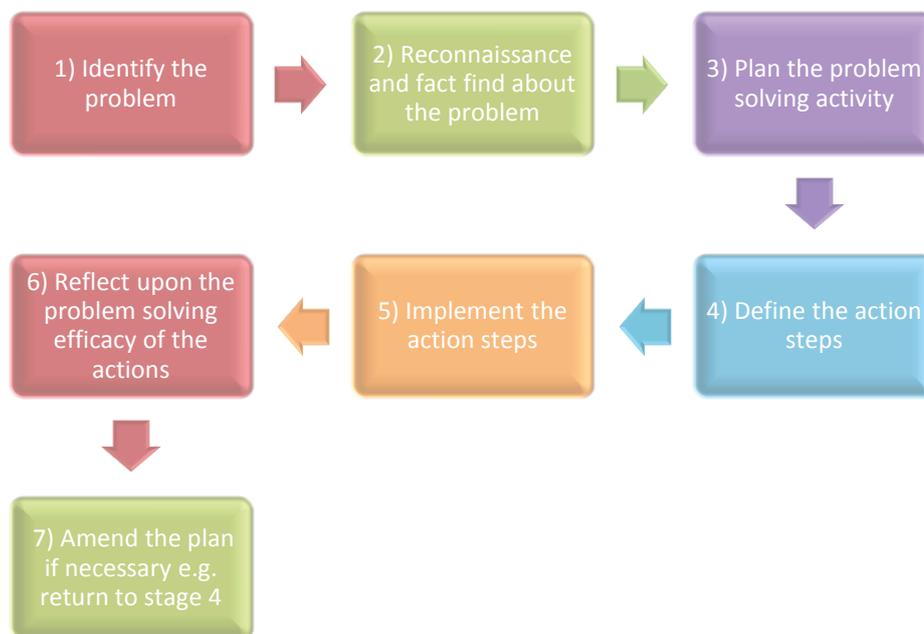
The participative element of action research seemed extremely important. As a critical realist it was also important to me to move towards an ‘answer’ which would hopefully enhance professional understanding and perhaps provide a workable and adaptable model. However, due to the particular nature of coaching, I felt that there was also an important

phenomenological component. The lived experience of the participant as the co-researcher as the journey unfolded might also yield some important professional insights, as the co-researchers were also the coaches. This participatory worldview (Reason and Bradbury, 2001) was mentioned previously in Chapter 1.

The Action Research sequence

In order to design the process, I adapted McKay and Marshall's (2001, pp.50–1) Action Research cycle. Figure 3.1 illustrates the sequence of the research.

Figure 3.1 – The action research sequence



The research followed the cycle outlined in Figure 3.1:

- 1) *Problem identification.* The problem had partly been identified from first-hand experience (and which was ultimately echoed to a degree by the co-researchers) and a preliminary literature review and is also articulated in the introduction to this thesis.
- 2) *Reconnaissance/fact finding about problem.* Fact finding involved carrying out a comprehensive literature review and also speaking to four

key informants. These key informants comprised business leaders, e.g. a FTSE CEOs, whom I knew or was introduced to. The findings from which are discussed in Chapter 4.

3) *Plan the problem solving activity.* Planning involved the design of the coaching model and the format of the coaching sessions. The evolution of the model and the nature of the sessions are contained in Chapter 4.

4) *Define the action steps.* The desired outcome here was to entail scheduling the coaching sessions and how coach and co-researcher's reflection and feedback would be collected and acted upon.

5) *Implement the action steps.* The implementation involved carrying out the actual coaching sessions. This was envisaged as six sessions plus a reflection session per co-researcher.

6) *Reflect upon the problem-solving efficacy of the actions.* This was to be achieved by studying the reflections and feedback from the co-researchers.

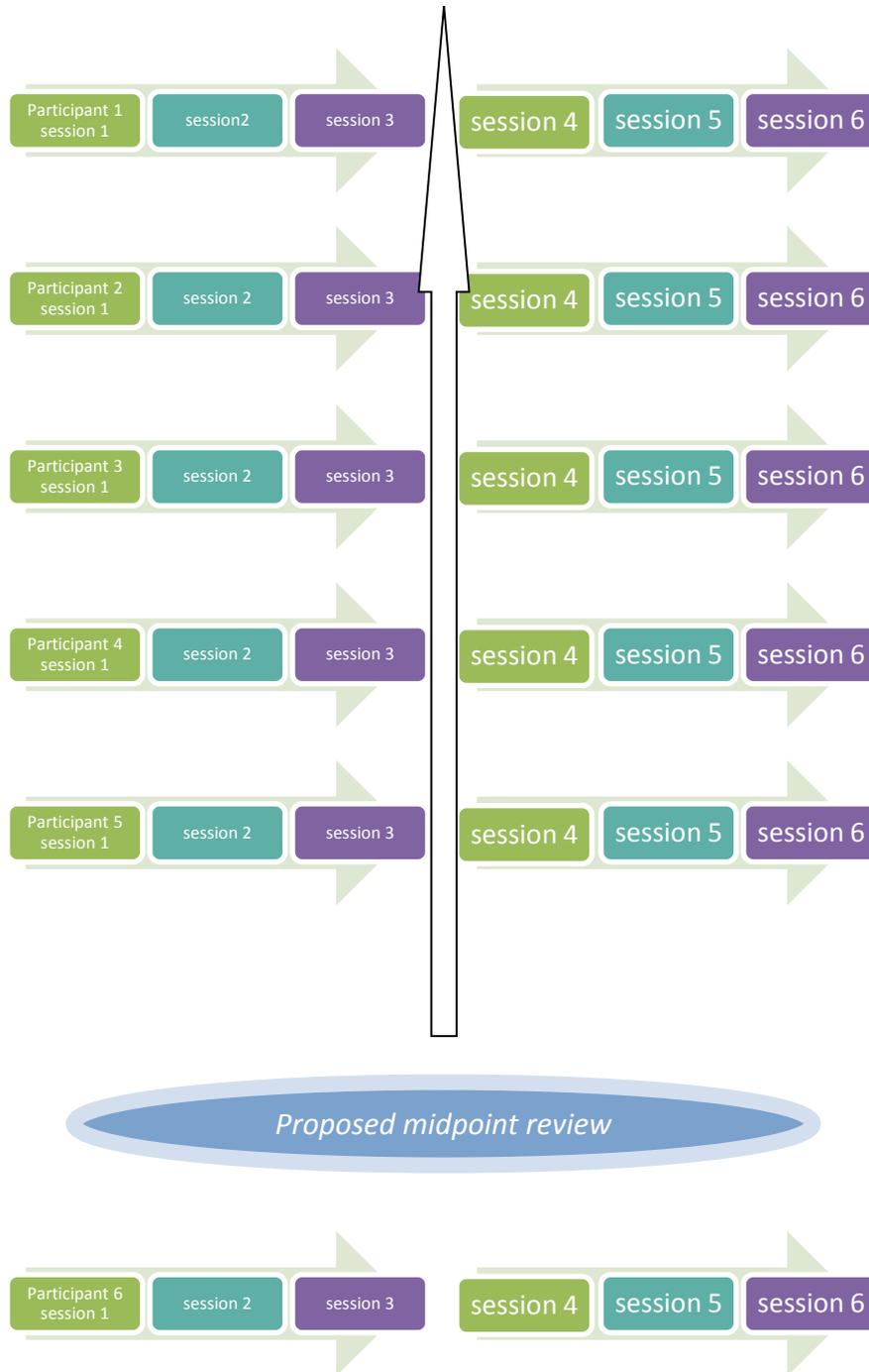
7) *Amend the plan if further change is required and return to Step 4.* The main objective here was to adjust the coaching model as required. At the outset I was aware that this may have entailed making minor adjustments which might be different for each co-researcher, or that there may have been a requirement for major adjustments after the mid-point review. The mid-point review was scheduled to take place after the third coaching sessions had taken place.

Exit: The coaching sessions were scheduled to end in between July and August 2011.

Due to the requirement for leaders to reflect and feedback their thoughts after each of the coaching sessions, the leaders involved in this study were co-researchers in this research. Baum *et al.* (2006, p.854) refer to this as Participatory Action Research. They describe the process as, '...collective, self-reflective inquiry that researchers and co-researchers undertake, so they can understand and improve upon the practices in which they participate and the situations in which they find themselves'. The co-researchers were ultimately selected from the private sector, and were from four different organisations in order to provide a range of perspectives.

The Action Research cycle took place over a period of six months. During this time 36 coaching sessions were planned to take place. After each coaching session I updated a reflective log book and each co-researcher was encouraged to do the same (Action Research Cycle number 6). The co-researchers were encouraged to send me their observations and thoughts on the coaching sessions and their observations of the use of the model two weeks after each session; the sessions being originally envisaged as being four weeks apart. Session 1, for all co-researchers, involved an element of familiarisation and orientation. From Session 2, the coaching sessions were envisaged as being split into three parts; one third of the session was to be devoted to reviewing the co-researcher's log book to record any adjustments to the model which this might necessitate, one third of the session was to be devoted to the discussion of the model as a concept (in essence capturing anything which had occurred in the intervening fortnight which was not captured in the log book) and the final third of the session was to be devoted to coaching, using the model as a framework. The idea behind the use of a log book or journal was that it has the benefit of capturing immediate experiences as recorded by the co-researcher and 'does not pass through a researcher' (Hatch, 2002 p.141). In reality the sessions were never as neatly choreographed as this, and due to the time constraints of the co-researchers, the use of a journal was sporadic at best. A larger mid-point review was planned to take place approximately three months into the field work (see Action Research Step number 7) to assess trends and patterns across co-researchers, which may have necessitated a much larger adjustment to the model, or highlight where it was simply not fit for purpose. This did indeed take place, as will be discussed in Chapter 5. Figure 3.2 below illustrates the process.

Figure 3.2 – Sessions 1 to 6 for the six co-researchers



Co-researchers

There were no deliberate exclusion criteria for the selection of the co-researchers. My initial action was to get in touch with those individuals within organisations whom I knew. This created a type of 'snowball' effect as those individuals put me in touch with others within their organisations, and in some cases, within other organisations. In the first instance an organisational invite was sent (Appendix A). If more interest was expressed, then an information document was sent (Appendix B). Both of these were on Oxford Brookes letter headed paper. The co-researchers were all extremely busy leaders who gave up their valuable time, energy and focus to assist me in this endeavour. Although I did not conduct in-depth interviews with them about their motivation for taking part in this research, it appeared to me that they were keen to further their understanding about coaching and leadership and also to be involved in something which was 'new'. I believed that it was important that they were involved in the general *mêlée* of leadership and managerial life, which as it turned out, they were. This did, however, present several logistical challenges. As a precursor to meeting the co-researchers, I had constructed some thoughts about the model and about bravery. I was initially unsure as to whether this would constitute leading the co-researchers too much. However, I concluded that we had a lot to do and that we had to begin somewhere, and also that there may have been an element of me wondering just how 'blank a page' they might be expecting. What I produced can be seen in Figures 4.2 and 4.3 in Chapter 4. The Action Research approach also highlighted the differing roles that we were all to play and called into question where the power lay. Selener (1997) suggests that the role of Participatory Action Research is to empower people through the construction of their own knowledge through a process of action and reflection. However, these co-researchers had to also play the role of coachee, and I that of coach. And whilst I think that everyone appeared to be empowered, I did note that overall driving element had to ultimately come from me, which is probably not surprising considering how busy the co-researchers were, and also that I was probably being imbued with more of an expert veneer than I actually deserved. Figure 3.3 provides a brief summary of the co-researchers' 'demographics'.

Figure 3.3 – The co-researchers

Pseudonym	Sector	Leadership experience	Age	Geographic role
Martha	FMCG	Less than 10 years. An HR professional.	30-40	Worldwide
Russell	Health retail	Less than 10 years. Marketing and Accountancy background.	30-40	UK and Europe
Amy	Engineering/Electronic	10 years approx. HR and Learning & Development specialist	35-45	UK and Ireland
Mickey	Engineering	10 years approx. General Management experience	35-45	Europe not UK
Jack	Electronics	Greater than 10 years Military, Sales and General Management experience	45-55	Worldwide
Rory	FMCG	Less than 10 years Retail experience	25-35	UK

Data Collection and analysis

There were six sessions for each of the co-researchers (apart from the individual who could not continue) plus a reflection session (not shown in Figure 3.2 above). Each co-researcher session lasted approximately one hour, although the timings did vary. The broad outline of each of the sessions from session 2 onwards was that one third was spent on dealing with any aspects from the last session, e.g. questions and feedback, another third was devoted to the model development, e.g. adding in pulling factors, and the final third was devoted to coaching using the model where appropriate. During some of the sessions the weighting was more towards discussing the model than coaching, and vice versa. The sessions took place at various locations throughout the UK including London, High Wycombe and Glasgow. They took place in offices or cafés and over a period of approximately six months, although occasionally they had to be done via telephone due to last minute schedule changes.

The six sessions were audio recorded with the full knowledge of the co-researchers. These recordings were then transcribed. The co-researchers were also encouraged to communicate any thoughts or reflections they had had between sessions to me via email (which only actually occurred 'en masse' between sessions one and two). I also used a reflective journal. This journal contained my thoughts after each of the sessions, e.g. how well I thought that it had gone, issues, etc. However, the initial primary source of data was from the six one to one sessions. I had originally envisaged that the co-researchers would also record their thoughts between sessions in a journal, but just as regularly emailing me between sessions did not happen; the co-researchers also did not maintain a journal. The intensity of the roles which they were involved in within each of their organisations precluded this, although there was some email traffic which proved useful. This was an issue which I had expected to a degree, but I had not expected that it would be an issue for all the co-researchers.

The reflection sessions (one per co-researcher, apart from one individual who dropped out) took place after that particular co-researcher had taken part in their initial six co-researcher sessions. The reflection sessions lasted

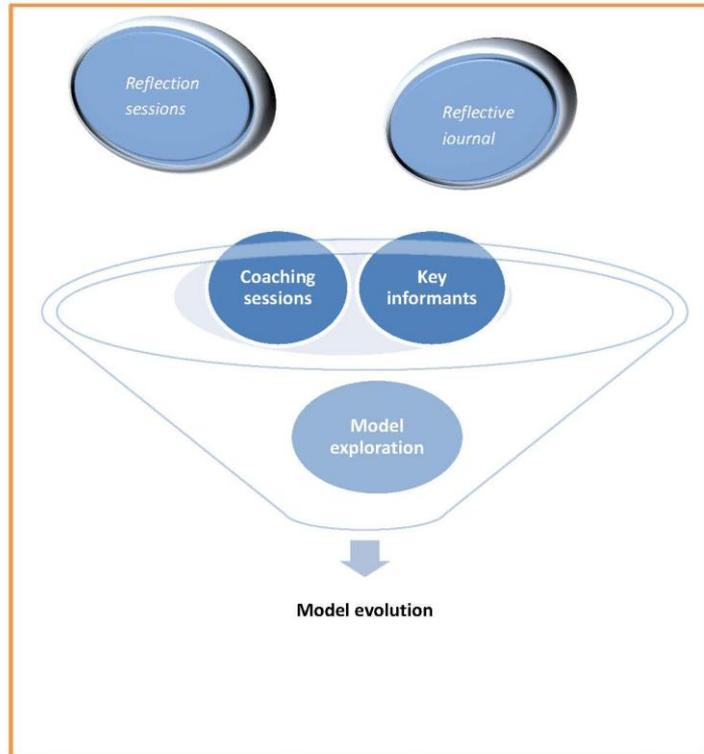
about an hour and also took place at various locations throughout the UK in cafés and also at London City airport.

These interviews were also audio recorded and then transcribed. The transcriptions (and those of the co-researchers' six other sessions) were read several times over and the audio recordings were also listened to several times. I also consulted any reflections which I had recorded in writing after the sessions. I was primarily interested in what I considered to be 'shifts' in the co-researchers during any of the sessions, and I was also looking 'across' all of the sessions as they played out more or less in sequence. This 'more or less' a sequence was an immediate challenge, as I could see that some co-researchers were involved in their fourth session whilst others had not yet managed to complete their third. I had not fully considered this during the research design. This meant that the proposed mid-point analysis was not viable. However, it was fairly obvious at that point that the co-researchers were still getting to grips with the model anyway (something which transpired because of the way I had eventually decided to 'drip-feed' the model structure, as this meant that by the third session, the co-researchers had only just begun to see it in its entirety). What was still clear, however, was that there had been no obvious rejection of the ideas at that point. These aforementioned 'shifts' during the sessions, I defined as moments where the co-researcher uncovered something about themselves, the model or the process. I was primarily interested in three main things. Firstly, I needed to understand whether my co-researchers became engaged with the model. Secondly, I was keen to understand if exposure to the model and this research process would elicit 'braver' behaviours. Therefore whilst reviewing the data I knew that there was an end point, and with a retroductive hat on (Levin-Rozalis, 2010) I attempted to glean where there may have been clues which illustrated movement towards this end point. An example of this from Chapter 5 would be Co-researcher Session number 2 with Russell and his fairly obvious frustration with his current employer. Given that Russell subsequently left his employment, this seemed fairly significant. Engagement with the model was also important, as it was likely that this would be indicative of a healthy evolution, and an example of this from Chapter 5 is Amy's suggestion about using a Myers Briggs tool in the process. Braver behaviours appeared in various guises; Mickey's insistence (also in Chapter 5) that he was using

the model to guide his approach on an ongoing basis seemed to illustrate this. There were also times where there appeared to be no movement, no evolution and a lessened engagement (primarily due, I believed, to time constraints) and whilst this was to be expected, it was also slightly unsettling.

In Figure 3.4 below, I illustrate the different data sources, with the coaching and the model evolution both occurring in the sessions with the co-researchers.

Figure 3.4 – Different sources of data



Induction v deduction v retroduction

A review of the Action Research literature indicated that there were no specific recommended Action Research analysis models. And whilst I did not specifically set out to devise my own, this absence did ultimately result in a consideration and reflection of what might be the best approach, and the conclusion that a retroductive approach might be interesting to apply. There is much debate about how to analyse qualitative data, much of which falls either into the camp of the patently obvious or the clinically obscure. I have attempted to make this analysis as transparent and straightforward as possible. As a critical realist, my approach is a contextualist method, which resides somewhere between essentialism and constructionism.

Jessop (2005, p.43) states 'Epistemologically, critical realism distinguishes the intransitive and transitive dimensions of scientific enquiry'. He claims that 'knowledge (transitive) is produced through a continuing process of confrontation between retroductive theoretical hypotheses about intransitive objects and evidential statements generated in and through transitive enquiry'. He suggests that retroduction involves asking what the real world must be like for a specific outcome to be actualised. This differs from induction, which seeks to generalise from a number of cases to something broader, and deduction, which seeks to make sense of a case or cases from a pre-ordained theory. However, retroduction, sometimes referred to as abduction (Peirce, 1955) is more concerned with checking our working hypothesis against our observations, 'the logic of discovery' (Rosental, 1993).

Although this is only vaguely representative of the real-life complexities and dynamics which exist between individuals in conversation, as was the case with each of the co-researcher's sessions, it is useful perhaps to illustrate, and perhaps choose, one potential pathway through the sometimes conflicting advice on how best to analyse data; the problem being that there are several 'best ways'.

Donning the pragmatist's hat for a moment, I was interested in getting to the essence of what was actually happening in and around the conversations with the co-researchers. And therefore the route must surely be that which was likely to generate the least noise in the system; the approach which produced the least interference between that which was

happening and that which I reported. It would be possible to use a deductive strategy, but that would entail generating a rule which may result in a rather large misrepresentation. There is a potentially similar challenge with the bottom up approach of induction.

I was drawn to the retroductive approach because I was interested in what was the intransitive reality behind the transitive evidential statements. A deductive approach would require that I had an initial rule or theory, e.g. all the co-researchers are bored, and as Mickey is a co-researcher, he too must be bored. This large leap is entirely in the wrong direction if the initial premise or rule, i.e. all the co-researchers are bored, is wrong. The inductive 'bottom-up' approach, i.e. I have observed that Mickey yawned, and so did all the other co-researchers, and so I will formulate the tentative hypothesis that the co-researchers are bored, may lead to an entirely blinkered reading of data after that point.

The challenge with utilising a deductive approach is that I might find myself approaching the data with an initial theory which may obfuscate what is actually going on. Essentially this can result in a form of priming (Fazio and Olson, 2003); I may be looking for what I believe. It is in fact an example of the old phrase, 'we do not always believe what we see, but we almost always see what we believe'. This approach might mean that I may miss some significant clues.

A similar, and yet in a sense inverse challenge, lies with an inductive approach. Using an inductive approach I may be looking for the other co-researchers to yawn, and in my desire to spot a pattern or a theme, e.g. 'all the co-researchers are yawning therefore they must be bored', I may miss entirely the possibility that only two were bored; the other two were suffering from sleep deprivation and the final two were simply consistently open-mouthed in surprise at the insights they were uncovering.

These examples are, of course, incredibly simplistic and biased against deduction and induction. However, I do believe that the best approach to analyse the data from this research has been to adopt a retroductive approach, i.e. to ask the question, 'for these people to be saying this at this point, in this way, in relation to the known 'end-point', what is likely to be happening here?' One criticism is that this can be a form of guesswork, and that indeed may be the case; however, if the question is asked with an

open mind and perhaps with the benefit of several touch points, this approach could be of immense value.

Retroduction

As Action Research has the advantage of often producing distinct end-points and outcomes, these outcomes can be used as a 'lens' through which to analyse the data. Retroduction has the advantage of being able to utilise a fixed point in time and space. This known end-point or outcome can then act as a way to filter or regard the data. The printed transcripts were read and re-read, and audio files listened to again and again. However, they were not specifically listened to or read to generate themes; they were accessed with a view towards understanding what, if any, steps were taking place which ultimately led to the known outcomes. This process is what I have called viewing through the 'lens'; the 'lens' of knowledge of a fixed outcome, and then the interpretation of the events in time which led up to that outcome.

McEvoy and Richards (2006, p.69) state that, 'Critical realists distinguish between three different ontological domains or modes of reality ... these are: the empirical (those aspects of reality that can be experienced either directly or indirectly); the actual (those aspects of reality that occur, but may not necessarily be experienced); and the real or 'deep' structures and mechanisms that generate phenomena ... these causal mechanisms cannot be apprehended directly as they are not open to observation, but they can be inferred through a combination of empirical investigation and theory construction'. McEvoy and Richards go on to suggest that in the case of critical realists, the ultimate aim of research is not to identify generalisable laws (which suggests positivism) or to identify the lived experience and/or beliefs of the main protagonists (which suggests interpretivism); rather that the ultimate aim is to develop deeper levels of explanation and understanding. Whilst the lived experience of the main protagonists (the co-researchers) was extremely important to the research, this was certainly not the ultimate aim; whilst a deeper level of explanation and understanding about bravery and the model in relation to leadership and coaching, certainly was.

Some of the experiences of some of the co-researchers could be observed at an empirical level (they remained employed). At the actual 'level' (the co-

researcher may have made a decision to remain, either consciously or unconsciously). The causal (real or deep) mechanism behind this 'shift' may be impossible to apprehend directly as social structure, human agency and other variable conditions may all be factors, although Bhaskar (1989) suggests that human reasons themselves can serve as causal explanations.

Mingers (2003) proposes that retroduction involves moving from the level of observations and lived experience to postulate about the underlying structures and mechanisms that account for the phenomena involved.

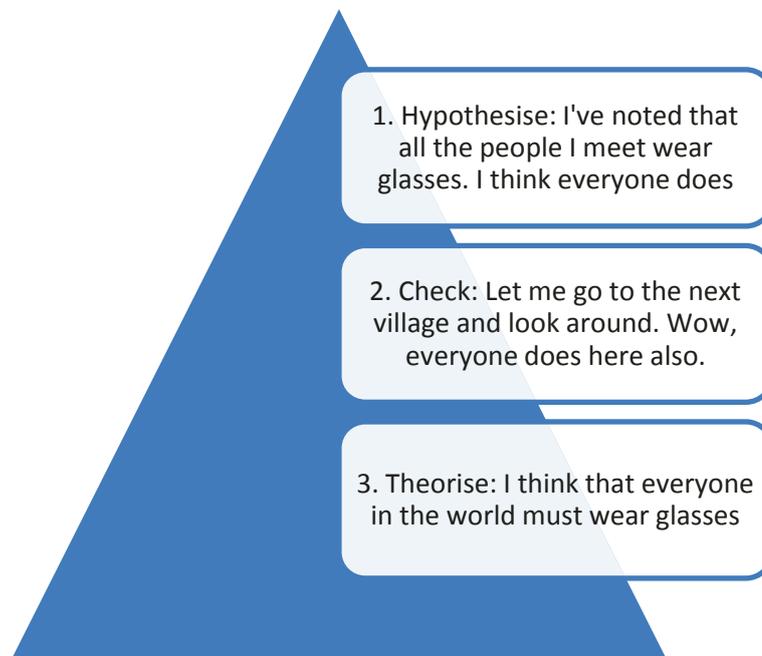
Doval (2008, p.504), when discussing how C.S. Peirce described inference to the best explanation, or inference by retroduction, uses the example of Sherlock Holmes explaining his methods to Dr. Watson in 'A Study in Scarlet' (Conan Doyle, 1887, p.86), 'there are a few people, however, who, if you told them the result, would be able to evolve from their own inner consciousness what the steps were which led up to that result'.

Conan Doyle (1887) had Holmes describe this as 'reasoning backwards'. I would suggest that reasoning backwards, or retroduction, could be considered as a primary tool for data analysis within action research. In action research there will normally be an end point, a conclusion to the research with some result or results. It is likely that this result or these results will have a tangible quality to it or them. The empirical level may be the observable actions taken. The causal level might be gleaned or glimpsed, or more probably inferred by generating a pastiche of the influential actors at that point. Considering, where possible, a visible and tangible end point and then 'reasoning backwards' may well reap the highest dividends in the data analysis of action research. I believe that this is likely to provide a greater understanding of the data than an inductive approach, which may rely on codes and themes, and a deductive approach, which may rely on flawed theory. I quote Conan Doyle earlier and to hopefully succinctly illustrate a point; however, an important distinction should be made here. The deductive approach in research implies generating a theory from which an hypothesis is formed and then observations can be collected which may help us address and ultimately test the hypothesis. The theory can be disproven, but we are potentially blinkered with that approach because we are simply attempting to prove or disprove the theory, and possibly biased towards finding evidence to prove

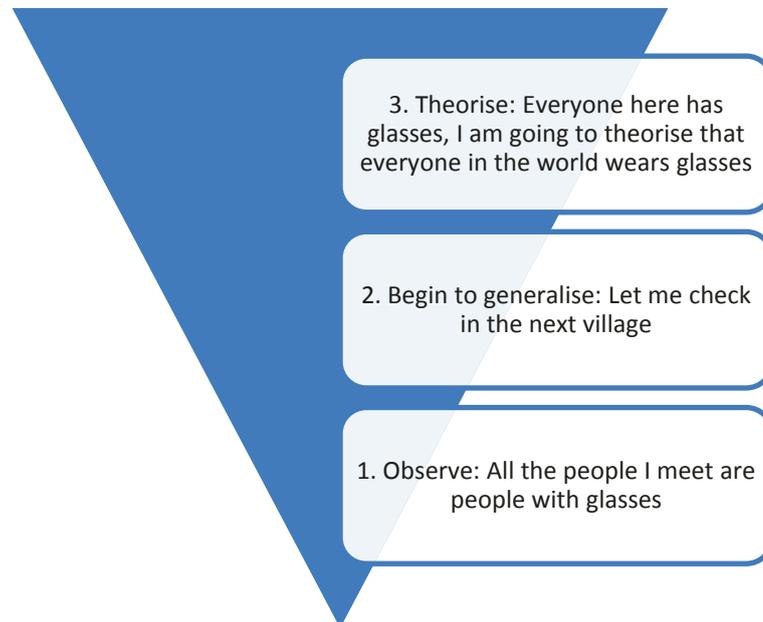
the theory. The Conan Doyle approach sometimes suggests that retroduction takes place initially before theorising or deduction. And so when Holmes deduces, he may well have held a working hypothesis 'in stasis' before utilising retroduction to reason backwards, and in this way checks it against the working hypothesis. He then theorises the cause of the effect, or simply reasons backwards without any initial hypothesis. There can therefore be an important distinction between the fictional and the academic terminology regarding deduction, in that deduction in academic terms is concerned with checking against a theory. The deduction of Sherlock Holmes is, in my opinion, actually much more retroductive in nature. Figure 3.5 compares deduction, induction and retroduction in a simplistic situation. It should be noted that the term 'abduction', first attributed to Charles S. Peirce, and 'retroduction', were often used interchangeably by Peirce himself (Anderson, 1986).

Figure 3.5 – Comparison of deduction, induction and retroduction

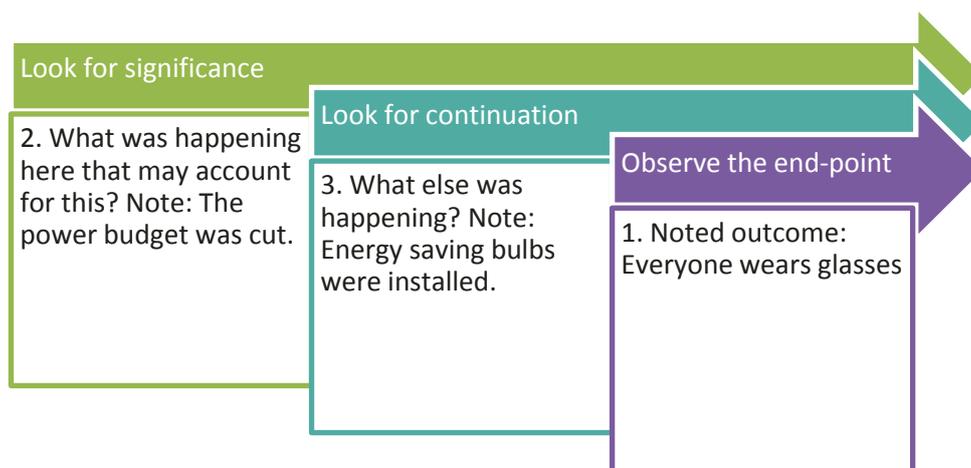
Deduction



Induction



Retroduction



This approach gains further credibility when one considers that in this research, and probably in many other examples of action research, there are distinctly tangible outcomes. For example, one co-researcher left their job and another decided to remain in their current role, having previously decided to leave. These are distinct and unequivocal outcomes as testified by the respective co-researchers. Therefore, what we have is an end point, an outcome, a conclusion. Heath and Cowley (2004) claim that no-one could claim to enter the field of research completely free from the influence of past experience, suggesting that analysis will always be filtered through some form of tradition and/or cultural position. This appears like a sound argument, and I would contend that adding codes and a thematic patina within action research when it might be possible to avoid our cultural and traditional biases should not be encouraged. However, I also believe that thematic analysis is valid and indeed necessary in certain situations. Indeed, the data from the reflection sessions in Chapter 6 has been analysed in this way; the different approach to analysis here being that the co-researchers are in reflective mode, and as such it seemed entirely appropriate to understand whether any themes emerged. This is a different situation from one where the data is presented from a series of Action Research iterations. I suspect that this flexibility of approach is also something which would find favour with individuals favouring a pragmatic approach. I am not suggesting in such circumstances that a thematic analysis cannot take place, but rather that a large opportunity might be missed if a retroductive approach is not undertaken as a primary tool of analysis. So a retroductive strategy is effectively the approach that I took with the data analysis. This is not to suggest that thematic analysis should be avoided; indeed, Chapter 6 is devoted to a thematic analysis of the reflection sessions; but rather that it should not automatically be the first tool pulled out of the tool-kit.

It was extremely important during the co-researchers' sessions, that they influenced the outcomes as much as possible, that I did not (where possible) lead; and subsequently that the analysis of the data was as 'clean' as I could make it; in other words that I did not see what I wanted to see. I believe that the act of generating themes and coding data can sometimes lead to an unconscious need to see what we hope might be there. So whilst some individuals might argue that the act of coding reduces

this unintentional bias, I would argue that the act of coding can introduce an immediate bias. I suspect that this bias will always exist, and that rather than imply that it is not there, it may be healthier to embrace it. However, I believe that this embrace is likely to be more meaningful when any in-built perceptual bias can, where appropriate and possible, be anchored to something tangible. And by 'questioning the data' with that in mind, a more insightful understanding may be gained. Some of the questions which helped with this approach were as follows: What might be going on here that may be a clue to the eventual known conclusion to this person's journey? What might be going on here that gives a clue to the eventual known outcome on the evolutionary journey of the model? Are there any brave actions or behaviours being discussed here? What simply leaps out? And also, borrowing from the classic coaching GROW model and flipping it around to analyse the data – is this person talking about, goals, reality, options or what next? I did also, once the retroductive lens had been applied, begin to look for commonality between co-researchers. This was done primarily to understand if there were any major issues with the co-researchers' engagement with the model as it evolved.

Utilising this approach, I believed that the meaning of the statements was often quite plain and less open to misinterpretation. However, the process really got interesting when I looked at the data through the 'lens of time' along the path of each co-researcher. Having been freed from a potentially false requirement to hunt for themes across the experiences of the co-researchers, it became far easier to see that there was a pattern, a narrative, a journey. If there was an overall theme, I suspect that it was the theme of evolution, of progress, of the journey of the individual.

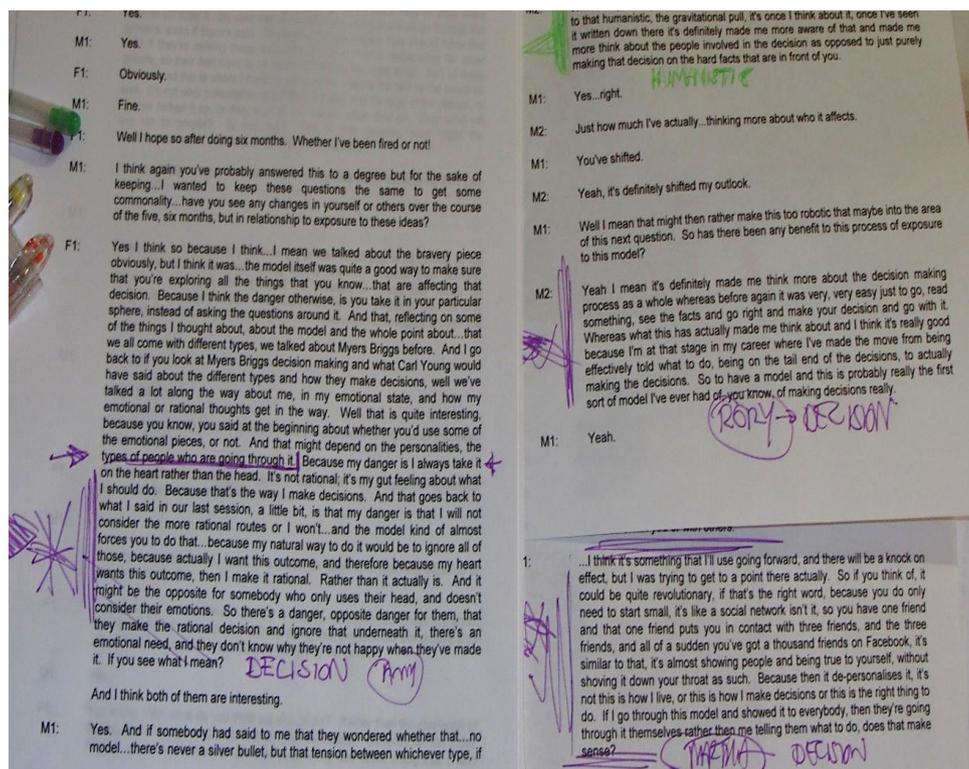
This insight also gave me a clue as to what was likely to make the model work at its best. And this was that a sense of direction, of a goal which the co-researcher wished to achieve, was an important contributing factor in how well the model helped facilitate change. This is mentioned in Chapter 5 and explored further in Chapter 7.

I think that it is important to note here that the use of retroduction cannot rule out biases. In some ways the researcher using this approach is just as vulnerable as the researcher using a thematic approach. I would argue, however, particularly in the case of action research, that given known

outcomes, adopting a retrospective stance allows for less chance of bias in certain circumstances. The straightforward rationale for a co-researcher's actions and/or comments may be less likely to be overlooked if it is not being coloured by the wash of a chosen, i.e. interpreted theme.

However, where I believe that the use of a thematic analysis is useful is where there is no obvious 'end-point' or conclusion, and instead there is a set of experiences. This was the main reason for analysing the reflection sessions in this manner. The sessions were analysed by listening to the audio recordings and reading the transcripts repeatedly in an attempt to get a sense of any 'threads'. The transcripts were then laid out, and using coloured pens, were marked where these 'threads' appeared to be strong enough to be considered themes. An example of this is shown in Figure 3.6 below. The findings from this thematic analysis are described in Chapter 6.

Figure 3.6 – Theming the reflection sessions



Ethical consideration

When ethical approval was sought to begin this research, my understanding was that whilst every effort was made to ensure that the research would not be detrimental to the co-researchers, the potential

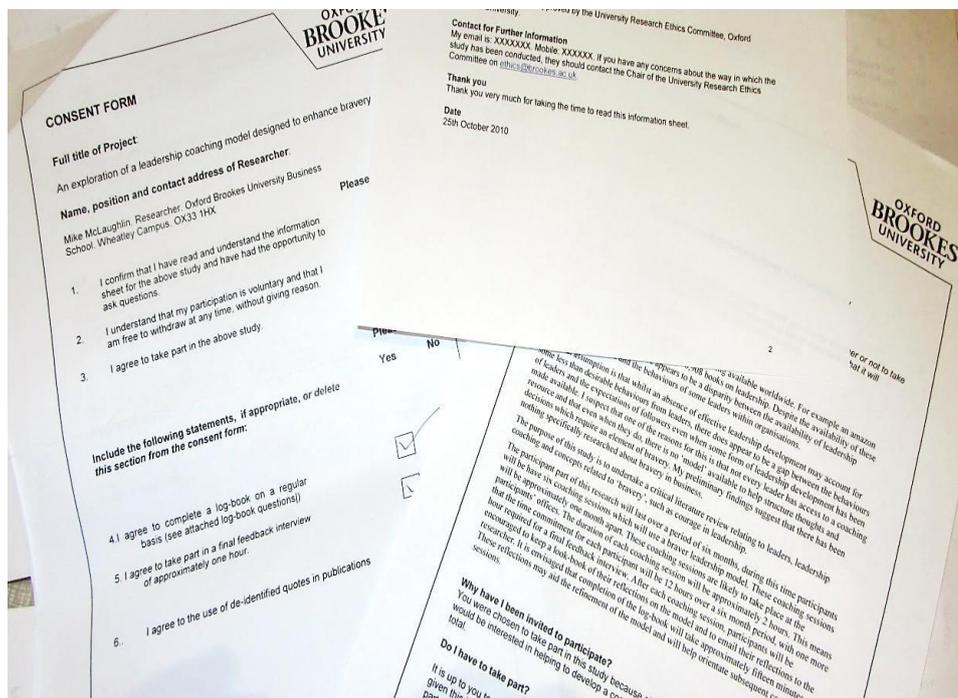
impact of coachees 'being brave' after being coached, i.e. disagreeing with a certain policy, was outwith the remit of the ethics committee. Whilst this seemed pragmatic, it also seemed to be curiously unethical, implying that ethics had boundaries, and so I felt that even some rudimentary check would be useful. This was one of the reasons I had some informal meetings with some business leaders prior to the research taking place. These meetings are discussed further in Chapter 4. I had also worried about the potential outcome of the research for quite some time before the research took place; this was due to the potentially powerful influence which coaching sessions can exert, and also to the possibility of the subject matter itself igniting a more emotive reaction than normal.

The literature review which had taken place up until this point had indicated that in terms of leadership, authentic leadership at least, might require an element of 'moving against the flow', of positive deviancy, perhaps. It was possible that braver leadership would require a high level of positive deviancy. The immediate challenge seemed to me to be that the CEO and/or the Board might in some extreme cases be an opposing force to any proposed 'brave' action. After careful consideration I concluded that this was indeed at the very core of the conundrum. The very nature of the brave act would ultimately preclude mitigating timing or circumstances; in fact it would be in spite of these that action would be taken which might be construed as brave.

This exploration of the ethical implications did, however, inform the model design. I had wondered whether there should be a quite well-defined definition of bravery at the core of the model which could be 'coached around'. I realised that not only would this be unusual in coaching, but also that each situation might be radically different, and that that approach would be highly likely to diminish the chances of a co-researcher taking ownership, and thus action.

In relation to presentation of co-researcher data, confidentiality has been maintained by employing the use of pseudonyms, and giving only broad and generalised information about them or their organisations. Full participant information was given and consent forms were obtained (Figure 3.7). The participant information sheet was similar to the organisational information sheet, Appendix B.

Figure 3.7 – Participant information sheet and Consent form



Reliability and Validity

Morse *et al.* (2002, p.18) in discussing validity and reliability in qualitative research, state that 'within the conduct of inquiry itself, verification strategies that ensure both reliability and validity of data are activities such as ensuring methodological coherence, sampling sufficiency, developing a dynamic relationship between sampling, data collection and analysis, thinking theoretically, and theory development'. In contrast, Stenbacka (2001, p.552) argues that since reliability issues concern measurements, then this has no relevance in qualitative research. She adds that the issue of reliability is an irrelevant matter in the judgement of the quality of qualitative research. Therefore, if it is used, then the 'consequence is rather that the study is no good'.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue, however, that trustworthiness is important in quantitative research and that the idea of discovering truth through measures of reliability and validity is replaced by the idea of

trustworthiness. The terms reliability and validity are potentially problematic in describing this research.

The results are almost certainly not reliable, as they cannot be an accurate representation of how individuals might react or respond to the employment of the model, notwithstanding the fact that, as mentioned previously, the model in its finalised form has not been tried out. It is therefore highly unlikely that the results would be reliably reproduced. The validity question is an interesting one; the research does appear to measure what it sets out to measure, as this has been verified by the co-researchers themselves in the sense that they, and I, had the experience of exploring the evolution of a model together, and so it could be argued that in reporting their experiences we gain a 'measurement' of their experience and thus fulfil the validity criterion. However, it can be seen that in this research the use of the word 'measurement' is misplaced as there can be no 'yardstick' by which to measure the outcomes, and so what represents validity may be difficult to define precisely. Whilst the use of the term 'validity' may be tricky to define precisely, I believe that the use of the term 'trustworthiness' is not. Trustworthiness is particularly relevant here, as it is important to be confident in the reporting of the experience which each of the co-researchers and I went through. This is, I believe, another reason why the use of retrodution and 'reasoning backwards' is essential to ensuring that the 'interpretative skew' is reduced as far as possible.

Triangulation can be thought of as a way to confirm, by a process of examining and comparing data gathered from multiple sources, whether findings converge or are confirmed. Denzin (1989) suggests that triangulation can improve the validity of a study if the findings from different sources are confirmed, as do Cresswell and Miller (2000).

According to Mays and Pope (2000) the validity of qualitative research can be improved by triangulation, respondent validation, clear exposition of methods of data collection and analysis, reflexivity and attention to negative cases. If this is so, I would suggest that trustworthiness would almost certainly be improved by the same methods. In this study a distinct aim was to clearly lay out the data collection and analytical methods employed. The data came from more than one source, my notes and reflections and the co-researcher's notes and reflections. I believe that an interesting element

of triangulation was achieved by comparing the themes as they emerged from the reflection sessions with the retroductive analysis of the coaching/research sessions and the 'journeys' of the co-researchers.

At various stages the coaching model evolved in a bespoke way for each co-researcher and they were able to validate whether this was an accurate representation or not. As well as adding validity, I believe that this also added a certain veracity to the study.

The methods of data collection are clearly defined and the data itself has an audit trail. The criteria for the data analysis are explained in some detail, and indeed this particular analysis approach may well help to diminish any researcher bias.

The approach was intended to be reflexive in nature, and the addition of reflection sessions after the completion of the research also assists in this endeavour. A 'negative case' is clearly shown in the analysis during a coaching/research session where the co-researcher is clearly 'wrong-footed' by the researcher when the model is improperly used.

Summary

The methodology employed was a feedback-driven participative action research approach with six co-researchers. This was informed from a critical realist perspective. The findings from the six sessions can be found in Chapter 5. In the next chapter, Chapter 4, the design of the model is discussed, and how it evolved during the various sessions. This chapter also describes the thought processes involved in the generation of the model and describes the Action Research sequence which closely adheres to the sequence as laid out in this chapter.

Chapter 4: The model design and session outline

This chapter explores the design of the coaching model and how it evolved during the sessions with the co-researchers. One of the primary reasons for conducting this research was to provide an understanding of how business leaders could in some way be braver within their organisations. As stated previously, the question this research explores is, 'can a coaching model be designed which could help to enhance bravery in a leader?'

My initial idea in constructing a coaching model which might enhance bravery was not to expect it to immediately change cultures or systems, but to give leaders space to consider whether their behaviours or actions, or reactions or responses were actually appropriate. Many leaders are promoted because of their particular skills or intellect, and yet not so many are given the 'toolkit' which would allow them to become more emotionally intelligent (Goleman, 1995) or resilient or inspirational. And I suspect even fewer are ever put into the mental and emotional space to consider bravery, to consider whether they are perhaps actually being quite weak.

Another consideration in constructing this coaching model was that the very nature of the one to one coaching relationship may be where the most effective space is for allowing the leader to contemplate and make shifts in both perspectives and actions. Training courses may, by their very nature, allow only for more culturally normalised shifts. And if the leader is 'highly geared' in that she or he impacts many people within an organisation, then it would seem logical that the leader should be given the time and space to consider her or his actions. The role of the coach in this situation is rather unique. Unlike someone who is operating from the position purely of that of mentor, a coach may not as readily fall into the same traps of thinking and of behaving, and may more readily question the status quo. Coaches are also more and more being seen as professionals in their own right, and that positioning may well be unique. This chapter lays out the model evolution, from initial ideas, through its introduction to the co-researchers, their input, and to its condition at the conclusion of the research.

Problem identification

My first-hand experiences appeared to indicate that there was a gap between the expected and perceived behaviours of leaders. I had initially

found it difficult to articulate exactly what that problem was. My feeling was that although there are Machiavellian characters around within organisations as well as psychopaths and sociopaths, the vast majority of the leadership population were either unaware of how damaging some of their behaviours could be, or were somehow being pressurised or were pressurising themselves into short-term (perhaps even initially popular) decisions. This is not to suggest that a psychopath or sociopath might not be unaware that their behaviours might be causing some angst, but more that they would probably not care if that were the case, although a more empathic leader might. It seemed to me that it could become a habit to go with the cultural flow, and that it could take a lot of strength not to. I felt that it took someone to be brave to stand up and do the right thing. A preliminary literature review which was followed by a more comprehensive review of the literature revealed that practically nothing had been written or researched into bravery within leaders in business, and so it seemed that there was indeed a gap.

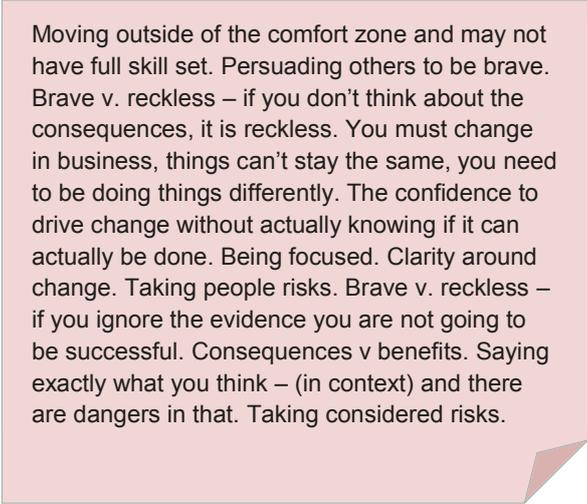
Reconnaissance

In order to understand the problem better, I began by talking to various individuals in group settings and in private. I was beginning to tentatively explore the landscape. Although a statistically significant conclusion would have been difficult to draw, my experience was that everyone I spoke to had reason to desire better leadership from within their organisation or from other areas which affected them both directly and indirectly. I can say no more than that there was a sense of something being not quite right, of things being less than they should be. These conversations took place before any formal work was done on the coaching model; I was simply getting a sense of what others felt, which I considered to be important, especially as there was no specific literature available on the topic. At the time of writing it is interesting to note that this sense of unease has increased, and as the underpinnings to world economic events have become more transparent and their outcomes more grave, thousands of people worldwide are expressing their concern, and in some cases horror, over what has been, up until now, passed for legitimate fiscal, political and corporate leadership.

I initially had no idea what form or shape the model would take, but felt that it would be useful to talk to some business leaders. This was for several reasons. Firstly, I wanted to get a sense of whether the idea of bravery was something which resonated at all with them or whether it was somehow a nebulous concept that held no real meaning. Secondly, I wondered whether business leaders might feel that if those who reported to them directly or indirectly became braver, whether this would in some way make them feel uncomfortable or even threatened. Thirdly, I wanted to understand what they would consider bravery to be in a business context.

Before any research sessions were undertaken I visited a FTSE 100 Chief Executive Officer, two FTSE 250 Chief Executive Officers and one FTSE 250 Finance Director to talk informally about the subject of bravery. These meetings took place in early 2011, very close to the first coaching/research sessions beginning. The meetings were all in London. The findings can be found below. *The question asked of the key informants was, 'What does bravery mean in business?'*

Figure 4.1 – Thoughts about bravery from the key informants (un-themed)



Moving outside of the comfort zone and may not have full skill set. Persuading others to be brave. Brave v. reckless – if you don't think about the consequences, it is reckless. You must change in business, things can't stay the same, you need to be doing things differently. The confidence to drive change without actually knowing if it can actually be done. Being focused. Clarity around change. Taking people risks. Brave v. reckless – if you ignore the evidence you are not going to be successful. Consequences v benefits. Saying exactly what you think – (in context) and there are dangers in that. Taking considered risks.

You have to tell people, to get into their personal intellectual space. Not enough leaders have enough courage to tell people what they think. Telling them is the best opportunity for them to intellectually develop. It should be horses for courses, you should 'stroke' them in different ways, but it should be genuine. Using empathy when they are struggling outside their comfort zone, tell them what you are thinking in a constructive way. Courage to seize the moment. Is an autocrat brave? Maybe autocrats are swashbuckling. There may be a time for an autocrat and a time not – so perhaps situational.

The problem with the word bravery is that it can sound like someone on a white horse with a sword charging forward. In an organisation, it is sometimes going slow to go quick. It is choosing what to work on in simple clear messages. How can someone make such clear change? Not swashbuckling but calm. 'No', is the hardest word in the business language. The courage to do this year that which will support next year. You can pull a lever here but it might take a long time to get there. Does it suit planners? Having the courage of your convictions, you can get buffeted a lot with short term requirements. The courage to drive success longer

Recklessness is doing something when you can't achieve it. It is often more about people rather than strategic decisions. If you ask me what scares me, well it doesn't scare me to rely on a bunch of people to do something they haven't done before, but it does scare me to rely on a bunch of people who are being pushed to do what they have done before. Give them a chance to change, if they won't change, do I change them? We must be leaders of change – but the middle managers must change also (succession). Encourage them (the middle) to challenge. Don't keep your head down. Some leaders don't have the confidence to let subordinates work that way (to challenge the leaders). The leader must have self-confidence. We should be aiming to find our successors.

Marks and Spencers, Rose arrived, things happened. Ryanair boss, outspoken. Candour and bravery, then honesty, then the rest is people. Perhaps there is a theme here; bravery, courage, genuine, integrity, honesty, candour, bravery. The value we get from honesty – winning hearts and minds. There is high level courage and bravery and lower level courage and bravery – lower level by giving away something. Low cost give-aways. Some people are very good at asking for forgiveness rather than permission. Do I have the courage to protect you? Maybe courage is the courage to question others and to allow them to make mistakes. How does one person cause change?

There may be pressure from the board to do something, or not. So bravery can be when others want you to do something else, it can be having the courage of your convictions, but not necessarily the charge of the light brigade. Need to cascade down (bravery) to middle management, where appropriate be firm but fair. Sometimes you need to be hard but fair. Be consistent.

Profit is only the measure. Ultimately success is the environment, measured by profit. Profit is a measure and a goal. Why are there problems in the Public Sector? No Goal, no courage. It is a line in the sand, it is like a moral and ethical compass, what do you do when you are pushed over that line? In moral terms, can the leader look in the mirror the next day? If done properly, you don't think of it as a brave act e.g. lay-offs, you didn't want to do it, but the question is, 'was it the right thing to do?'

There was a sense of resonance from these leaders with the concept of bravery within business. As can be seen from the findings of these meetings, what is perceived as bravery varied between individuals, but is not extremely different. In fact the differences appear to be contextual. Whilst I could have been being told what I wanted to hear, I did not get that impression. These leaders wanted results, but they did not seem to want to have 'blind followers', they wanted to be challenged and seemed to appreciate that this would lead to a healthier organisation. There was no sense that these particular leaders were concerned about having 'braver' leaders reporting to them, in fact the idea seemed to be met very favourably.

Having conducted the meetings, I was still unsure where and if the findings were applicable to the coaching model. One issue which bothered me during the formulation of the research was how best to construct the coaching model, and specifically how best to avoid 'telling the coachee what bravery was'. On one hand, I felt that there could be some valuable insights to be gleaned from some 'captains of industry' but on the other, this would not necessarily be the same as the coachee's perspective. In essence these meetings performed two distinct functions. The first function was that I was concerned, from an ethical perspective, that if I was to be coaching individuals around the subject of bravery, would this actually leave them vulnerable? The slightly unscientific but nonetheless reassuring answer appeared to be that, as far as these leaders were concerned, they would welcome braver employees, and the idea of bravery generally seemed to appeal to them. The second reason for the meetings was that I was really unsure about what bravery meant to people in business, if anything. I was relieved to find that there was a variation of opinion and that I had, if required, some 'primers' around bravery for the co-researchers, although at that point I was not sure if I would utilise them or not.

The question of how to design the coaching model was indeed a big one. My concern was that this proposed 'model' had to work as a coaching model and not a training model. In other words, it had to not be too prescriptive and it had to allow space for the coachee and coach to 'show up' in their own unique way.

The impact of the thoughts about bravery from the key advisers on the co-researchers

To help orientate the reader, I think that it is important to note that I had been keen to not overly emphasise the thinking of the key advisers about bravery to the co-researchers as the model evolved. The reason for this was that I was concerned that this may have been too directive in nature. I think that it is also worth noting that the key advisers were initially contacted by me to explore whether the idea of bravery was something that they might be even remotely comfortable with. It was not, at the outset, intended to form part of the research process. However, the fact that it seemed to appeal to them and also generated some very interesting thoughts was a distinct bonus, but one which I almost did not share with the co-

researchers. Nonetheless these thoughts were shared, and then deliberately downplayed, although there was evidence that at least two of the co-researchers had taken into account the thoughts of the key advisers.

For example, during session 2, Mickey quotes from one of the key advisers in reference to bravery:

'...no is the hardest word in the business language...somebody then says 'no, no, no, no'. No, we've done this before, no. We tried it before, it's really - this is really like an ice cold shower'.

Also, during his reflection session Mickey makes reference again to the key advisers as illustrated in the following dialogue:

Mickey: '...sometimes I take the list...these are things that I certainly don't do and some of them are not a risk because I would never do that...but there are a few things which I don't do and...you can communicate better by making more clear firm statements'.

Mike: 'Is this from the key adviser?'

Mickey: 'Yes, the key adviser... the key advisers and saying well this is how I bring the message and motivate the person to get something but make sure what I want from him by when and so it's more about accountability...'

I think that it is interesting to note that one of Mickey's drivers was to become a stronger leader (as noted in Chapter 6) and so perhaps he was more consciously open to the thoughts of the 'expertise' of the key advisers than the other co-researchers.

On the other hand, Martha essentially made no reference to the key advisers. However, given her predilection for understanding the 'mechanics' of the model use (as noted in Chapter 6) this is perhaps unsurprising.

Rory's suspected goal (also noted in Chapter 6) of gaining some development at an earlier stage in his career, and his relatively recent appointment had resulted in most of the sessions with him being quite retrospective in nature. This, I believe, did not allow for as full a consideration of the thoughts of the key advisers as might have been the

case. They were mentioned by me in session 3 and 4 and by Rory himself in session 6, where he stated that they were worth considering, but which ones and in what way was not explored. This was simply the way that the conversation evolved. However, I suspect that had the issue been more pressing, Rory may well have gravitated to perceive 'expertise' in a similar way to Mickey.

Jack and Russell made no obvious reference to the thoughts of the key advisers, although probably for different reasons. Jack's sessions were cut short due to his need to focus on career opportunity, whilst Russell had focussed in on the idea of doing the 'right thing' at quite an early stage of the research.

However, during session 1 Amy did make specific reference to the key advisers, one of whom suggested that bravery wasn't necessarily charging forward with a sword (Figure 4.1).

'Now gung-ho bravery...I wouldn't even recognise. We've got some of those, we've got some mavericks that have joined us who just blindly go ahead and whether they are aware or not I'm not sure, but they've upset every stakeholder in the business and they are disliked intensely and, you know, that's not bravery to me that's just closing your eyes and being a bull in a china shop. It's about being aware that bravery means it's going to be hard and you are going to get a lot of people telling you, you haven't communicated even when you have and, you know, people suddenly don't like it, well yeah you have to know that's going to happen'.

I think that it is worth noting that Amy was considering where she should head in her career, and that this may have resulted in her reflecting quite deeply about bravery from an early stage in the research process. I also think that it could be argued that looking at the suggested journeys (Chapter 6) for each of the co-researchers may in retrospect give some insight into what extent the thoughts from the key advisers were considered. Amy was deeply involved in considering what bravery was for her. Russell made a decision at an early stage about what was 'right'. Mickey was keen to improve as a leader and was open to the thoughts of 'experts'. Jack had other things on his mind. Rory was working retrospectively, and probably therefore more theoretically. The desire to focus in on what those with experience had said would, I suspect, have

been much greater in Rory if these issues had been in 'real time'. Martha's requirement was for an understanding of the process and was less personally involved, and so gleaning thoughts from the experts was there in the process, but there was no particular emotional driver to do so 'in the moment' at that time for her.

The discussion of the concept map (Figure 2.2) suggested that bravery could be construed as doing the right thing based on the value set of each particular 'school of thought'. For example, allowing the leadership role to be malleable could be the right and brave thing to do if the value set was relational in nature, i.e. relational leadership. With this in mind it could be argued that Mickey is being brave within the value set of situational leadership. He is essentially being more directive in his approach. This is a brave step for him because it is outside his comfort zone and not something which comes naturally to him. It is difficult to say what leadership theory could be ascribed to Amy here, if any. However, she does appear to be espousing her own values about what is right, and suggests that she would stick to them come what may, and this could be linked to authentic leadership.

Interestingly, although the co-researchers discussed what bravery meant to them in their initial session with me (e.g. Martha – 'Braveheart') there was no subsequent discrete discussion about what bravery actually meant to them. This may at first seem surprising. However, the research was conducted to evolve and explore a coaching model. Whilst the model encourages the coachee to uncover what bravery is for them, the answer is likely to be quite contextual in nature. The co-researchers were not asked to provide their overarching definition of bravery, although how their thoughts about bravery changed and evolved was evident during the reflection sessions (Chapter 6, Theme 4).

I had also to consider whether what I was about to embark upon 'designing' was a model or a framework. It could be argued that if the 'process' were followed closely (see 'Idealised Process', Chapter 7) then this might constitute the use of a 'model', and conversely, if the coach and coachee merely dipped in and out of this 'process' or perhaps even simply gave a passing 'nod' to what was ultimately designed, then this would more likely

lie at the framework end of the spectrum. My main concern was that I adopted, as far as possible, a co-researcher-centric approach. And because there is, as far as I am aware, no definitive definition of what a coaching model or a coaching framework actually is. I would suggest, therefore, that whether this should be called a model or a framework is 'in the eye of the beholder'. And therefore the level of comfort which would inform this decision would be the level of comfort which the coach and/or the coachee had with any potential label. That is perhaps an area which should warrant further discussion: for the moment, I shall generally use the term 'model'.

Whatever the 'label', I considered it to be important that a coaching model should leave 'space' for the coachee to reflect and consider what they envisaged bravery to be, and for the coach to 'coach'. I had also considered introducing a finalised coaching model to the co-researchers, but quickly realised that this could greatly limit their input and would very likely reduce the quality of the research, as it would in some ways be a case of *fait accompli*. The model was therefore introduced in several stages, with each stage potentially prompting a 're-write' of the model.

Session 1: The bravery model Part 1 – Introducing the idea of bravery

The first sessions were mainly to be concerned with rapport building and getting 'orientation' around bravery. The first research session was to consist of discussing what the coachee considered bravery to be, where they had seen examples of bravery, and also who they considered to be brave. I had thought long and hard about what bravery was, and how it might be displayed. The initial conversations with business leaders had highlighted that it can mean many things and that it was also likely to have a contextual element to it.

I concluded that as this was a coaching model and not a training model, the idea of bravery would have to come from the co-researcher. There was simply no way that bravery could be effectively taught in this situation, nor should it be. This was a coaching model, and as such the coachee was likely to have the answer within them, and was therefore more likely to take ownership and responsibility.

Asking the co-researchers to consider what bravery might look like, and by implication, 'how might they be when they were brave?' may have generated at least two potential influences on their 'journey'. One influence was, I believe, similar to what Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006) refer to as the 'ideal self'. In essence this gives an individual something to measure themselves against. In my interpretation, this means that it can begin to generate a 'gap' between the current situation or behaviours and the ideal. There are also aspects here, I believe, of psychological priming (Levy, 2003). Psychological priming or non-conscious activation has been shown to influence perception, motivation, evaluation and behaviour (Bargh *et al.*, 2001). Exposing the co-researchers to the concept of bravery, partly in relation to a potentially idealised braver version of themselves, and also partly by the simple addition of this word in a business context, may have begun the process of them 'looking within'.

This approach would, I believed, be most likely to allow the coachee to move into a space of thinking about bravery and begin to make their own connections and distinctions. The idea of not appearing with a 'fully functional rotating scale model of the solar system' (essentially a fully formed coaching model) was firmly in my mind, as I believed that it would have been very difficult for the coachee/co-researcher to mentally 'reverse engineer' such a model to allow them to actively and critically participate in the research.

Once this conversation had taken place, I shared with the co-researchers the thoughts about bravery from the business leaders. This was conducted as a prompt to see if anything resonated with them, or indeed, if anything jarred.

Once this was done, I also shared with the coachees an early overview of the idea of bravery which I had constructed in January 2011. I felt comfortable sharing this as it was not the finalised model and was more about my broad ideas of what bravery might be at that time. This definition, as shared with them (text and graphic) is illustrated in Figures 4.2 and 4.3 below.

Figure 4.2 – Bravery definition overview

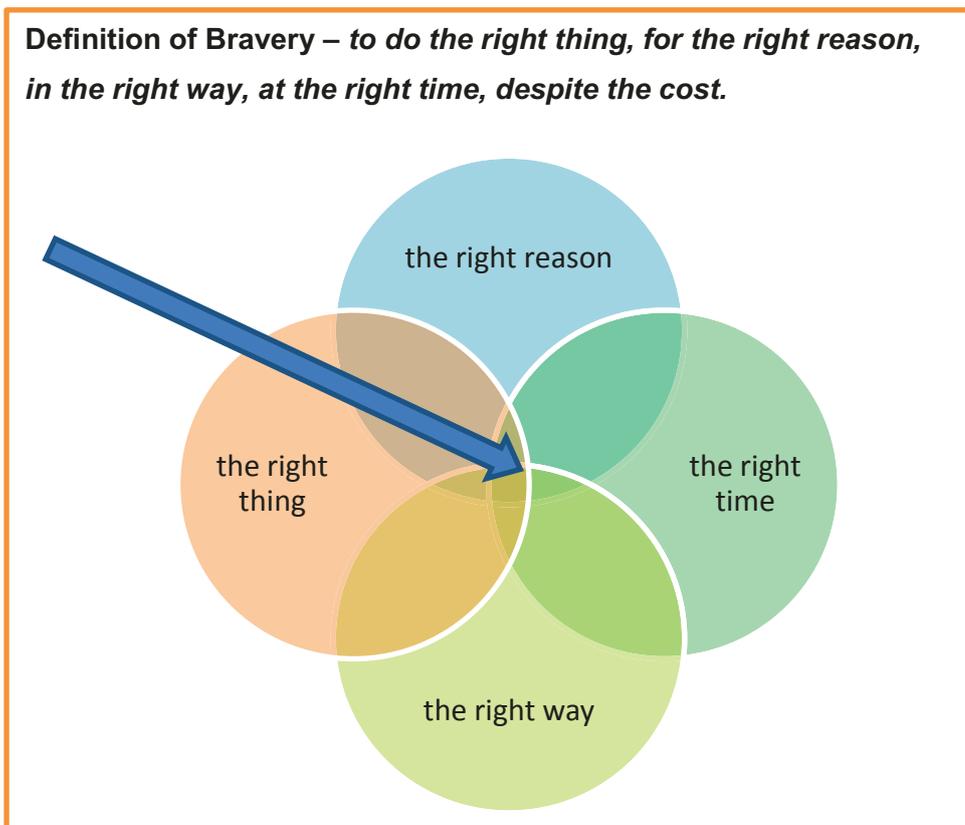
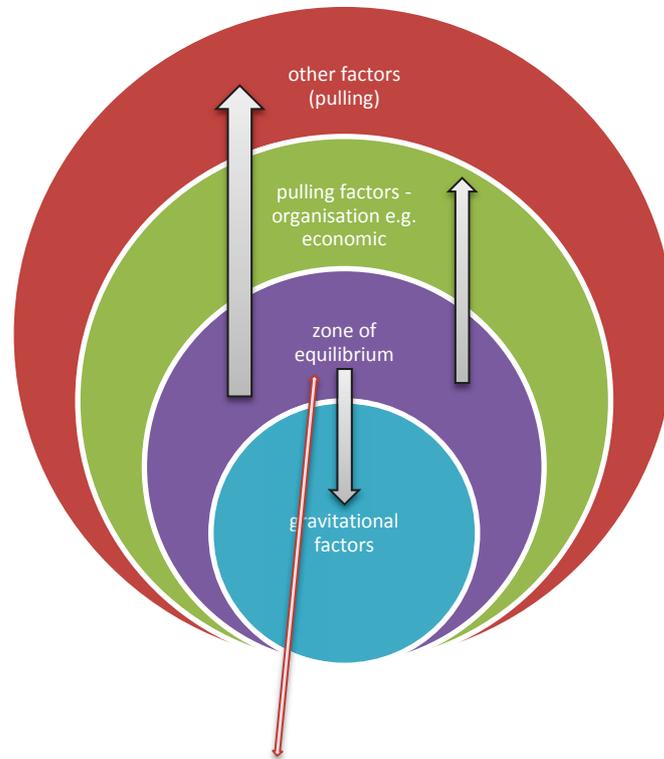


Figure 4.3 illustrates the other part of my early initial thinking about the model which was also shared with the co-researchers during our first session together. I had called it the Factors Model, and as can be seen in this early version, there was no sphere, but there was a 'zone of equilibrium'.

Figure 4.3 The Factors Model – The environment within which brave decisions must be made



To the co-researchers: 'The bravery decision model lies within the zone of equilibrium and within the centre of the decision model lies the 'eye of the storm'. This is where bravery can be accessed.

There are therefore two distinct but connected thought processes at work here.

The Factors Model.

The leader must consider the environment within which he or she operates. This consists of those forces which seek to influence the decision making process e.g. company economics. However the leader must take into account the more humanistic demands which are also at play here. These elements will inform the formulation of a decision based on 'rightness'.

To the co-researchers continued: 'This is the definition of bravery, and the decision making tool which lies within the zone of equilibrium, which is part of the Factors Model. The zone of equilibrium is where all things must be given their correct weighting. Correct weighting does not necessarily mean balanced-out, in that equal weighting is given to all factors, as this is likely to be false; but instead that a point of mental equilibrium is reached where all things have been given appropriate consideration and a balanced decision is made. Such a balanced decision can only be made in a clear and calm state of mind. The centre of the decision model is in essence, the eye of the storm. It is where the Leader must visit.

The word 'right' appears several times within this definition. The meaning of this word will be to a degree subjective, and yet will be bound by business needs (the pulling factors) and will also be affected by moral and ethical influences. These moral and ethical influences may be less obvious and vary greatly from culture to culture (the transparency index of countries being one example of this variation).

The basis of this early design

These early thoughts came from my slight sense of fear as I realised that I was soon to be involved in a real live action research project with real live leaders. I had decided that it was entirely wrong to begin the sessions with a fully functioning whirling, flashing model, partly because this may well have reduced the co-researchers' engagement, creativity and ownership of the process, and partly because I had no real idea if I was on the right lines at all, and yet I felt that I could not turn up 'empty-handed'.

The idea of doing the 'right thing' was borrowed from the Institute of Purchasing and Supply who emphasise the importance of getting the right goods, at the right time, etc. (Institute of Purchasing and Supply, 2007). I did think that there was something inherently powerful about using the phrase 'doing the right thing' and that bravery was also in some way connected to timing.

I believe that it is important to note that this version of the model was not the actual model as it eventually evolved, but rather an early crude attempt to have the co-researchers begin to formulate their thinking. In this early 'sketch' (Figure 4.3) the zone of equilibrium is mentioned but, as discussed in Chapter 7, I ultimately concluded that it did not actually exist. And so, to summarise this initial stage, and to hopefully ensure that the reader gains a clear understanding of the sequence of events, the co-researchers were asked to consider some comments from some business leaders about bravery, to think about bravery in terms of individuals they admired, and to think about themselves in terms of bravery, and they were given a copy of the document replicated in Figures 4.2 and 4.3 above.

Between session one and session two, the co-researchers were asked to email me any other observations that they may have had about bravery, as I thought it would be useful to begin the habit of reflecting between sessions. An example can be seen below in Figure 4.4. It should be noted that my original idea for the model was that there would have been regular email correspondence from the co-researchers to me between each of the sessions. However, this did not transpire due to the co-researchers' schedules.

Figure 4.4 – An example of a co-researcher’s email sent between session one and two.

From Russell:

“Risk taking -

I strongly believe that bravery is commonly seen through risk taking – being willing to lose in the knowledge that it will make you stronger to fight another day. This also includes knowing when to admit defeat so that you do not lose everything. Admitting defeat often requires more bravery than taking the risk in the first place. On a personal level I take a lot of financial risk with as much borrowing as possible to finance buy to lets, building our own home etc. On a business level this is about stepping out and trying to be the catalyst for change. I do this by challenging the status quo or raising 'brutal truths'. People generally do not want to hear 'brutal truths' as it creates work and requires a change to what/how we do things.”

Session 2: The bravery model part 2: The Pulling Factors

In this session I introduced and explored what I called the ‘pulling factors’ with the co-researchers. I had had time to reflect between session one and session two and realised that it was essential to have the co-researchers generate their own pulling factors. The pulling factors came from my own reflections about bravery and leadership. I believed that bravery had something to do with the timing of taking action and had something to do with doing things when there were other forces at work, which could potentially influence or ‘pull’ an individual. I had felt this myself when I had been making Management/Leadership decisions in the past. I may also have been subconsciously influenced by Lewin’s (1943) force field analysis. I had imagined the ‘pulling factors’ to be those elements in the environment which were generally the most pervasive in business, and that these would be external to the Leader. I therefore constructed a rudimentary and ‘baseline’ model of what the ‘Pulling Factors’ might be. This is shown below in Figure 4.5 along with the text which accompanied this baseline model.

Figure 4.5 – Pulling factors

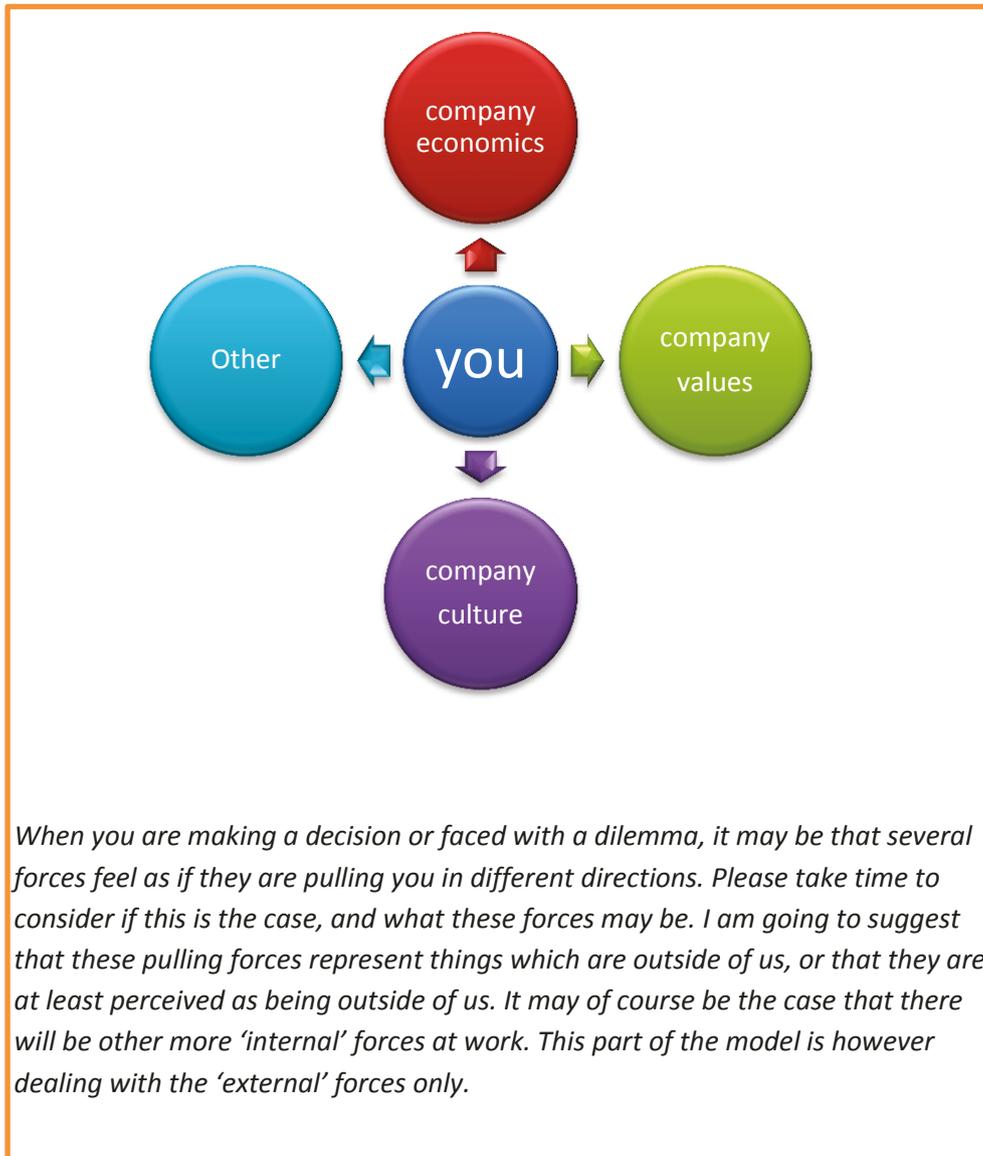


Figure 4.5 above illustrates what each co-researcher was asked to consider, during and after their second sessions. I did not reintroduce any elements from Figures 4.2 and 4.3 as I believed that they would have done their job of catalysing some thinking, but should not now be allowed to dominate the on-going process of the model's evolution. The 'Other' pulling factor was there to encourage them to consider their current landscape and to make the model their own.

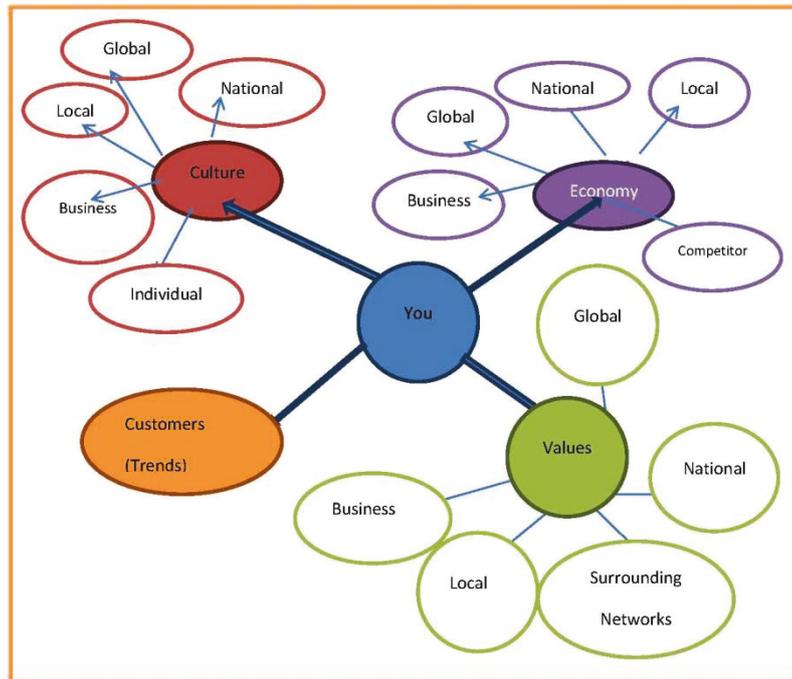
This session was the first session where one of the main components of the model was introduced. Its acceptance or rejection was to heavily

influence the next session. The outcome of the sessions was that the idea of pulling factors seemed to be universally accepted, and each co-researcher helped to tailor the pulling factors to his/her current situation. It became apparent at this point that these pulling factors were not static and were likely to change, and so should be revisited periodically. This evolution of the pulling factors is also discussed in Chapter 5.

Session 3: The bravery model part 3: Consolidating and gaining feedback about the Pulling Factors and introducing the Gravitational Factors and the idea of an emotional needs audit.

The third sessions continued on the theme of the pulling factors. In between the second and the third sessions, I constructed a personalised Pulling Factor diagram for each of the co-researchers and emailed this to them for their consideration. Figure 4.6 below shows one example of how the model evolved. I had been encouraging the co-researchers to keep reflective notes about the 'journey' and had also been doing the same thing. One of my reflections at this point was that I may have overloaded the co-researchers with too much too soon. Whether or not this was the case, it did seem that almost every co-researcher had been extremely busy and had had little time to consider much more about the use of the model.

Figure 4.6 – An ‘evolved’ Pulling Factors diagram



I had also included in an email follow-up a document which gave more of an overview of the model and introduced the ‘Gravitational Factors’ and the idea of performing an emotional needs audit (Griffin and Tyrrell, 2004), the idea of the ‘sphere’ and some questions which might be considered when moving around the model (Appendix C – this was emailed between session 2 and 3).

I had considered the idea of including something about the leader’s emotional state, but had concluded that this might make the model too complex. However, the impact of emotional state on thinking was specifically mentioned by one of the co-researchers in a previous session and so this fed forward into these sessions. As already mentioned in this chapter, one of the main concerns of this research has been that there appears to have been a large focus in business towards short-term gain and much less about the longer term human cost. Therefore it was important to include something in the model which was humanistic in nature, something which helped ‘ground’ the leader, hence the phrase ‘Gravitational Factors’. I was initially at a loss about what to include. I had considered including ethical factors or even the emotional needs audit as the gravitational factors. However, their inclusion during the decision

making process (as had been suggested by Martha, which is noted in Chapter 5) effectively ruled them out as a 'gravitational factor'. I did note, however, that Kauffman (2006) in discussing positive psychology mentioned signature strengths. As I hoped to have an emphasis on the humanistic aspects of leadership decision making, I decided to include these, but perhaps counter intuitively removed bravery and courage, as I felt that these were contained in the totality of the model and so were woven into its 'fabric' and were not something which should be considered in a discrete fashion. I was unclear if this would be appropriate at this time. As well as Appendix C, the co-researchers were also emailed a separate document which detailed the emotional needs audit (Appendix D).

The Sphere

This sphere (Appendix C) effectively replaced my initial idea about a 'zone of equilibrium' (Figure 4.3). It became apparent, as our thoughts evolved about the model, that a certain traction was required to 'hold the brave position', and whilst it was important to calmly consider the situation and choices (from a hopefully balanced emotional state) holding the brave position required the 'engine of bravery' itself to do so. And so the sphere performed the dual function of allowing a place of 'sanctuary' to consider the options, but also the ability to traverse the entire landscape and ultimately hold the brave position.

Session 4: The bravery model part 4: Considering the model in its entirety and also using it, where appropriate, to help coach the co-researchers.

I felt that it was important in these sessions to gain an understanding of how comfortable the co-researchers were (or not) with the model. I was never quite clear whether we were dealing with a framework or a model, and whether a semantic discussion was required; however, both my co-researchers and I seemed comfortable with the term 'model' and so in that sense at least the nomenclature seemed appropriate. What I was more concerned about was to what extent my co-researchers were getting comfortable with and used to the model. Therefore I included a three-dimensional version to help aid use/feedback/understanding. This is shown in Figure 4.7 below.

Figure 4.7 – A photograph of the three dimensional representation of the model



The three-dimensional representation shown in this photograph was used to illustrate the connection between the various parts of the model. The gravitational factors are drawn in yellow, the coloured circles represent some of the pulling factors and the ball represents the sphere. These components were moved around to illustrate the potential dynamic tension between them. As it transpired, the three-dimensional version of the model was used only during these sessions, partly because I thought that these were the sessions when it was most crucial for the co-researchers to have a complete overview of the model and also to consider the interactions between the constituent ‘parts’; and also because I felt that its use was ultimately redundant, as they all appeared to have generated their own internal representation of the constituent parts of the model.

Between the fourth and the fifth sessions, and in response to one of the co-researchers, I produced and sent out a Bravery model – Sequence of Use. This particular co-researcher was keen to get an understanding of the sequence or process, and so this was intended to help clarify everyone’s thinking about the complete model and also to further critique it if necessary. (It should be noted that not all sessions were taking place in strict unison, and so for example, some co-researchers received this after

their fourth sessions and some just before. The 'sequence of use' document is replicated below in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8 - Suggested sequence of use

<i>Bravery model: Potential sequence for introduction and use.</i>	<i>16th May 2011</i>
1) Think about bravery. What does it mean? Where have you seen it? When have you been brave? Who do you think is brave? What is it about these people that makes them brave?	
Reflect/consider/contemplate	
2) Key advisers. Read their definitions of what they consider bravery to be. Circle any which appeal to you.	
Reflect/consider/contemplate	
3) Consider the environment. The 'Pulling factors'. What are the main factors pulling at you from the 'external landscape'? Start off by suggesting Economic, Culture and Values. It is not important to look at these in detail at this moment; it is more of an overview. Although with the coachee you may be talking about something specific, it could be useful to get a feel for the generalised 'landscape' as something which may not appear to be relevant, but may indeed be when you get into detail later. So you are really asking about those general areas which tend to 'pull' when a decision needs to be made. Another way to think about the pulling factors is in terms of external needs needing to be met.	
Thinking now about emotional state	
4) Check out your emotional state. Perhaps using the Human Givens Emotional Needs Audit. Do you need to address having any of your emotional needs met in a more balanced way before continuing?	
Or/ Do you need to ensure that you take into account any potential 'imbalance' whilst making decisions?	
Or/ Do you need to understand which of your needs requiring to be met is propelling part of your decision/route forward? (e.g. a need for greater control)	
5) Step into the sphere	
The sphere allows us to enter the eye of the storm. To reach there however, we must experience (safely) the forces at work in the current situation.	
6) Visit each of the planetary pulling factors. Consider the micro environment of each, e.g. economic factors. What must be taken into account in your decision making process?	
Potential questions could include a 'drill down' approach.	
'If this was the only factor for consideration, what would you do?'	
'If this was the main factor for consideration, what would you do?'	
'If you could only do three things here, what would they be?'	

'What one thing must you do/consider/take account of/take into the sphere/contemplate?

Repeat for all pulling factors.

7) Visit the Gravitational factors

Look at these. Are there any others? Are any irrelevant?

How far can we begin to move away from this gravity before we begin to destroy the integrity of this planet?

N.B. The sphere is a pulling factor on the planet

Looking at each 'Gravitational factor' in turn, ask the following:

'If this was the only factor for consideration, what would you do?'

'If this was the main factor for consideration, what would you do?'

Then considering all the 'Gravitational factors':

'If you could only do three things here, what would they be?'

'What one thing must you do/consider/take account of/take into the sphere/contemplate?'

8) Move the sphere to the 'eye of the storm', the position of bravery.

Where is the eye of the storm? Where is that place of equilibrium? Where do I need to move to? What factors are at play when I get there?

The engine and the ability of the sphere to hold position in space is 'bravery'. Considering all the factors, what is the brave thing to do? (Remember your own thoughts about bravery).

One definition: The right thing, in the right way, at the right time, for the right reason.

Some questions which may aid decision making:

What is the right thing to do? What is the brave thing to do? What will it cost me if I don't take action? What will I gain if I do take action? What must I do? What is the first step? When will I take it?

How do I ensure that I am not considering me first here? Are my intended actions based on a selfish or a selfless approach?

Session 5: The bravery model part 5: Consideration of the totality of the model

By this point the model had been introduced in its entirety and depending upon the co-researcher, different observations and uses were made of it. One point of particular note was that during its use in a coaching session, my unfamiliarity with the model resulted in a less than ideal outcome. This is discussed in Chapter 5 in Amy's sessions. One of the main learnings here was that the 'pulling factors' should have been revisited and potentially redrawn for the co-researcher's revised situation. Another point of note was the need for one co-researcher to familiarise themselves with the model by using it to coach someone else; again this is discussed in Chapter 5 in Martha's sessions.

Session 6: The bravery model part 6: More consideration of the model

The sixth sessions involved more coaching using the model, where appropriate. One interesting point for consideration was that one of the co-researchers had used the model themselves to effectively 'self-coach' and had reached what they considered to be a brave decision. During the fifth and sixth sessions, there were no significant changes suggested or made to the model. The reflection sessions which followed Session 6 are discussed in Chapter 6.

Summary

This chapter has explored the evolution of the model. This evolution transpired partly as envisaged before the research began, and also partly as influenced by the co-researchers. The model was designed to help enhance leadership bravery. As bravery can mean many things to many people, and also because this is a coaching model, the definition of what bravery may be was defined by the co-researchers themselves. The landscape within which each co-researcher was operating and navigating, was represented by the pulling factors. These pulling factors represented

the external forces which may be operating on the leader at any point in time. Some of them may be relatively constant whilst others would change with time and/or context. In this model it was important for the co-researcher to carefully consider exactly what was 'pulling' them in each particular direction. Although there was specific reference made to the co-researcher's emotional state whilst considering these options (in the form of the emotional needs audit) the very act of 'moving over' these pulling factors and giving them careful consideration could help to reduce an emotional or habitual reaction.

The gravitational factors were for me an extremely important aspect of the model, as this is often where I believe some leaders, imagining that they exist in an isolated biosphere of profit and loss with no corporate responsibility to the wellbeing of employees, conduct themselves in a way which is unacceptable.

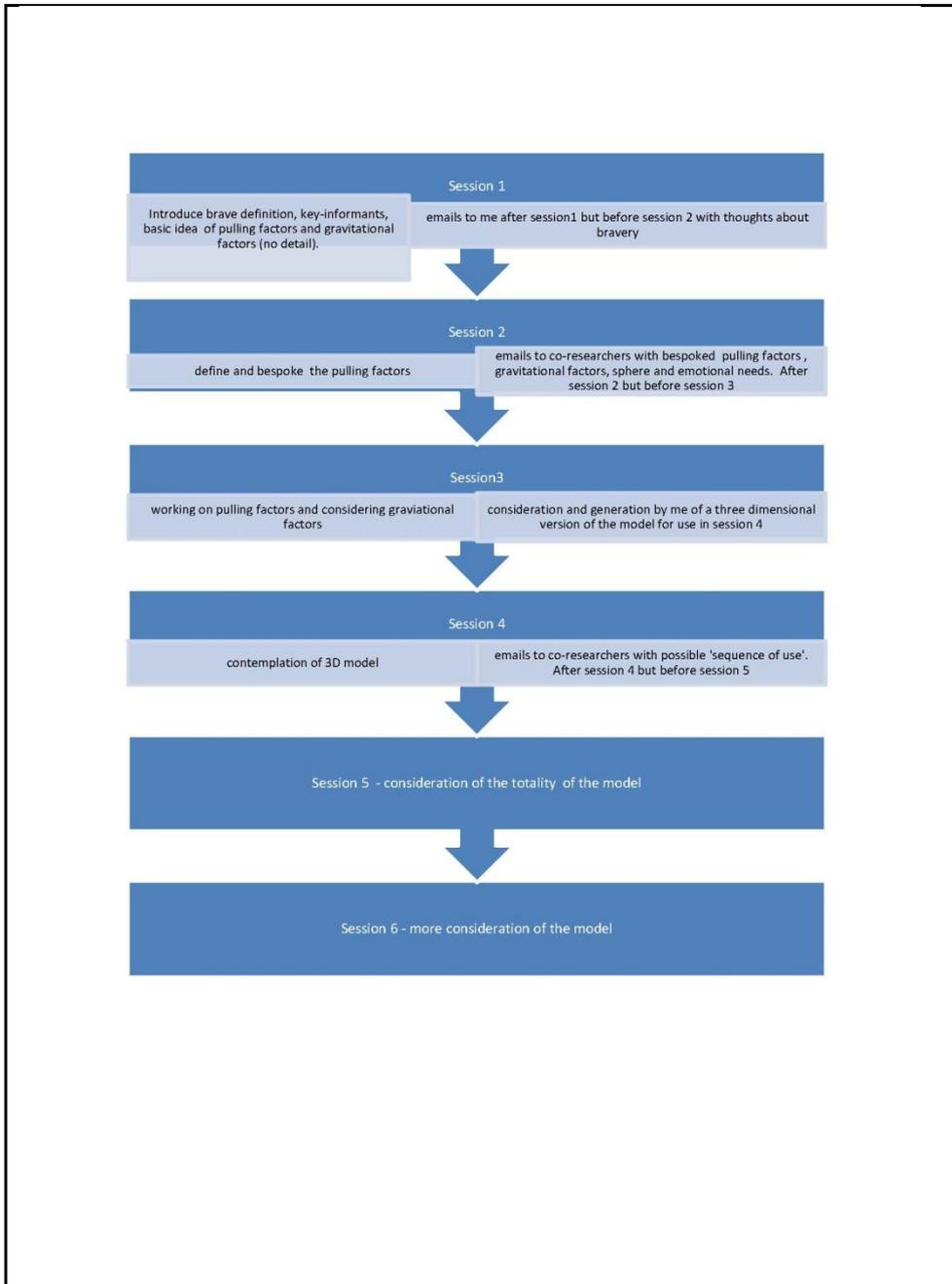
The 'sphere' was envisaged as allowing the co-researcher to visit the various elements of their corporate environment and consider what was important and what might need to be overlooked. Within this sphere the co-researcher could consider their emotional state and any effect that this might be having on their ability to think clearly (and if so to consider remedial action) and also to consider the idea of 'rightness'.

The 'engine' which could drive the sphere to a point of 'forced equilibrium' was bravery, as was the force which would hold the sphere there, and allow an individual to 'hold the brave position'. The potentially potent mix of considering what a brave person would do, what they would do if they were brave, and what was the 'right' thing to do, was designed to allow the co-researcher access to as much of what they considered to be bravery as possible. One extremely important factor here is that I realised during the process that it became important that the leader would have to have their 'feet held against the fire'. This process may be uncomfortable, but perhaps that is exactly how it should be.

To help illustrate the way in which information flowed during the research period, I have laid out the sequences involved below in Figure 4.9.

In the following Chapter, Chapter 5, the experiences of the co-researchers will be explored in relation to how they and the model evolved.

Figure 4.9 – The model evolution: information flow



Chapter 5: The braver coaching model co-researcher exploration sessions.

This chapter uses a retroductive approach to analyse the six sessions with the six co-researchers. As will be seen, one co-researcher had to drop out of the research process; however, for five of the co-researchers there were a full six sessions. All of the first sessions are analysed together, as are all of the second sessions, and so forth. The analysis took place after the reflection sessions (discussed in Chapter 6) had taken place, and some of the information gleaned from the reflection sessions helped to inform the analysis of these sessions.

As there were only five reflection sessions, but over thirty co-researcher sessions, the activities which constitute the 'field-work' for this research predominately involved the meetings with each of the co-researchers. The co-researchers' roles in these meetings involved assisting in the development and exploration of the coaching model, and also being coached, where appropriate, using the model. My role was also to explore and develop the coaching model whilst also acting as a coach in the use of the model, where appropriate, for my co-researchers. This potentially ambiguous relationship between not only myself and each co-researcher, but also between each of us and the model, resulted in some interesting dynamics which required on-going evaluation and reflection.

In the initial planning stages, I had hoped that there would have been a fairly even distribution within the sessions where time would have been devoted to the model development, coaching around the model, and dealing with the outcomes of the coaching from the previous session. However, the 'chaotic' nature of human interaction, personal and professional expectations, time challenges and a joint and rather steep learning curve, meant that very often, any expected delineation of roles and timings was rather blurred. Nonetheless, whilst it may not have been as immediately obvious to any of us involved in the 'exploration sessions' at the time, there was indeed an evolution of the model, and coaching did take place.

The research sessions with the co-researchers took place between February 2011 and September 2011 at locations throughout the UK which included London and Glasgow. Occasionally some sessions had to be

done by telephone. This was not ideal and was mainly due to the scheduled meetings having to be postponed.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, I have incorporated a retroductive approach to the data analysis. However, analysis of the data also resulted in it having a strong narrative feel (Freeman, 1984).

The main outcomes from which I believed a retroductive analysis could best be conducted were as follows. Russell left his employment. Amy remained in her employment after considering leaving. Mickey was initially confused about the model and then became comfortable in its adoption and use, to the extent that he felt it helped his decision making on a regular basis. Martha requested a 'process' and only began to get comfortable with the model when she could begin to formulate the 'sequence' and have at her disposal a 'route-map'. Rory considered himself to be using the 'light' version of the model, essentially because he was new to his role and many of his 'issues' were retrospective.

To help me answer the retroductive question, 'what might have been taking place here to have caused that outcome?' I had to generate some questions to help guide my thinking. After some consideration, I concluded that as I had often extolled the virtues of the GROW model (Whitmore, 1992, Alexander, 2006) and the fact that during a coaching session the coachee is generally somewhere within that model. It seemed reasonable to assume (even although these were not strictly discrete coaching sessions) that this would help my thinking in capturing moments of significance. In analysing the data gained from each of the sessions, I looked for events that seemed to propel the co-researcher forwards, that took them closer to their known outcome, or that was significant because there was an instance of what I called a 'brave moment'. I also studied my reflection journal for anything which agreed or conflicted with this. I was also interested in understanding where the points of model development were, and where there had been perhaps any 'brave moments'.

To imply that there was an exact sequence and process would be an inaccurate description of what was going on during the analysis. The analysis was not always straightforward, and sometimes what appeared to be significant had no direct bearing on the perceived main outcome for each co-researcher. And some of the questions were never particularly

useful, but they were held in mind during the analysis. However, keeping an inquisitive focus with the ultimate 'end point' in mind was, I found, very useful.

The first co-researcher sessions

The first sessions were essentially designed to build rapport, set the co-researchers at ease, and to clarify anything which may have been unclear about the process. As mentioned in chapter 4, I had made a decision that the most fruitful approach would be to discuss the idea of bravery with the co-researchers and to have them think about situations where they had witnessed bravery. I also shared with the co-researchers some early thoughts about the model, Figures 4.2 and 4.3, which included the idea about doing 'the right thing'. The phrases from the key informants, Figure 4.1, were also shared with them. Additionally, I suggested that they think about their 'brave state' between the first and the second sessions. Some of the comments from the co-researchers about bravery are discussed below.

It is worth noting that by the time I came to analyse the data I knew that Martha had been happier once she understood the process, Rory had commented that he felt he had been using the 'light' version of the model, Amy had decided to remain in her current role, Mickey had gone from great confusion to understanding, and Russell had decided to leave his job. I was also interested in any indications on their journey of what might be construed as a 'brave moment'. This research was, after all, concerned with the possibility of enhancing bravery. Additionally I thought that it might be useful to note any of what I would consider to be significant moments of model development.

To this end I have used the following phrases to note possible significant moments in the session. 'Retroductive insight' – to highlight where something is possibly happening which relates to the known 'end-point'. 'Model development' – to highlight where some significant change or evolution has taken place or been suggested in relation to the model. 'Brave moment' – to highlight where a possible brave decision has been reached or action taken. In the quotes from the co-researchers which follow, I have also noted any general points of interest or anything which I thought was significant and 'leapt out'. And so the 'sign-posts' (*italicised*)

are as follows: *Retroductive insight, Brave moment, Model development, Leapt out, General.*

The retroductive insight and the model development are both, it could be argued, retroductive in nature as they are being observed from a known 'end-point'. The brave moment is probably retroductive to a degree, but has, I suspect, also more of a broader narrative quality in the sense that Freeman (1984) suggests when he calls the narrative an imposition of a continuous account on discontinuous data. In other words, the 'brave moments' may be events in themselves and not necessarily connected to any overall outcome.

Session 1: Amy – General: Amy is discussing someone whom she considered to be brave in a business context.

"... he came in and basically tried to break the mould of the sort of culture of the business that had been very much, you know, profit is a dirty word and we shouldn't do research and, you know, my gut instinct is right and he came in and, you know, was kind of going against that culture with the owner which, you know, was quite brave".

Session 1: Mickey – General: Mickey is personalising bravery and perhaps predicting troubled waters ahead.

"To stand on the table, get on the table, have the guts to stand there, but know also that you're going to get, you know, tomatoes and whatever thrown at you. And to be aware that that is likely to have been going to happen before you stand up on the table. It's not just the guts to stand on the table, it's the guts to know that when you stand there, you are going to get attacked [Laughs]".

It is interesting to note here that both Amy and Mickey refer to 'gut' or 'guts' albeit that Amy is discussing instinct and Mickey is talking about bravery; however, perhaps they both are accessing a 'feeling'. Also, Amy talks about 'going against the culture', which resonates with Mickey's 'when you stand there'.

Session 1: Jack – Leapt out: Jack has a military background.

"I'm a lover of Churchill stuff because he continually took extraordinary decisions both physically, I mean, he really was in war and he charged...he was captured in the Boer war, he regularly did things that were outside the box...the worst Chancellor of the Exchequer that England ever saw... but the fact that he continued to recover. If I looked at an example where I think things have changed, how many politicians who've lost have come back to fight again, why have they not, because they're not brave; they don't have the courage...it's the capacity to bounce".

It is perhaps unsurprising, given Jack's background, that he discussed bravery in this way.

Session 1: Russell – Leapt out: Russell is discussing people who have been entrepreneurially brave.

"Yeah, I think the people that are brave in business are people that are willing to fail. That real willingness to embrace failure and move on again to the next step. So you think about...I mean Richard Branson's probably the classic example. He's had more failed businesses than successful businesses but everyone remembers the successful ones.

Or I met a lady the other day who was on Dragon's Den...She presented a board game and got laughed out of the den because it was similar to Monopoly. She was told she would never make a success of it. She made a success of it, got the business up to a few million pound turnover, got the contract for a Harry Potter board game from Warner Brothers. Bought all the stock in, the launch of the Harry Potter film got pushed back by six months, and the bank wouldn't lend her any more money and the business went bust. So she has now started another business...and she's just launched a brand that is for rewarding women...it's based around her and her bravery. And I think the tagline is 'Gifts for Remarkable Women'. So she's quite brave".

It is interesting to note here that Russell is discussing failure and moving on and Jack is talking about the capacity to bounce.

Retroductive insight. During Russell's session there are indications that he is already thinking about leaving his employment, and rather than focus on Richard Branson's achievements, he highlights his failures. The 'willing to

fail' to 'move on to the next step' is perhaps an indication of the forthcoming brave decision.

Session 1: Rory – Leapt out: Rory is 'looking up' to more senior colleagues.

“On a business level... I look probably up towards the directors of the company, it's people like (Name) and (Name), when I see them standing up at conferences, things like that, and speaking to a couple of hundred people with, you know, a small bit of paper, and very confident, and, you know, comfortable, and at ease with what they do... On a personal level... I had a friend who broke his back in an accident a couple of years ago. He was paralysed from chest down, and, two years down the line, you know, he's, he's out with us all the time, you know, and he's living his life as best he can. So, you know, courage and bravery to come back from something like that to, to where he is, from where he was to where he is now, you know, is something that, you know, I think anyone would take their hat off”.

Rory is also talking about someone 'coming back' from something which has echoes of Jack and Russell.

Session 1: Martha – Leapt out: Martha, similarly to Rory, is interpreting the word bravery partly in quite physical terms. The following quote illustrates this.

“That's my thinking of William Wallace; everybody has their own take on it. Maybe Braveheart, sorry I'm just thinking of the word brave [laughter] maybe that's why I just linked it all together”.

“So a single mother who has three children and still goes out to work and manages to make ends meet and the everyday person would probably be the bravest of us all actually, because they don't have the comforts of money to hide behind”.

My reflections after these initial sessions were that I was very pleased with how readily people had engaged with the idea and how it seemed to produce some quite insightful thinking. It is interesting to note that Russell

is already talking about being entrepreneurially brave and Rory is perhaps signalling a feeling of being very new in his role.

The Second co-researcher sessions

The first sessions had partly revolved around discussing the idea of bravery. The second sessions were focussed more primarily on discussing the concept of the pulling factors, and bespokeing these for each co-researcher, based on the initial factors which I had provided. (The bespoke pulling factors were then emailed out to each of the co-researchers after the completion of session 2).

I had initially thought that I would introduce the model as a complete entity after session 1. The idea was to test it out and then change or augment as required. However, at the beginning of the first sessions, I found myself saying to at least two co-researchers that 'I didn't want to turn up with an all-singing, all-dancing complete revolving solar system model'. On reflection, I realised that this was exactly what I was about to do. It struck me that unless the various components of the model were considered separately and over a period of time, the co-researchers were effectively being handed a fait accompli. Hence, these sessions (the second sessions) were concerned primarily with the pulling factors.

Session 2: Amy

"I've been trying to influence others...it is interesting sort of whether you can split it and you've got obviously the four bits, you know, where would you, some of the issues that I'm having in doing that influencing or persuading, which, you know, which bits do the, the things that I'm encountering fit into. Which is also partly including myself in the middle anyway because there is that bit about some of the things that are going on outside of work at the moment are probably interfering a little bit as my own behaviour and reactions.

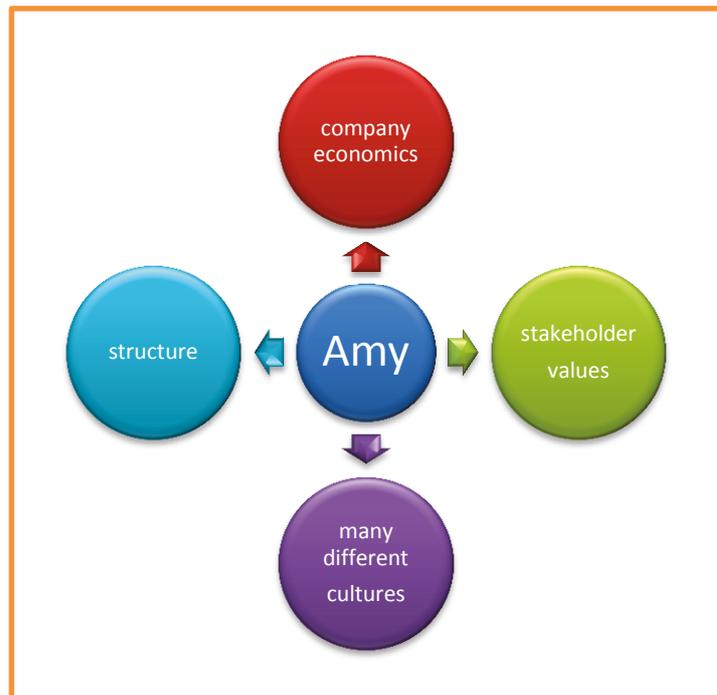
Retroductive insight. Amy mentions things outside work interfering with her emotional state. I had considered including the Human Givens emotional needs audit (Appendix D) somewhere in the process, but wondered whether that would make things too complex. However, this interaction may well have been an indicator as to why Amy thought it important to consider.

It does, however, certainly hint at some internal struggle; she goes on to say,

“...because I think that you talked about all the other bits, I think the rest of it is a bit about me, my own mental state, my current situation, my... because if you went back a few years ago when I first joined...swim against the tide for too long and perhaps feel as if nobody really cares enough about whether I do or don't do it, in fact some of the divisions might go, oh good, let's just leave it as it is, because that's the culture. A few years ago...I'd have been adamant that is, you know, we need to develop it, and, but the very fact that I was tempted to not do it and kind of drift along with everybody else in the business is frightening a little”.

Retroductive insight. Amy appears to be worried about becoming ‘stale’, about being in the role for too long. This may be indicative of the decision which she is facing.

Figure 5.1 – Amy’s pulling factors (emailed out to her after session 2)



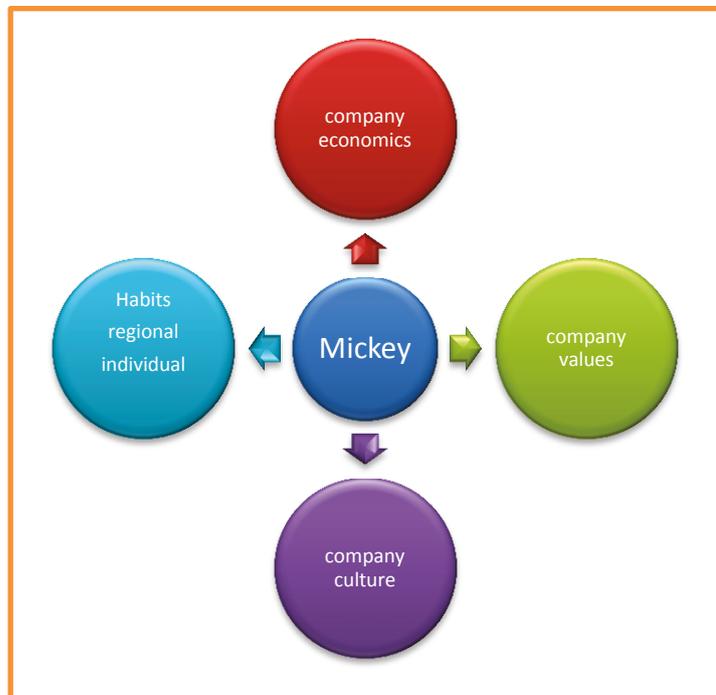
Session 2: Mickey

Leapt out: This session could best be summarised by the word ‘confusion’. This session had to take place via telephone and this was not ideal. My own reflection at the time was that I was thinking too much about where I wanted to end up, i.e. to help Mickey generate the pulling factors. Mickey began to think about how to generate values and drifted away from thinking about the pulling factors.

“Is what’s today’s reality. And where it is today, you know the values of... on a nice piece of paper in the office. But often you’re striving to get there, to get to these company values and culture but you’re not there yet”.

Retroductive insight. Mickey displayed some real confusion during this session and this may have been the start of his initial confusion within the co-researcher role.

Figure 5.2 – Mickey’s pulling factors (emailed out after session 2)



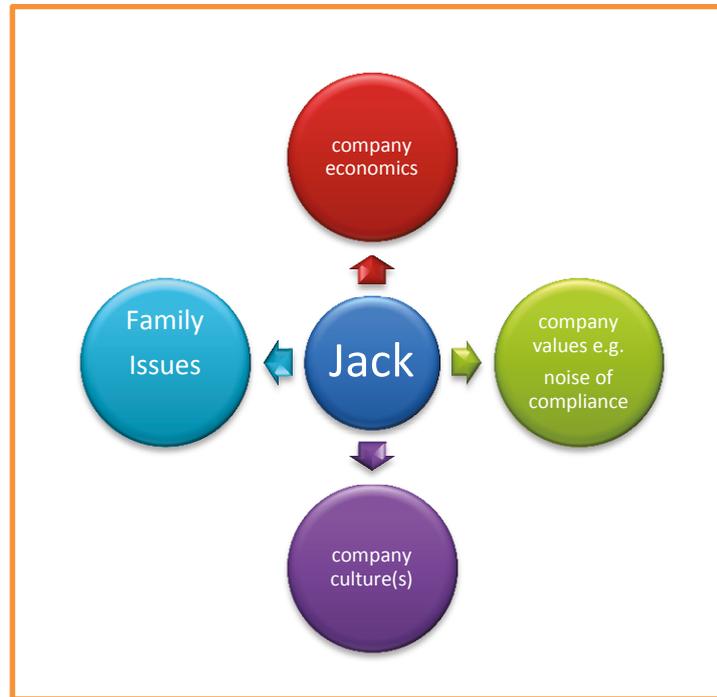
Already there are differences in the perceived pulling factors between Amy and Mickey.

Session 2: Jack

General: Jack talked about a need for adventure as a potential pulling factor. I hadn't considered that, and it could be that this would be better placed as one of the humanistic factors, perhaps a need for novelty or change. He also talked about two interesting areas, the 'noise of compliance' and how the 'workers' are more interested in whether they will have a job. Unfortunately Jack's sessions were limited, as this area may well have led into an area which was not explored well during the research, viz. the tension between the humanistic factors and the pulling factors.

"...you go into a corporate headquarters and you will see the environmental document, the social ethics document, you'll see the community plan, and I sit there and go, most of it is compliance nonsense. This is the bit that the workforce value is a different issue because the workforce want to see you as a leader...the pull from them, not me, is they want to hear why I think we're going to be successful, they want to hear are they being closed, they want to hear is it growth opportunities, they want to know about their training, their development...will have a job next year. They're all the values that pull on me every day because every time you walk the floor that's what they ask you. They couldn't care less about the corporate ethics policy but they're really interested about are they closing the factory...a workforce value issue they ask me about, are we on a wage freeze for another year..."

Figure 5.3 – Jack’s pulling factors (emailed out after session)



Intriguingly, Jack suggests that family issues may be a pulling factor; whilst this might have been ultimately placed within the gravitational factors, it would have been very interesting to explore further, as would the potential tension which might arise if certain company values were considered to be 'noise'.

Session 2: Russell

Retroductive insight. Russell is quite frustrated at this point. This may be indicative of some inner conflict – perhaps as he wrestles with whether to stay with his employer or not. He discusses his values and that they are potentially in conflict with the company values. It could be that there is also a hint of the (as yet not discussed) humanistic (gravitational) factor, which is similar to Jack's session 2.

“...two and a half years ago we had a re-organisation, big re-organisation with departments changing, the whole structure changing, not that many people leaving but just reporting structures changing. As a result people not sitting within their teams, two and a half years later and I’m responsible for making it happen...getting everybody sitting within their teams...two and a half years later, that is not happening because the company keeps pulling it because it costs too much or it’s too difficult or there’s some other change coming up. So we have our people, this is the most important thing to our people, what they desperately want, they want to sit within their team, so they come to work, they want to be in a team environment, they want to enjoy coming to work, at the moment this is the biggest thing that’s preventing them from doing that, and we won’t sign off moving people. Worse than that we say yes, it’s going to happen, so I personally communicate this is happening, two weeks later it gets pulled so it makes me look like an idiot and it completely goes against my values and my thought process of this is right thing to do, this is the right time et cetera, et cetera, et cetera and there is no real business justification why we don’t do it”.

Model development. During this session, Russell mentioned (although not quoted here) a ‘sanctuary’ which in due course helped formulate my thinking about the sphere as being a place of contemplation – although ultimately held in place by ‘bravery’.

Russell’s pulling factors were emailed out to him after session 2. These were used to illustrate the pulling factors in figure 4.6.

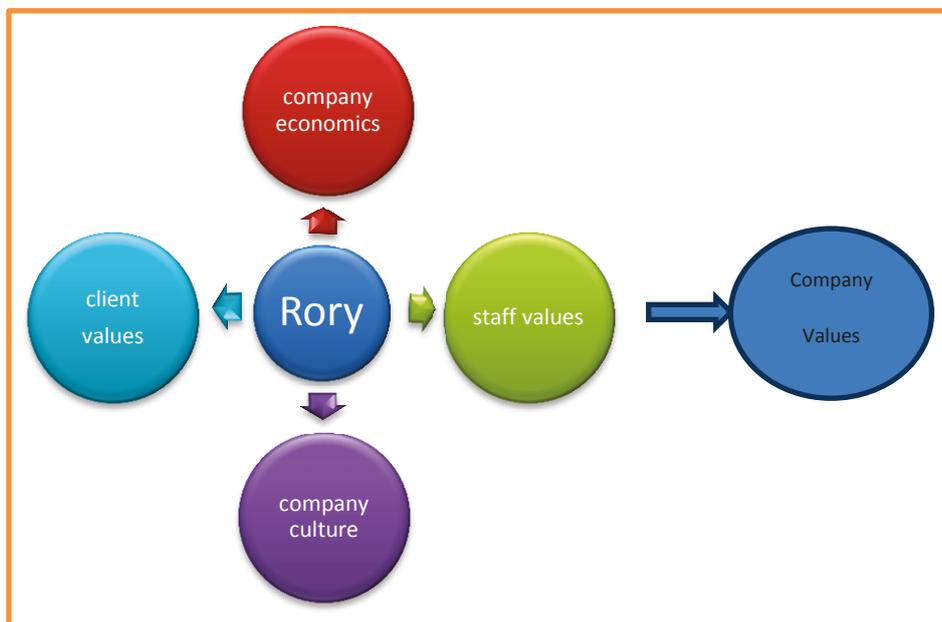
Model Development. Russell’s pulling factors are the most complex of all the co-researchers. This is probably related to the nature of his role at this point, but this also indicates how different the interpretation of the pulling factors can be from individual to individual and also hints at how time-bound they are. It also gives an indication of how malleable the model might be.

Session 2: Rory

Leapt out: Rory was quite focussed on the model design and conceptually how things might link together. He is new to his role and there was an indication that he was looking for answers. I reflected that perhaps I should have supplied the co-co-researchers with a complete model. His pulling factors are significant in that he sees the company values as pulling on the staff values. Once again a unique individual interpretation of what these pulling factors might be is apparent here.

“...so if you are thinking about a pulling factor but the company values on this model, if we put the staff values as another spoke coming from company values that they would be pulling on the company values or are the company values pulling on the staff values, or is it, you know, a sort of loop?”.

Figure 5.4 – Rory’s pulling factors (emailed out to him after session 2)



I had not considered that there may be pulling factors on pulling factors, and I believe that this idea warrants further investigation.

Session 2: Martha

Leapt out: Martha's strong sense of the importance of people in organisations was apparent in this session.

"...and fit and tick the company economics, the company values and the company culture... I felt that the pulling factors, probably in everybody's role, I just always think with HR we've got to think of so, we've got to play so many different hats on, just because of the nature of our role, because we're here to purposely look after the colleagues, but we're also here to look after the business".

Figure 5.5 – Martha's pulling factors (emailed out to her after session 2)



In a similar way to Russell, Martha includes 'people' as a pulling factor. This may be because the gravitational factors have not at this point been explored.

General reflections on the second sessions

The Pulling factors are an intrinsic part of the model. Without understanding what is having an impact on a leader's decision making, it is likely that decisions would be made with a lesser awareness of all the key elements, which may well then reduce the richness of the decision making process. It could be argued that to actually be brave, we must have a sense of the 'peril' that we face, as the act of bravery implies experiencing a feeling of courage in the face of adversity and/or fear. If an action is taken arbitrarily, or with no thought of the consequences involved, then there can be no sense of courage and therefore no bravery by the individual. The act itself may be considered by others to be brave, but without the main protagonist having a sense of context, consequence and conviction, there can be no sense of a brave decision and/or action.

I would suggest, therefore, that the pulling factors are not only an essential part of the leader's decision making process, but also that without taking cognizance of them, where they are relevant to the decision at hand, the element of bravery is reduced or perhaps even negated entirely.

The Third co-researcher sessions

In the intervening period between the second sessions and the third sessions, the co-researchers were sent out a description of the model which included the pulling factors and the gravitational factors – Appendix C.

In session 3, Amy is beginning to explore her emotional state as well as the other environmental 'factors'.

Session 3: Amy

"Even as you were talking, it made me think about a big decision that I might need to make at the moment...It's about taking the emotion out of it, or my physical well-being in or out...and it is for me, the difference between your own motivating factors and your actual environment..."

Retroductive insight. Amy talks about a big decision she might need to make.

My reflections were that Amy also appeared to 'like' the model and it did not 'jar', and she began to think of ways that it could be used, although she did state that she had not had too much time to consider it. I felt that the fact that the model made some sort of sense to her was significant, as she was an H.R. professional.

Session 3: Mickey

Leapt out: Mickey had not had enough time to read the documents thoroughly which had been sent to him, however he seemed to warm to the subject of the pulling factors and at one point was suggesting that the size of the 'planets' should perhaps vary dependent on the 'importance'. At this point, therefore, the 'full model' was not able to be fully considered by Mickey as he had not had enough time to reflect on it. However, what he had been exposed to up until that point did seem to be getting clearer to him. He had also personalised the model and was linking it to a forthcoming conflict.

"...yes, important people who are already a long time in the business and very strong people, if they say something then it's the size of a big planet... Yes.... I mean it's not realistic to have all the bubbles of the planets the same size... There's ones that are things that are pulling me further away than others. As a human being that's normal... Because you can see a lot of fish in the water between some bubbles and another one is lifting you somewhere in another direction... so I don't know how to put it exactly and we can talk about it later, and items like managing all those staff members, including my boss... I mean, if you have to stand up against people who are already 25 years in the business saying, 'Well we go that direction', and if you believe the other direction then it's not so easy".

Retroductive insight. Mickey is gradually beginning to talk about making a brave decision, although there is still an element of confusion.

This could also have been a moment of potential model development in terms of perhaps varying the size of the pulling factor 'planets'. However, the scale and volume of what had to be discussed in time-bound sessions meant that this was never properly explored.

Session 3: Jack – cancelled

Session 3: Russell

Leapt out: Russell had also not had too much time to reflect on what he had been sent out. However, he appeared to have been doing some reflecting on his future.

“Yeah, so I’ve resigned from work...because of the, or partly because of the bravery model. I’ve been not enjoying work for a few months and I guess that looking at the bravery model I think the thing I struggled with most, and a lot of people struggle with at (the company) at the moment is the leadership question, and you’re not allowed to be brave. So like very much in a middle management environment, in fact in (Name) in a lot of cases senior management positions you don’t have the accountability to be brave. You’re not empowered to make those decisions. So even if you think it’s the right time, the right way, the right reason, then you still don’t have the accountability to make that change, and that’s what I really struggled with the most... and I think that I am confident in that being brave will get me places and if I can’t be brave then I’ll just shrink and not get that self-actualisation because I need to go and do things that I couldn’t do in my current role. And being brave and leading is definitely one of them”.

Retroductive insight. Russell’s frustration has now manifested in him leaving his employment.

Model development. Russell’s sense of bravery was partly triggered by considering what was the right thing to do? In one sense this is retrospective model development, because the ‘right thing’ was one of the first things which I had written about bravery. However, this indicates that simply considering bravery and a sense of ‘rightness’ can generate behavioural change, and so the apparently simplistic introduction to the model may well be important.

Brave moment. Russell has taken action and left his employer (for another). It is interesting to note that this employer was entrepreneurial in nature, which may have been hinted at when he focussed on entrepreneurial bravery in session 1.

At this point there are definite similarities between Russell and Amy, with the obvious difference being that Russell has made a decision, but Amy is still considering hers.

Session 3: Rory

In relation to thinking about the emotional needs audit, Rory stated that he had looked at it and added,

“Well I think I’m generally in a good place at the moment but I can definitely see how maybe the higher up the management chain you might go, you might see those scores starting to come down a little bit, but I think in general I’m generally in a good place at the moment”.

We also discussed the idea of getting into the ‘eye of the storm’ to make a decision.

“...but it’s almost...putting them down and actually thinking, yes, right what is the right thing to do here, whereas maybe before you just, kind of, maybe flying on instinct a little bit whereas, yes, so it’s actually now getting into that quiet space to actually properly consider them in a calm, rational state, so yes, I’m fully on board”.

My reflection was that there was a lack of any concrete examples on which to base our discussion, which was almost certainly a feature of Rory’s recent promotion into the role. There was a discussion about the idea of moving the planets as well as the sphere (again a possible missed moment of model development) and whilst that may have proven too complex, at least until people had been familiarised with the model, it did demonstrate that a more conceptual conversation could take place in the absence of any specific examples or situations.

Retroductive insight. It was very apparent that Rory is working retrospectively. This was an early indication of him heading towards the ‘light version’ of the model.

Session 3: Martha

Leapt out: Martha responded favourably to the ‘structure’ of having questions to aid her thinking around the model, and the questions appeared to allow her to consider her options in a process-driven manner.

“...the only thing I wanted to add was I quite liked the two, four, five, six questions, that I think works for me in terms of being able to pull yourself out, because it’s quite perceptive, because everybody knows what the right thing to do is, and everybody knows what the brave thing to do is, and you know, what would it cost me? What will I gain if I do this action, what must I do, what is the first step, when will I take it?”

This was a truly collaborative session. Martha is referring to the questions in Appendix C.

Retroductive insight. Martha appears to be enjoying the fact that there is a process.

General reflections on the third sessions

In relation to the model development, I gained an insight regarding the sphere, which took place as a result of Martha’s session in particular. I suddenly understood what I thought should be the way to move the ‘sphere’. My thought was that the brave ‘thinking’ should be the momentum for the sphere, and where that takes the sphere is the point at which the sphere must be ‘held’. The sphere should go around each of the pulling factors, and then it should proceed to the gravitational factors. At that point the sphere should move to the position where all factors are being felt but the sphere is being propelled (or perhaps more properly held in place) by bravery. Bravery is the engine.

In the original plan, the conclusion of the third sessions was the point where I would have checked whether the model was working generally with all co-researchers. This was the mid-point review (Figure 3.2). However, as I had elected to introduce the model in a drip-feed fashion, the co-researchers had only recently been introduced to the ‘full model’. With that caveat firmly in mind, I uncovered nothing particularly ‘wrong’ with the model. However, there were clues about the nature of the journey that each of the co-researchers were on, and signs which indicated where they would ultimately find themselves at the end of the research. Amy was considering a fairly important decision. Jack was having trouble attending the sessions. Russell had decided to leave his employment. Rory was new in his role and working with the model at a more conceptual level. Mickey was working through some confusion. Martha was becoming more comfortable with the

model after the introduction of a 'process'. There was an underlying hint also of having to 'herd cats' as people were busy, meetings were postponed, and I did wonder whether I had either supplied the co-researchers with too much information too soon, or perhaps not quickly enough.

The Fourth co-researcher sessions

The fourth sessions were probably the first real chance that the co-researchers had had to consider the model in its entirety (although at this point they had still not been sent the possible 'sequence of use', Figure 4.5). Even though the model had been introduced to them before this point, in the third sessions, their own time commitments and the fact that the additional facets of the model had been emailed to them prior to the sessions had not, I believe, allowed them enough time to truly consider and reflect upon the model in its suggested (to date) 'full' form. These sessions then became a combination of considering the model, and its adaptation, and also using it to coach around a situation if and where appropriate.

Session 4: Amy

Amy is an advocate of Myers Briggs type indicator (Myers and McCauley, 1985) and is discussing it here.

"NTs love change so, you know, they're going to run around and do it and be brave all the time, but maybe being brave for them would be to slow down a bit and actually consider whether the change is needed....Or is it an ST? Anyway, you know, some of the other lenses, the four lenses, you know, hate change and, you know, Fs in particular hate change because it's a loss and, therefore, being brave would be to make a change even if it's a little one".

Model development (possible): Amy wondered if using something like Myers Briggs might help the coach/coachee with the decision-making process. I believe that Myers Briggs could be used in conjunction with the model, but I suspected that introducing it to the other co-researchers at this stage, particularly when they have been so busy, would prove to be confusing. I decided to let the model run as it was, although I think that it

would be very interesting to conduct further research into Myers Briggs, bravery, and this model.

Session 4: Mickey

Leapt out: During this session, there was less confusion, if any. Mickey had moved into considering situations where he could apply the model. I reflected that the model was beginning to be used more competently (and that probably applied to all the co-researchers) as greater familiarity allowed for a more tailored approach.

Mickey is considering options using the model. This session consisted of a run through of the emotional needs audit.

Mike: "...with the human givens emotional needs audit...it's getting you to think ...when I step into this sphere to make the decision, are there any things which may be impacting me?"

Mickey: "So maybe I feel very insecure just now, my security is...I'm feeling low as a leader. And so I've got to be aware, when I make a decision, that this may be impacting my thought process."

It also contained a 'live' coaching session about a management issue, as shown in the dialogue that follows:

Mike: "...putting the sphere in the decision-making place, wherever that might be, in terms of (Name) then, I'll ask you a question. So what is the right thing to do?"

Mickey: "What is the right thing to do? Well, the right thing to do is try everything to get her on board, to understand the aim, the goal, what we want. Because I'm really saying try to get...to keep her on board, because she is good, she's very good, actually. And try to make her believe that we will do things differently."

Model development: After my insight with Martha's session, I was able to use the 'sphere idea' with Mickey, and it seemed to work well. Mickey also mentioned the need to change cultures/values, etc. in his team. So, a further adjustment to be made to the model is perhaps not just that there is a requirement to take into account the 'pulling needs' of the current situation, but 'bravery' may mean changing what is already there. In other

words it may mean that removing or adding one or more of the pulling factors, is the brave action.

Retroductive insight: Mickey is now moving away from confusion.

Brave moment: Mickey has made a decision he had been avoiding.

Session 4: Jack

This session ended up being much more about Jack's decision to apply for promotion or not, and so it is practically impossible to extract anything from this conversation which would be either meaningful to the progress of the research or non-confidential.

Session 4: Russell

Russell is discussing exploring each pulling factor initially discretely.

"In fact that might be quite an interesting way of looking at it, actually, so if we were living in a world where only the economic pulling factors existed what would you do? If you lived in a world where only the cultural pulling factors existed what would you do? And I think out of that falls probably the right answer when you put them back together".

Model development: Russell's idea of questioning each factor in exclusivity was incorporated into the 'Potential sequence for introduction and use' document (Figure 4.5) and was emailed out to the other co-researchers after this session with Russell. (The idea of producing the 'sequence' document came from a conversation with Martha).

Also: Russell mentions (below) his predilection for starting with the pulling factors.

"Yes because I think if personally if I did it the other way round and started with the values and emotional factors, gravitational factors, I'd rule lots of stuff out before I'd even started...Which is where having that breadth of ... so almost parking the values and the gravitational factors to start with gives

you a long list of options that you can then cut back and weigh up the options because as it's not black and white."

Session 4: Rory

Rory has been studying the model and seems to be comfortable with the framework.

"So it all seems to flow, as I say, it makes common sense and it links in very well. So I think it's just actually now looking at a few examples and seeing if we can get it working. Yes".

It is encouraging to note that he seems comfortable with the 'flow'.

"I think if we're to do the right thing, and maybe be fair in the right way, then it could have the complete opposite effect, and reaffirm them in the way that... wait a minute, you know, they realise that they maybe have done something, they're maybe veering off the company culture and value, but the company are willing to see that and work with them to flip that around and try and get him back on board."

Retroductive insight: Rory is discussing a decision that he has already partially come to.

Model development: Rory utilised the idea of the 'gravitational factors' and chosen what he considers to be the relevant ones to this situation. This may be less model development and more model affirmation, but I think that it is significant enough to note.

Session 4: Martha

In her fourth session Martha was very interested in the 'Potential sequence for introduction and use'. This is shown in Figure 4.8. She also noted a potential similarity between the model and De Bono's six thinking hats (De Bono, 1986).

"...comparing this to the six hats model...the question that was asked...was, 'So what's the process?' which is a really good question. Because I think the process is...I think you could come up with a pre-defined model, I wouldn't rule anything out. You could go, 'Right okay, here's broadly what other people have come up with, let's look at it like

this.’ But I’m wondering, at its most fluid state, which is probably where we should start, that it’s something about getting them to think about bravery”.

I reflected that I hadn’t consciously thought about the six hats model and yet could see a certain similarity between this and the consideration of the various factors contained within the bravery coaching model.

Retroductive insight: Martha is not only talking about process here but also instigated the production of the ‘sequence of use’ document (Figure 4.8).

General reflections on the fourth sessions

There seemed to be more engagement from the co-researchers. At this stage in the research what became apparent was that the ‘trend’ was no ‘trend’. In other words each of the co-researchers had engaged with the model in different ways. One had suggested stacking pulling factors on top of pulling factors, another had suggested that a goal might be to remove pulling factors, and yet another had suggested the introduction of Myers Briggs into the mix. From a coaching perspective, this was greatly encouraging as I had wanted the ‘model’ to be a framework into which the coach could input their own energy and personality and to allow a space to grow where the unique dynamic between coach and coachee could be prompted, nourished and even challenged, but not stifled or diminished. The introduction of a suggested ‘process’ even seemed to suggest that those coaches and/or coachees who were more sequence driven might also be able to utilise this approach.

The Fifth co-researcher sessions

The fifth sessions were the first sessions where all the information relating to the model had been sent out to the co-researchers. This stage had almost been reached during the fourth sessions, but the addition of the ‘sequence of use’ document had added to the ‘canon’. At this point the co-researchers were becoming much more familiar with the elements of the model. They were also aware that we were nearing the end of our research sessions and so perhaps there was also an element of a greater sense of ownership.

Session 5: Amy

The snippet of dialogue below is from one of the points where my use of the model for coaching purposes was exceptionally poor. I had randomly (and looking back, foolishly) introduced the idea of bringing pulling factors into the sphere in an attempt to clarify things and basically confused them, and in my confusion had given the wrong answer, which was when I used the word 'either'. My reflections from just after the session are below.

Mike: "...so if you then look at those two, the time factor, the job situation factor. If you were going to bring in two things into the middle of that imaginary sphere...if you had to bring one or two or three things in to consider, what would they be?"

"You mean apart from the ones we've talked about or the ones we've talked about?"

Mike: "Either".

Retroductive insight: Amy was attempting to use the model specifically to make the decision to stay in her role or to leave. This was also the point at which I became aware that she was facing this decision.

It became apparent that Amy was very much in the zone of considering her options. However, I felt that this session did not go as well as it could have. Due to changes in commitments we had to do this via the telephone, and I felt that we really needed the 'visuals'. I did not ask enough questions and I also gave advice at what I considered to be the wrong time. Very possibly I went too much into researcher mode and not coach mode. There was also a point where I felt that I floundered around the model. I was thinking about researching, how the model might be used, coaching Amy, and being worried that it was not working, all at the same time. I felt that the situation was being shoehorned into the model. I felt that this was a confusing session.

Session 5: Mickey

Leapt out: What leapt out from this session was that Mickey appeared to be beginning to have the model 'working in the background'.

“Yeah, it has an impact, because I am always thinking about, yeah, the factors in there, and the gravitational factors and the pulling factors have had that impact on how they pull me away from my decision, and how I have to interpret it. So I think about the blocks, and I also try to anticipate how these planets are trying to ... pull me away from where I want to go to.”

Mickey is also clearer about the ‘landscape’ within which he operates.

“I mean, for instance, value... and remember when we talked about company values, and I said, ‘Oh, I don’t have really an answer right away, because it seems a little vague and abstract,’ but for me company value is to offer people chances, career opportunities through a good structure. I want to offer something to my management that embeds a good succession planning, which was absolutely not there when I arrived. I mean, there was nothing. And with the structure that I’ve put into place, if everybody is doing a great job there, then we have, after two years, we can pick and choose succession”.

Retroductive insight: Mickey has now moved from confusion and ‘dancing around’ the model to having far greater clarity.

Model development: At the conclusion of this session Mickey said that the model was working ‘behind his eyes’. Mickey appeared to be thinking about the model ‘in real time’. I have noted it here as model development as I had not anticipated this level of consistent conscious interplay with the model whilst not in a ‘coaching session’.

Brave moment: Mickey has now begun to discuss with his management team the structure that he wants to put in place and is linking it to a clearer understanding of what the team’s values are and why they are beneficial.

Session 5: Jack

This session revolved around using the model to assist Jack in his thinking about a promotion opportunity which had presented itself. Due to the confidential nature of this session, it is not possible to present any of the detail here.

Session 5: Russell

Russell was now in a 'wind-down' having resigned but not left his employment, but he had been considering the model and its implications for use in business.

"I would then go "right, so I've been through culture, economic values. I've been through my trends stuff and whatever else I've been through. I've been through my gravitational factors and now I think this is the thing to do, and then I'd go, so I think that's the right thing to do. Is this the right way of doing it? Is this the right time to do it and am I doing it for the right reasons?...and I think it's much easier to get yes to all four of those questions having been through the process than it would be by just going, "Right today I'm going to, I don't know, sack 20% of my workforce". And then go, "well it is the right reason? Yeah. In the right way? ...if you've been through a process I think you can consciously say that you're making the right, brave decisions or it enables you to act bravely because you've consciously been through all of those questions and phases... For me it's all about the conscious journey to making a decision".

Model development. Russell is highlighting the importance of making what might be unconscious choices, decisions and inferences, conscious. This insight may need to influence the language of the coach who might use this approach.

Russell's suggestion below, was in response to my suggestion that we might want to take things into the sphere to consider, this was also what caused confusion with Amy in session 5. Russell's suggestion was in my opinion preferable.

"Because one of the things I was thinking about was whether it would add or it would help in the decision making that if you went to the economy pulling factor and went into that area and said, "Right what would I do if this was the only thing that I considered?"

Model development. I also reflected that Russell's idea of asking, 'what if this were the only thing that I had to think about?' could be broadened to

have the coachee consider the two main things they had to consider, then three main things, etc. This could then be considered with each area.

I also considered what might be ripped off this 'planet' (the gravitational factors) causing it to lose integrity? If the sphere moved too far away from the gravitational 'field' then perhaps that 'planet' might be 'destroyed'.

Session 5: Rory

In this session, Rory was mainly in retrospective mode. He had no relevant issues at that point to which the model could be applied, and so we took a decision that he had made in the past and applied the model to that. The issue concerned a team member.

"Yes, the key things really were...making that right decision for the right reason at the right time... if I had to go down that route, I think I would have gone down the informal route to keep an element of... what's the word I'm looking for? Harmony, within the team. Because I didn't want to lose a member of the team, I didn't want to obviously let the team, at a time when we were top heavy in terms of workload, so I think by making that decision it might have annoyed a few people within the company, but as you say, it's making that right decision at the right time for the right reason. So I think I would have gone down that, but yes, I would... it wouldn't have been to everyone's liking, but I guess that's where the whole bravery bit comes in".

Retroductive insight. We were dealing with an issue retrospectively, which I suspect ultimately influenced Rory's 'light version' comment.

Session 5: Martha

In this session Martha discussed the difference between management and leadership.

"I always struggle with this, when you're trying to define the difference between leadership and management. And I know people say it's quite easy to define that. I really don't think it is, to be honest. And actually this has helped, you know; leadership is really hard work, I'm not saying

management isn't, but management is like a process that you follow and if you stick to that process, nine times out of ten you'll make the right decision. This is on a different level, and I think people look at more senior people and they do wonder what they do. And they think, well, you just make decisions and you don't really think about them. But actually there'll be people out here that have instinctively done this...Because you must have thought about this, it's come from the people that you've talked to ... you know that they instinctively go through this process without knowing it, almost, it's just a natural instinct."

Retroductive insight: Martha had requested a 'process' document for the use of the model but at this point she hadn't yet read it. It is interesting to note that she makes the distinction between management and leadership as being about process; it appeared that the challenge for her was that leadership might be less process orientated.

To help step through the process of using the model, I suggested that she try using the model with someone else, i.e. coach someone else; perhaps about a situation which had already passed if required, although my preference would be if it could be used for something current and 'real'.

General reflections on the fifth sessions

On one level these sessions illustrated the continued general divergence of the co-researchers' interpretation of the model. How they responded to the model and interpreted it was, I believe, heavily influenced by their current situation. Amy was wrestling with a big decision, which was whether to leave her then current role. Her requirements for the model were real time and very important (and although it initially looked as if it would not be suitable for her purposes, as we shall see, this was not exactly the case). Russell had already made his decision to leave his employer at this point, but he was still interested in the model from an intellectual perspective and also as a management and leadership development tool in perhaps his new role. Jack was decidedly drifting away from the process as he considered the promotion process within which he was then involved. Rory was having to work retrospectively within the model, as he was new to his role. Mickey's initial confusion had changed into a tailoring of the model for his

own use. Martha was keen to get to grips with the process, partly because of her particular approach and also because she was considering the model's use in a wider organisational environment.

The Sixth co-researcher sessions

Although these sessions were not of the more reflective type as discussed in Chapter 6, they did mark the conclusion of the co-researcher sessions. As such, they were entered into with a real sense of the unknown, in that they might have uncovered more about the model and/or entailed using the model in a way which had not been foreseen.

Session 6: Amy

The session with Amy revealed one such surprise. After the fifth, and what I considered to be poorly handled, session with her, she had spent some time reflecting about her situation and going over the model in relation to this situation on her own.

"...and I've gone back through the model, it's quite interesting because I'm now going back to asking myself what is the brave thing? Because actually the brave thing would be to stay and face my demons, almost. Because actually is leaving brave, or is leaving running away? You know? And then it got me round and round, and actually what is brave? Was one of my key motivators, running away from something that's quite difficult? The situation with (Name), the fact that there's a lot of rubbish in my job...there's a lot of good stuff that I haven't pushed or got involved with because I'm too busy making an excuse that it's because the other half of my job is awful, and therefore I just...but is that brave, or actually is it more brave to say, 'No, I'm going to stick around and try and make this...face the music, try and mould the role more in what I want.' Because actually that's more brave. Now, financially risky to quit...and I don't think it is brave, I think that that's running away. So it's made me re-assess the whole beginning question about what is brave".

Retroductive insight: Amy's 'big decision' has now been made.

Model development: Amy has used the model entirely on her own. She has used it for a life, as well as business, decision. This 'autonomous use' of the model was entirely unexpected and has echoes of Mickey's 'behind my eyes' comment. She had also mentioned that perhaps the model wasn't suited to 'life coaching' and then added that it had still worked. The 'life coaching' comment may have been due to the confusion I had created in the previous session.

Brave moment: Amy's decision was brave.

Session 6: Mickey

Mickey discussed how he has embedded the model into his thinking.

"Well, I think in a way and probably a bit unconsciously I'm using the model in my day-to-day management...I have the model in my top drawer and regularly I take it out of my drawer and look into it and see, what am I doing now, and does it fit with all the good stuff that I picked up in the last couple of sessions. But it's often going into unconsciousness... it's somewhere there in my head, to say well, these are the pulling factors and these are pushing me in a certain direction, these are pulling me backwards. These elements and this gravity, this is something which is now embedded in my brain".

Retroductive insight: Mickey is now apparently really comfortable with his use of the model. The confusion appears to have gone, and has been replaced with a sense of confidence.

Session 6: Jack – cancelled.

Session 6: Russell

I was impressed by Russell's commitment to the process and also by his intellectual engagement. He also highlighted the need to take action after going through the model.

"you can take your team through it as well....so I think you can sit in a room in your own and go through the model, but...there's still some level of engagement that you need to do afterwards."

Model development: Russell made some really important distinctions in this session. He discussed the possibility of the leader potentially taking the team through the model after she/he had gone through it, emphasising the importance of consensus. And significantly, he emphasised the need to actually take the brave step. This is an important point, that bravery is not simply about the thinking, it is about the doing. And the doing is ultimately the domain of the coachee, but is likely to be influenced by the quality of the coaching relationship.

“And ultimately, as a leader, it’s your decision, it’s going to be your brave step... which is where most strategy development goes wrong because there is a fantastic process for strategy development, but everyone forgets that you then have to implement it. So it’s like, the strategy is done, lovely...but if you haven’t engaged the people in how are you going to deliver it, and thought through the whys, whats, and hows – so you do the whys and the whats – it’s the how that really makes it work or come to life. So a brave decision is useless if you don’t know how you can implement it”.

The need to actually take the brave action was also a point made by Rory in his reflection session.

Session 6: Rory

Rory and I began to discuss a recent, but still retrospective, decision which had been made:

“I’m being pulled toward that and also my culture and the way that it is essentially my job to make sure that the tools and the information we receive are correct and that they’re sent out to our (Name) to do the correct job. Where I’m being pulled towards the client values is that...well, in fact, I’ll take that back, what is almost pushing me away from my company culture and my staff values is that I think the decision that we came to as a management team yesterday is not completely wrong but I think aspects of it are wrong. I think the decision’s been flawed slightly, looking back at it retrospectively”.

Retroductive insight: Rory was able to think through the model quite ‘fluently’; however, I still had a nagging sense of ‘flatness’ as we hadn’t really utilised an up to the minute issue. This had been a concern of mine at

the outset of the research and yet was probably almost inevitable with at least one of the co-researchers.

Session 6: Martha

Martha had at this point received the 'sequence of use' document by this point and had also used the model to step through an issue with one of her team.

"So from that point of view I thought it was really workable... I should be saying, yes, I've used it, I've used it [laughs]... So it did work, it worked really well; we used a business example..."

Retroductive insight: Martha appeared to be much more relaxed, having stepped through the 'process', and also having coached someone using the model.

Model development: Martha had used the model successfully with her team member, which was an important point in its evolution.

Brave moment: I believe that Martha took a brave step in coaching someone else using the model.

General reflections on the sixth sessions

I think that everyone 'landed safely', with more learning for some than others; and the model seems to be broadly applicable to leadership coaching situations, particularly when there are actual issues to be considered. The ongoing feedback during the process was mainly concerned with how the individual co-researchers were dealing with the model. The third session 'meta-review', looking 'across' the six co-researchers revealed nothing about the model as such, but more about the process; this appeared to be the time where due to other commitments, the least engagement from the co-researchers was taking place. This did cause me to wonder whether I should have simply produced a finished model for the co-researchers to consider. In retrospect that would have been the wrong approach, as the introduction of the Human Givens

emotional needs audit and the 'sequence of use' document and also the 'if this was all you had to consider' questions were really a result of introducing the model in stages, and also as a result of what surprised me the most, the feed-forward element as opposed to feedback. In other words, the experience of some of the co-researchers had an impact on the suggested development of the model by the time I reached the equivalent session with another co-researcher.

The Journeys

I believe that it is useful to view the experiences of the co-researchers as a journey: one which has been retroductively traced backwards from a known end-point, and one in which a brave narrative (or at least brave moments) has taken place; and all this running alongside the development of the model. I believe that the journeys of the co-researchers were as follows:

Amy: Amy's journey was ostensibly about her wanting to leave her job and organisation. This real issue caused her to reflect deeply, and this allowed her to make her brave decision.

Mickey: Mickey was quite confused about what the process involved until he began to realise that he had to take a more active role in the development. Once this happened he 'got it' and began to apply his new way of thinking in various different scenarios.

Russell: Russell was keen to avoid being un-brave and quickly set about going through a rigorous reflection and evaluation process. He also wrestled with, and made, a major decision.

Rory: Rory was running with what he called (in the reflection session) a 'light' version of the model. This was due to the consistently retrospective nature of the sessions and his newness in the role.

Martha: Martha was keen to understand the model as a process and how it might be used in different situations, including training.

Summary

Having looked at the sessions through the lens of retrodution, and the narrative of brave moments, and of the model development itself, it is, I believe, possible to observe some broad themes. However, these 'themes' only properly emerged after a retroductive analysis had taken place. I would suggest that the biggest theme which has emerged from the co-researcher sessions is that there is a high correlation between the psychological starting point of the co-researcher and a more 'definitive outcome'. By psychological starting point, I am alluding to how motivated they were to reach a particular outcome. In particular, how personal it was to them, and of course, how pressing; in essence, the psychological starting point is a measure of their personal drive. By 'definitive outcome', I mean how binary the outcome was. For example, Russell left his employment, which was markedly different to Rory, who ended up feeling like he had experienced the 'light' version of the model. In many ways this should not be a particularly surprising finding, at least in retrospect. Both Amy and Russell were wrestling with decisions which required (as far as they were concerned) an answer during the time period in which the sessions were taking place. This was highlighted by Russell's decision to leave his employment after considering what was the 'right thing' to do, and Amy's use of the model to 'self-coach' towards her decision.

Whilst no definitive outcomes may have been reached by anyone during the research, it does appear that the factors which I have called 'personal drive' (a combination of how important to the individual the outcome being reached was, and a need for immediacy (how quickly it was perceived that some decision had to be reached)) were important factors in influencing how definitive the outcome actually was.

Martha was keen to generate a process for the model so that she could perhaps facilitate its use within her organisation. This would likely account for her desire to have a slightly more process-driven approach to its use. There was also an absence of particularly personal goals during her sessions. Rory had almost no concrete examples upon which the coaching part of the sessions could be built, but he did wish to develop as a leader, and so although the 'content' tended to be retrospective, he did gain a firm grasp of how the process might flow. I would suggest that Rory and

Martha's personal drive and need for immediacy of outcome was, compared to the others, low. Mickey was initially confused about his purpose during the sessions and what the model represented, however he was keen to develop as a leader and so utilised it, more than anyone else, in a regular and almost daily regime. I would suggest that Mickey's personal drive and need for immediacy was medium. Mickey and Amy also highlight that the model may also be able to be used for self-reflection and/or self-coaching. This could also be said to be true of Russell, who came to a decision particularly quickly, but still suggested that the exposure to the model had been, at least in part, responsible.

It is noteworthy that Russell was motivated into action at a very early stage and that the primary driver seemed to be his contemplation of the idea of what was 'the right thing to do' in terms of remaining in, or leaving his current employment. It was also of interest that Amy ended up successfully coaching herself around an issue which she appeared to believe was more 'life' orientated, something which she considered might be out of the remit of the model. I would suggest that Russell and Amy's personal drive and need for immediacy was very high. It could also be argued that perhaps simply having a goal, and finding space and time with a coach in a productive dialogue, with merely the concept of bravery being touched upon, could have been enough to elicit similar changes.

For future researchers who may be considering using a retroductive approach to analyse Action Research data, a very important point to note is that these reflective sessions also helped me to triangulate what was the 'end point' or 'exit point' for each of the co-researchers. In the case of Rory, for example, I used his assertion that he had been engaged with the 'light' version of the model to assist my retroductive analysis.

Another important point to note is the sequence of analysis. Although I had initially studied the transcripts of the co-researcher sessions, I only began the retroductive approach once I had studied the reflection session transcripts, although this was before they were themed. I then themed the reflection sessions, and reconsidered the narrative and retroductive elements of the co-researcher sessions.

In the next chapter, Chapter 6, the themes from the reflective sessions are explored.

Chapter 6: The findings; the Reflection Sessions

This Chapter explores the findings from the analysis of the reflection sessions. These sessions involved myself and each co-researcher having a (separate) conversation about their experiences. The five reflection sessions were analysed using a thematic approach, and subsequently six separate themes emerged. These themes are discussed in this chapter, as is the validation through triangulation which I would suggest exists between the retroductive analysis of the previous chapter and the thematic analysis of this chapter.

Before the reflection sessions began, each co-researcher was given a copy of the first email which they had sent me with their thoughts about bravery. This was partly to remind them about their original thoughts and partly to give them a sense of how things may have developed during the time which had elapsed between their original exposure to the model and this meeting. No reflective session took place longer than four weeks after co-researcher session number six.

A retroductive approach to analysing the data gathered from the reflective sessions seemed inappropriate, as I wanted to glean a sense of any theme or trend collectively from the experiences of the co-researchers, whereas in the analysis of the data during the evolution of the model, I was much more concerned about understanding their journey and any key developmental points along the way for them as individuals, as they each had distinct and separate 'exit points'. However, in this instance, I could compare their perspectives, and so rather than finding myself immersed in the multi-faceted dynamic of each unique co-researcher session, this approach allowed me to consider their experiences collectively and so thematically.

It was only after the last reflective session had concluded that I began the process of searching for any themes across the data. The audio recordings were listened to several times and the transcripts read several times also. I sought to find commonality of experiences and observations. I coded potential themes using coloured highlighters. I was interested on this occasion not in the individual's journey per se, but more on any shared experiences. Six distinct themes were uncovered: Contemplation and

awareness of bravery in others and self, Bringing things to conscious awareness, Decision making, Bravery enhancement in self, Coaching Bravery and Emotional pitfalls and the model.

Theme 1 – Contemplation and awareness of bravery in others and self

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the journey which the co-researchers had been on had engendered what appeared to be a greater sense of awareness around bravery. In discussing how she might think or even coach differently in the future Amy noted,

‘...go back to that person that you quoted as being brave, or people, and put them in your situation, what would they do?...because that’s the interesting thing. I kind of got there myself anyway, and I’m not sure whether some of our discussions got me there more subconsciously’.

Amy was referring to the idea, from session one, of thinking about someone who she considered to be brave. Mickey had also been considering brave people and how perhaps we might all become braver by introducing an element of reflection. In one sense Amy was also talking about reflection:

‘What I understand very well is that I recognised a year ago brave people, people who could be brave, who are brave, brave people that can make brave decisions but...could never... feel it, why they were brave, I don’t think we were born brave and not everybody is born as brave and strong leaders, so I think now I understand that they have made the reflection for the certain journey as well, in becoming brave and taking brave decisions’.

Russell had also been considering bravery, and perhaps because he had made a particularly brave decision, he appeared to be contemplating not a brave individual but more the actual act of bravery.

‘... it’s very clear to me now that making a decision, whatever that decision is, is brave. So it might be the wrong decision. It could be something very small or it could be something very big and it’s not just making the decision, it’s the conviction to follow it through. And I think that’s where ...making a decision is not necessarily the brave thing to do, it’s following it through.’

Martha was also considering bravery, and brave (or not) acts, and she was thinking more widely.

'Yes, and thinking through some of the mistakes that have been made in the media from, you know, from the banking situation...politics that have happened recently, the changes, and further afield from a business perspective in terms of China in particular, and then some of the war things that are going on. Because it's almost looking at it through this lens of – have people made decisions rashly, or for their own personal gain, rather than what's the right thing to do?'

On the other hand Rory, like Amy (above) was considering how he might approach things differently.

'So thinking about, you know, things like company values and staff values and pulling those into the decision-making process, so I've never really maybe thought about those, contemplated them that much before...also bringing in the humanistic side of things, so the more emotional side and thinking about the emotional needs or how that can affect your decision making.'

Amy was also thinking more widely, less about bravery, and more about the absence of it.

'I guess...how difficult it was for me to find people who I consider to be brave, in the real world, if that makes sense to you. In my world. Or maybe that just says something about our organisation at the moment. So I found it quite surprising. Maybe that is the nature of the culture in our organisation'

This absence of bravery was also echoed by Martha.

'...people take the easy route...it feels that people are only just starting to realise the impact that their decisions make...my perception of it is that they are taking the easy route rather than actually thinking, do you know what, I'm not going to make a decision just now, because actually I'm not 100% convinced that we actually have all the facts, really. So paying bonuses to people in banks, I'm sorry! [laughter]...didn't affect me personally but I just don't see how that makes sense, and somebody's made the decision somewhere.'

Whilst a greater awareness of the bravery of others has the possibility to ultimately shift organisational cultural norms, I think that for a leader this would be ineffective without also having increased self-awareness, in this case, about bravery. Axelrod (2012) suggests that self-awareness is one of the key commodities in executive development, and Walumbwa *et al.* (2008) suggest that authentic leadership can be promoted through, amongst other things, increasing self-awareness. (There are links here also to theme 2).

However, Brown and Trevino (2006) claim that self-awareness is not part of the ethical leadership construct, and relates more to authentic leadership; although ethical leadership suggests (amongst other things) that ethical leaders lead in a way that makes followers feel that their rights are being respected (Ciulla, 2004) and interestingly there are elements of this in Theme 1 (where Rory discusses bringing in the more humanistic side of things).

Theme 2 – Bringing things to conscious awareness

One main effect of the model appeared to be that it allowed people to step through their thinking, to consider more consciously that which they might previously have done automatically. Russell confirmed this:

'I think really ... getting...conscious about the process that your mind, you hope, takes you through but actually seeing it in black and white and realising actually how complex decisions are and being brave is.'

He went on to note how the model made him more aware during decision making.

'I guess from my personal perspective, the most surprising thing was me resigning halfway through the process, and I kind of think there was partly an impact of that the bravery model in that. I think if you use this, use the model in every day it will make a fundamental difference to the decisions that you take.'

This awareness raising element was also noted by Mickey.

'I didn't realise that there were that many pulling factors which are steering in one certain direction and also how they interfere with each other. That, well to see it on a piece of paper and to see it in a model and talk about and discuss it, that again, that was a surprising insight for me.'

And also by Rory.

'...coming back to that humanistic, the gravitational pull, it's once I think about it, once I've seen it written down there it's definitely made me more aware of that and made me think about the people involved in the decision...it's definitely shifted my outlook'

One of the main tenets of Relational Leadership is that leadership is best focussed towards social process rather than context issues (Dachler, 1992). There are elements of this in Theme 5 (coaching others) and this theme (Theme 2): making more conscious all the factors at play, including the human element (Rory). This may also have the effect of increasing self-awareness, which is promoted by the proponents of Authentic Leadership.

Theme 3 – Decision making

Perhaps surprisingly, I was surprised that decision making came out so strongly as a theme, for although Eberlin and Tatum (2008) discuss making just decisions, for example, I could find no reference to research having been conducted into coaching models and decision making whilst conducting the literature review (Figure 2.3). I had considered, of course, that a coaching model which was concerned with leadership and bravery would eventually have an impact on decision making. However, I had posed the research question before I had remotely considered what the model would look like, and in the mêlée of the participative action research as the model evolved, I don't think I ever got far enough back from it to consider quite the impact that it might be having, or might be able to have, on decision making (although decision making was mentioned very early on (Figure 4.2).

Discussing the model Rory observes that:

'...it's definitely made me think more about the decision making process as a whole, whereas before again it was very, very easy just to read something, see the facts and go and make your decision and go with

it...and I think it's really good because I'm at that stage in my career where I've made the move from being effectively told what to do, being on the tail end of the decisions, to actually making the decisions. So to have a model, and this is probably really the first sort of model I've ever had of, you know, of making decisions really.'

Whilst Rory is discussing decision making in general terms, perhaps again because of his recent appointment, Russell is more specific in thinking about brave decisions.

'I'm quite prepared to take decisions anyway but I think I'm a lot more aware of ... the path to get to those decisions and ... so I'm not making snap decisions, I'm making considered bravery decisions. I feel, and this will be partly because I'm leaving as well, but I feel like the lid's been taken off... I'm quite a quick thinker, so I can go through the process in a more structured way really helps me because it helps me articulate it to other people'.

Although Mickey is specifically talking about communication, it is interesting that he has made a decision to communicate differently, perhaps even in a braver way:

'I'm using the model more and more in my day to day practice, in the way I communicate with people, I work with people...you can communicate better by making more clear, firm statements of what I expect from you'.

Unlike Mickey, Amy is less concerned with communication in decision making, or simply bravery, but more how she makes decisions. In the following extract she discusses how the model might actually make her consider taking a less emotional approach.

'...my danger is I always take it on the heart rather than the head. It's not rational; it's my gut feeling about what I should do. Because that's the way I make decisions... my danger is that I will not consider the more rational routes...and the model kind of almost forces you to do that...because my natural way to do it would be to ignore all of those, because actually I want this outcome, and therefore because my heart wants this outcome, then I make it rational. Rather than it actually is'.

On the other hand, Martha is also concerned with decision making, but also how the model and the ideas surrounding it might influence the decision making of others.

'So if you think of, it could be quite revolutionary, if that's the right word, because you do only need to start small, it's like a social network isn't it, so you have one friend and that one friend puts you in contact with three friends...and all of a sudden you've got a thousand friends on Facebook, it's similar to that...If I go through this model and showed it to everybody, then they're going through it themselves rather than me telling them what to do, does that make sense? Maybe, if this is written down and people do start to think about the decisions they've made...'

Servant leadership (amongst other things) suggests that self-interest should not motivate leaders (Greenleaf, 1977). There are also elements of this in Theme 3 (considering other factors and others in decision making).

Messick and Bazerman (1996) suggest that decision making may be improved by improving our theories about the world, ourselves and others, and is an important component of ethical leadership. Ronald and Shaw (2008) in relation to improving leadership decision making offer the advice of; know your team, pay attention to behavioural flags, create openings for contrarians and reinforce the three strike rule. However, as mentioned previously, there is either very little or nothing in the literature which specifically addresses coaching leadership decision making, and no research that I could find regarding decision-making models in coaching. However, Situational Leadership promotes (amongst other things) situational adaptability (Graeff, 1983). There are elements of this in Theme 3 (the ability to adapt to the needs of the environment and make a considered decision/take considered action).

Theme 4 – Bravery enhancement in self

Each co-researcher had had a different experience in terms of their feelings about whether their own bravery had been enhanced, but there did seem to be a theme of change. Whilst Martha did not feel that her bravery had been

enhanced, she did feel that she was on a journey. When asked if she felt she was any braver, she stated:

'Not yet, because I'm not sure that I've thought about it in that way yet... I think it's definitely...I'm definitely on the journey because it's made me question and it's made me think, so when I was going through it with (Name) that helped me personally...'

Rory also seemed to think that he was at the beginning of a journey, and his 'light version' comment is shown below.

'What I was also thinking about is almost at the moment I'm almost using a light version. One of the things that I was thinking about as I was pulling together some of these notes earlier was...how this model would change as my career progresses, and at the moment I think most of my decisions are made...aren't massively business critical, a lot of them are more, as we've discussed previously, the sort of team management issues.'

In a similar way to Martha, Amy appears also to have felt some sort of shift.

'Well it's made me challenge whether I was or not! My...emotional superficial view of bravery is now a little clearer...'

Russell's 'shift' appears to be a little more definitive.

'...and it's probably cut back on my stupidity as well. The intuitive bit ... so it's confidence...confidence to be brave, so I was probably quite brave or stupid anyway, but unconsciously competent. So I am now consciously competent when being brave.'

There are also similarities here to Theme 2, 'Bringing things to conscious awareness'. Mickey's 'shift' is similar to Russell's in that it appears to be quite concrete, and also has links to Theme 2.

'...there's clearly a difference in approach and in giving messages and speaking to people and there is clear difference, whereas six months ago...also when I have not made a brave decision I go back to my office and say this was not a brave example, next time better. This comes from getting from unconscious to conscious and that's already for me a very positive effect from the journey so that I now can understand what I'm doing and the impact that I'm creating for myself and the people around.'

Authentic leadership suggests that Authentic Leaders should be 'deeply aware of how they think and behave' (Brown and Trevino, 2006) and as mentioned previously, Walumbwa *et al.* (2008) suggest that self-awareness is a major component of authentic leadership. There are elements of this in Theme 4, i.e. being aware of self (in this instance in relation to bravery).

Theme 5 – Coaching bravery

A theme which emerged from the reflective discussions with the co-researchers was the way forward, and specifically whether the model could be used to coach and enhance bravery. Rory suggested that whilst it certainly could enhance bravery, the actual brave behaviour might not take place.

'...the model's giving you a framework for considering the brave decision...it's maybe not telling you to make that brave decision...but I think it's certainly going to point out what the brave decision would be...and it's up to the individual to make that decision as to whether they take that decision or they go ho, ho, I'm not up for that at all'.

Russell suggests that it could help others, and he also mentions a framework, but points out that the process of use need not be too prescriptive.

'...it really is a confidence builder because people aren't stupid but they do need to be empowered and feel like they're making the right decision for the right reasons and that they have a framework. So some people like process, some people like to really go with the flow, but I think the model helps both of those because the people that want to go with the flow, it gives them a bit of a framework to make sure that they're not making the wrong steps or acting irrationally. And the people that like a process, it gives a framework but it's not the, you know, the idiot's guide step by step and I think that ... it sits very neatly in the middle'.

Mickey's idea for the use of the model in relation to enhancing bravery appeared to be positive, and he also alluded to self-coaching.

'...and then rather than being a document next to it in your drawer it becomes a steering, it becomes an automatic steering pilot in yourself... I mean, if somebody comes in I already know what I want to do, give them clear message, clear expectation and that's, that is really hard...whereas six months ago you would start the same conversation but you would not know where to end...adding up all the success of the brave steps will lead to an end game which is good for both parties.'

Amy also seemed to be optimistic about the model's future coaching effectiveness, and perhaps because of her experiences in self-coaching using the model, had begun to imagine it being used in a particular way.

'...it forces them to consider everything, but whilst doing that it also forces them to ask the question whether what they're talking about is brave or not...and that's why I quite like the format...if you're saying this is your brave decision and we're exploring it, let's have a quick check. Put that person in that you said was brave, what would they do?' 'Oh no it's different.' 'Well why is it different?'...'What's the reason? Let's go back round the model, and what are the differences then?'

Martha's contribution (towards the end of our time together, and beginning to run late, was much more succinct):

'Yeah, yeah definitely, without a doubt, without a doubt.'

An entirely meaningless positivist analysis of the theme of coaching bravery would suggest that the majority of co-researchers would appear to agree that this model could enhance bravery in a coaching situation. I mention this because it is highly unlikely to extrapolate to the real world in a way that generates thousands of braver leaders overnight. What is more relevant here is that the worldview of the co-researchers appears to have changed. They are now much more aware about bravery, about how and why they and others may be making decisions, but they are also now aware of a potential process which they can take forward. This process is likely to be different for all of them; however it is possible that one 'Meta Theme' gathered from the themes so far might be that of self-coaching, of moving forwards. There are hints here that not only are they aware of the framework and the process which this model provides, but also that they may well use the model on their own as they move forwards, without

perhaps the need to have recourse to a coach. This may imply that the model has some level of sustainability. It is also worthy of note that Transformational Leadership promotes individual consideration through coaching (Bass, 1985) and that there are elements of this in Theme 5 through the ability to coach others.

Relational Leadership promotes (amongst other things) that the main focus of leadership would be better directed at social process rather than context issues (Dachler, 1992). There are elements of this also in Theme 5 (coaching others).

Theme 6 – Emotional pitfalls and the model

The theme of ‘emotional pitfalls’ could also be entitled ‘challenges going forwards’, or ‘limitations of the model’. It has a resonance to Rory’s comment in Theme 5, which essentially suggested that the brave decision might not actually be taken. I have entitled this theme ‘emotional pitfalls and the model’ because I believe that the following comments are connected either directly or indirectly to the ability of the coachee, with the help of the coach, to reach an emotional ‘tipping point’. Amy mentions emotions directly.

‘...whether it’s an easier model to use for a business decision than an emotional decision. And...I mean we got there, but it was more difficult...And it worked for my issue, kind of. Although some of it was more difficult because I’m talking about leaving, and that’s creeping into my whole life issue, which is different.’

I believe that Amy reached an emotional tipping point which prompted her to stay in her role. However, I also believe that the reason she questions the use of the model for more ‘life’ orientated decisions is not because it couldn’t be used in this way (although that may well be the case) but because in this instance, when I was using the model to coach, it was too confusing (and probably emotionally confusing) to allow for any clarity of thought around the issue; and it was only when she coached herself that a greater clarity was achieved.

Rory also mentions emotions as being a potential issue in the model not being utilised to its fullest extent.

'...I think the individual traits of a person...I mean, how do you model that? And that's going to alter your whole model quite drastically dependent on that... I think it's difficult to say how the emotional state of somebody would...what am I trying to say here...is there's nowt queer as folk, I guess'.

Russell suggests that there may be a gap between theory and practice. This is also hinted at above by Amy and Rory in this Theme (and also as mentioned, by Rory in Theme 5).

'The only problem with any model is practicality...because it's how you put bravery into action or brave decisions into action, which may be a completely different thing, but it's where a lot of models and courses that you go on and coaching sessions stop. So they take you through a whole load of theoretical stuff that you leave that day and it's gone, thus you never use it again. Or you hope that it's into your subconscious somewhere and you are using bits of it, but I think the power of the model is the totality of it, not dipping in and out'.

I would suggest that at the heart of Russell's comment is the need to allow the coachee to gain enough emotional leverage to take action, so that the model is not simply theoretical. This again requires an emotional tipping point to be reached.

Mickey's concern is similar, in that there may be emotional (rather than logical) barriers. He sees a potential challenge in coaching peers, and suggests that perhaps group coaching might be the way forward. Mickey's example probably focusses on the specific emotional barrier of perceived status.

'...I think that the model is really helpful, as I said getting even more and more unconscious but getting it operational in, and in a structure where you do not have full control is more difficult...I'm the leader in my department...so coaching...to subordinates would probably be okay because you can go, this is the way...but if you wanted to do it peer...I think maybe it's one of those situations where a group coaching session,

you'd need to have a coach who was separate and then all the peers get talked through it'.

Theme 6 has not been linked to any specific leadership 'schools of thought'; however I think that it could be argued that if possible, emotional pitfalls are to be avoided across the leadership spectrum. What I believe that this theme does suggest is the requirement to conduct further research into the 'emotional needs audit' element of the model during its use in a coaching session.

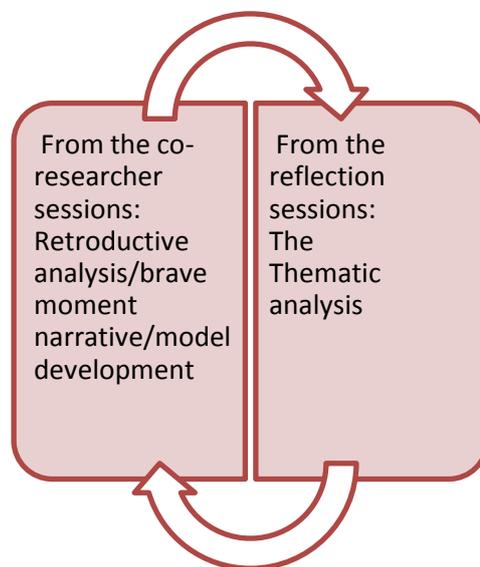
Summary

The reflection sessions with the co-researchers had reminded me that there appeared to be a wide range of engagement and adoption of the model. Russell, Mickey and Amy appeared to gain a more substantive outcome from their journeys, in that they made big decisions. This was particularly the case with Russell and Amy, whilst Mickey was enjoying quite a different leadership experience. Rory had no real pressing situations and so had to engage with the process using retrospective material, and Martha appeared to be more content. I think that it is fair to say that the model appeared to be at its most effective when there were real and pressing issues. However, a different way to look at this may be to consider what the relative goals were of the co-researchers. Martha's goal was to gain an understanding of the 'mechanics', which she did. Amy's goal was to generate an inspiring way forward in her career. Russell's goal was to understand whether he should move forward in a different direction in his career. Mickey's goal was to become a stronger leader. Rory's goal was less obvious. I suspect that it was to gain some development at an early stage in his career as a leader. This may or may not have been useful development for him. And so there is definitely an element of the circumstances surrounding the co-researcher's immersion (or not) into this model; but I believe that it actually boils down to goals. In other words, the power of the model is potentially made far greater by the co-researcher's own desire to move forward in a clearly defined direction. Therefore one other main theme which could potentially be gleaned from this analysis is that effectiveness of the model is partially goal-dependent, and particularly when there is an emotive element propelling the coachee to reach that goal. This was also illustrated as a potential obstacle in the use of the model, and I think that it is worth

noting that it may be likely that for the coach and coachee to have success with this model, close attention should be paid to the more emotive elements surrounding the situation.

Apart from implying that there may be a correlation between the initial goals of the co-researchers and model effectiveness, I believe that the information summarised above and in this chapter also helps to triangulate and improve the completeness of this study when considered alongside the analysis of the co-researcher sessions. The retroductive/narrative/development analysis of the co-researcher sessions and the thematic analysis (plus the reflection sessions generally) provided an opportunity for an element of triangulation. Figure 6.1 illustrates the potentially symbiotic relationship between the reflection sessions/themes and the retroduction/narrative/model.

Figure 6.1 – The relationship between thematic and retroductive analysis



The narrative part of the analysis in Chapter 5 (although still partially retroductive in nature) was specifically looking at the 'journey' of the co-researchers by noting points along their journey when I suspected that they had had a 'brave moment', which was normally connected to a decision and/or action. However, as I can now point to themed discussions with the co-researchers in this chapter about bravery (Theme 4), this has a twofold effect. Firstly, it would seem that there had been a generalised trend towards being braver across the co-researcher group, thus making it more likely that the effect was actually happening and not wishful interpretation by the researcher whilst the individual journeys were being analysed. Secondly, this is also likely to decrease the chance of interpretative bias in generating themes across the co-researchers, as the individual journeys of each co-researcher can also be analysed from a 'brave moment' perspective. This can, of course, never entirely eradicate interpretative bias, but I believe that it does promote more critical thinking.

In relation to the model development, a similar situation exists. The retroductive analysis of the model development (or the model's journey) is reinforced by the fact that two strong themes emerged, viz. Theme 3 – Decision making and Theme 5 – Coaching bravery. This seems to enhance the likelihood that the model development points were real and genuinely developmental. The caveat here, of course, is that what may have been highlighted retroductively as model development may not have been the actual development points which were ultimately 'working' for co-researchers as they reflected on the 'finalised model'.

The retroductive approach relied on having a fixed point in time and space from which a reasoned 'backwards analysis' could be made. However, not only did quite a lot of the 'end point' information come from the reflective sessions; the fact that there seemed to be a fairly homogenous feel to the themes, appeared to me to indicate that I was dealing with a set of data (from the reflection sessions) which was robust. This robustness, I would argue, adds credence to the individual end points as there appeared to be no 'outliers', i.e. the reflection sessions could generally be themed and even though their data 'end points' were all different, I think that this lessened the chances of any individual simply telling me what they thought that I wanted to hear. And of course, as I had 'end point' data from the

reflective sessions (not simply the themes) the robustness of the retroductive analysis was enhanced.

In the following chapter, Chapter 7, the relationships between these themes and the leadership theories are explored, conclusions are drawn about the study, the limitations of the research are discussed, and suggestions for further research are made.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This study asked the question, 'Could a coaching model be designed which could help to enhance bravery in a leader?' I sought to answer this question using the process of Action Research and with the assistance of six co-researchers. The 'field-work' took place over a period of approximately six months. The outcome of the study appears to be that indeed a coaching model has been designed which may well be able to enhance bravery within leaders. That is, of course, a simplistic rendition of the outcome, and yet, despite the many caveats which must follow such a bold claim, there does appear to have been some sort of 'shift' within some of the co-researchers who would agree that the research question which was initially posed had been answered positively. However, a 'could' is not a 'would', and the experiences of six individuals are not necessarily going to be the experiences of anyone else. What can be said is that during the course of this research, some changes, as reported by the co-researchers, did appear to take place, and a potential coaching model was developed.

From my analysis of the data, I would conclude that there were two main developmental areas taking place, and therefore two ways to assist in drawing conclusions. These two areas were (i) the journeys of the co-researchers, and (ii) model evolution. The journeys of the co-researchers were also able to be considered in two ways. One was the 'brave moment' narrative, where at various points some of the co-researchers appeared to be taking a braver stance. The other was the retroductively traced journey from a known 'end-point'. As well as summarising the journeys of the co-researchers and the evolution of the model, this chapter also presents an idealised process for use of the model, discusses the limitations of this research, and recommends areas for further research.

The journeys of the co-researchers

In many ways the individual journeys were much more important than the development of the model. In one sense they were the embodiment of the model. Although I looked at the data to identify 'model development' points, I had also employed what I have called a retroductive (and narrative, in terms of the 'brave moment' journey) approach to analyse the data, and so I was aware of the stages along the co-researchers' journey and the 'end point'. As I have stated previously, I felt that there was a strong connection

between the motivation of the co-researchers to achieve a particular outcome and their level of engagement with the model. Whether simply having conversations with them would have resulted in the same outcomes is unknown. My analysis is that their experience in generating greater clarity of thought about their situation and taking, where relevant, action to change that situation would have been diminished had they not had the model to assist their thinking (and this can be seen in Theme 5, Chapter 6). In Chapter 6, it can be seen that thinking about a brave individual, the sense of rightness, the pulling factors, the questions, and to a lesser degree the gravitational factors, seemed relevant to different co-researchers in different ways.

Model Evolution

The model itself was not devised by the co-researchers from a blank sheet of paper. There was already something to work on. This was very much down to the time constraints which surrounded me and the aforementioned co-researchers. It would have been entirely impractical, and probably frustrating, for extremely busy leaders to spend time reflecting on what might be and how that might look. It would, however, in different circumstances be an interesting study to carry out. In this instance the co-researchers were 'primed' by the thoughts of key advisors, ideas of 'rightness', and the broad concepts of pulling and gravitational factors. The beginnings of the model evolution have been discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. However, having considered and analysed all the data from the co-researcher and reflection sessions, and engaged in some post research reflection, I felt it useful to construct what I have called 'the idealised process' for the use of the model. This may be of particular use for future research. This is based on not only my own reflections, but on the observations, comments and reflections and suggestions of my co-researchers during the research process.

The Idealised Process

What I have described as the seven-part 'Idealised Process' is shown below. It should be noted that this process is aspirational and has not yet been carried out in its entirety, and also that when it is used, it may well need to be amended.

Part 1 – Considering Bravery

The coachee would be encouraged to think about bravery, to think about whom they consider to be brave. This could be someone who is in their workplace or outside their workplace, present-day or from history. The coachee should also be encouraged to think about what brave acts they have seen, when they themselves have been brave, and also what constitutes bravery. Once this discussion has taken place, the coach might consider introducing the concept of the ‘right thing at the right time’ definition of bravery.

Part 2 – Consideration of the Pulling Factors in the environment

The coach would introduce the idea of the pulling factors by giving examples of some and allowing the coachee to really reflect upon their ‘landscape’ and what factors are pulling and thus potentially influencing them. An example of this evolution is shown in Figure 4.4.

Part 3 – Consideration of the gravitational factors (the more humanistic elements of the environment).

The coach would introduce the idea of the gravitational factors which are described in Appendix C. I believe that during the co-researcher/coachee sessions, this was not explored enough, although it was considered by one co-researcher and is discussed in Chapter 6.

Part 4 – Consideration of the coachee’s emotional state

Coachees would be asked to consider their emotional state ‘at present’. The Human Givens Emotional Needs Audit (Human Givens Institute, 2006) is useful for this. Again, due to the way that the co-researcher sessions went, there was little or no exploration of this, and yet these questions could be crucial in helping the coachee arrive at a brave decision, and it should be emphasised here that ensuring that the coachee’s emotional needs are being met in balance may necessitate a ‘sub-routine’ of exploration, and that a coaching session or sessions may need to be devoted to this alone. An example of this may be that the coachee is feeling tremendously insecure and that this is causing him/her to make short-term and not well considered decisions, and/or decisions which are designed to make them feel more secure but are not fully fledged brave decisions. The

insecurity may have to be addressed before any other significant progress could be made. Or it may be that the Emotional Needs Audit highlights that the coachee is feeling a loss of control. Raising their awareness of this and how this might be influencing their behaviour could be an essential prerequisite to moving forward, as it may be colouring the coachee's ability to make the 'right' decision. The idea of exploring emotional state came from another co-researcher.

Part 5 – Consideration of all the factors from the sphere

During the coachee/co-researcher sessions, I do not think that enough emphasis was placed on the need to be relaxed and as calm as possible during the imagined journey of the sphere to the various parts of the landscape. The need to remain calm and not overly emotionally aroused is important to allow for neo-cortical consideration here. This may even mean that a 'closed eye' exercise should be conducted, where appropriate. The sphere is discussed in Chapter 4 and replaced my original idea about a zone of equilibrium.

The findings of this study suggest that emphasis should be placed on questioning the coachee about the nature of each pulling factor and what ultimately must be considered whilst 'hovering' over that area. Similarly, the gravitational factors must be considered carefully, as this can be where the real 'people cost' is, because with some individuals this may be overlooked or too readily dismissed. Also, some leaders may find it difficult to be brave and to make the tough economic decisions (a pulling factor) and one reason may be that this lack of bravery manifests when they fail to consider fully and to subsequently act upon what is the right thing to do, perhaps from, say, a financial perspective, which whilst ultimately beneficial to some elements of the workforce, may be detrimental to others.

Part 6 – Considering the Brave decision

The 'engine' of the sphere is, as I have suggested previously, bravery. This I believe was far from clear during the research, partly because it was far from clear for me. I was initially unsure whether the 'thought exercise' which led the sphere to a position of bravery should consist of the sphere simply

'floating' to a point where there were no real forces at work on it, i.e. the original 'eye of the storm/zone of equilibrium' idea, which was essentially the concept that there was a place of tranquillity where a reasoned decision could be made whilst the storm raged all around, but that the sphere would be in a position where it would be unaffected.

However, in retrospect I think the idea I did touch upon during the research, and which I think is best, is that the sphere must be 'driven' to a point and held there by the energy of bravery. It is unlikely that there would be a point of natural equilibrium in any decision making process; by its very nature it would require an act of will, an intent to swim against conflicting currents and hold position in the flows and eddies of conflicting forces. The interior of the sphere itself should be a place of calmness and contemplation, and this is probably the true eye of the storm. It is also probable that this contemplation would from time to time include the contemplation of the effort and energy required to make the brave decision or take the brave course of action. And this may well require the assistance of a coach.

I believe, therefore, that the consolidating part of positioning the sphere to a place of bravery was generally missing from the use of the model in the research. To continue with one of the examples which was used previously in Part 5 of the 'Idealised Process', it might be that the coachee perceives a conflict between being fair to a group of employees and fulfilling an economic priority. The potential power of the model lies in the coach's ability to help the coachee drive the sphere to the 'brave point'. In this example it may be that the brave point is closer to the gravitational factor of 'fairness to the individual' rather than to the economic pull of the organisation. This leads on to the brave decision itself.

Part 7 – Taking the Brave action

Two co-researchers identified that the model could not ensure that any agreed action during the coaching session was actually carried out. This is an important point. The same challenge is potentially faced in any coaching relationship where a decision must be made or an action taken. It may, however, be more starkly obvious if the theme has been that of making brave decisions and/or taking brave actions. Whilst a decision or action cannot be guaranteed, it should be noted that many coaching relationships are not one-off affairs and that a series of coaching sessions, combined

with the skill of the coach and the strength of the relationship, are likely to give the coachee the greatest chance possible to carry out any agreed actions. This may in part be due to the accountability which is engendered within the coachee. Figure 7.1 illustrates this process.

Figure 7.1 – The idealised process



Themes and Leadership Theory

As I contemplated the findings from the analysis of the reflection sessions, I observed that elements from the reflection session themes can be found in the leadership theories as outlined in the literature review in Chapter 2 and as noted towards the end of each particular theme section in Chapter 6. It could be argued that some of the relationships between theme and theory as described towards the end of the theme sections in Chapter 6 are tenuous. I would contend, however, that these relationships are nonetheless real, and taking into account all the data from this research

study, are possibly stronger than they might appear at first glance. I have illustrated where I believe there is a relationship between the particular themes in this chapter and the relevant leadership theories (as discussed in Chapter 2) in Figure 7.2 below.

Figure 7.2 – The relationship between themes and leadership theories

Leadership theory	Themes
Ethical	Theme 1, contemplation and awareness of bravery in others and self. Theme 3, decision making.
Authentic	Theme 1, contemplation and awareness of bravery in others and self. Theme 2, bringing things to conscious awareness. Theme 4, bravery enhancement in self.
Relational	Theme 2, bringing things to conscious awareness. Theme 5, coaching bravery.
Servant	Theme 3, decision making.
Situational	Theme 3, decision making.
Transformational	Theme 5, coaching bravery.

Figure 7.2 shows how the themes from the reflection sessions can also be integral to the six theories of leadership. Chapter 2 identified that brave leadership could have permeability throughout each of the leadership theories, and that drilling deeper into the literature themes from the research could be linked with aspects of the leadership theories. And whilst this in no way implies some form of triangulation, it does suggest that brave leadership is intrinsically connected to these leadership theories.

Considering, then, the journeys of the co-researchers and their reflections, the themes and leadership theories, I believe that brave leadership can begin to be defined as something which is fundamentally required in leadership. If, as I have suggested earlier, leadership has something to do with change, then brave leadership has an essential role to play in ensuring that change takes place. Each of the six leadership theories espouses its own values and their importance in leadership. Brave leadership therefore

has at its core a requirement to make the appropriate changes by taking action, or by taking no action; or to resist change by taking the appropriate action, or by taking no action. For leadership to be truly effective, brave leadership must exist at all levels and in every 'school of thought'.

Additionally, however, the coaching model which has evolved from this research displays an element of my bias, and that is that the gravitational factors must be given proper consideration. This I believe is crucial in helping bridge the 'perceived gap' (as discussed in Chapter 1) between leadership training and theory and what I and others seem to experience on an on-going basis in different areas of our lives. If greater emphasis is given both academically and practically to the 'human element' then this may, in one way, help reduce this gap.

However, emphasis alone is not enough. A 'brave decision' must be made. The fact that this came out strongly as a theme (Theme 3, Chapter 6) from the reflection sessions is hugely beneficial, not simply because it adds to an understanding of the research journey but also because it highlights one of the key elements that may also be missing in the 'perceived gap' as discussed in Chapter 1, which is that despite all the 'information traffic' from things such as company values on notice boards and ethics committees, they may well simply remain as 'noise in the system' unless brave decisions are made and ultimately brave actions taken.

Whilst the brave decision is crucial to make, the brave action (which may be inaction) is equally crucial. However, as Rory points out (Theme 5, Chapter 6) it may be that the action is simply not carried out. I doubt that any coaching model could, or indeed should, guarantee that an action is taken, however one factor which may impede well-considered decision making and an appropriate action being taken is highlighted in Theme 6, Chapter 6, 'emotional pitfalls and the model'. I believe that this theme emerged because a particular area of the model was not fully explored. This area was the emotional state of the coachee.

The idea of having the coachee think about their own emotional state came from the co-researcher Amy. The model suggests using the Human Givens emotional needs audit to begin to ascertain if some emotional needs are not being met. In relation to the use of the model, the emotional needs audit could highlight areas which may need to be brought into balance before

proceeding further. For example, if the emotional need for control was not being fully met, it is possible that any potential decision making could be subconsciously skewed towards ensuring that a greater sense of control was felt. It is also possible that if the coachee's emotional needs were not being met in balance, then the general 'emotional capacity' required to think clearly under pressure and make considered decisions could be greatly diminished.

The relationship between the concept map, the themes of decision making and emotional pitfalls have implications for brave leadership and the brave leadership coaching model. Firstly, as previously stated, brave leadership is likely to be required within an organisation, irrespective of the underpinning leadership theory. Secondly, brave leadership is unlikely to manifest without a brave decision being made and action taken. Thirdly, the brave decision is more likely to be taken if the emotional needs of the leader are being met in balance.

Limitations of the research

Apart from what was identified in Chapter 6 (Theme 6 – Emotional Pitfalls and the Model) which was essentially the potential gap between choosing a brave course of action and actually carrying it out, the main issue is that it is impossible to say what problems with the model there might ultimately be. By this I mean that this is really just the beginning of what may be possible within the coach/coachee relationship using this approach. It might be interesting, therefore, to explore the model from a case study perspective. However, this research was devised to develop a model with co-researchers. This ultimately meant that the co-researchers and I were each on our own unique journey. As they were also helping to construct the model as at the same time they considered how their situation might fit within it, no-one actually experienced the model purely from the perspective of the coach or coachee. Both the co-researchers and myself were immersed in the experience, and I believe that it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to reach a point where we could sit back from the model and experience it afresh; simply bringing our 'issue' or 'issues' to that particular arena to discuss them without any conscious awareness of having been involved in the construction of the actual arena itself.

This ultimately meant that there was no-one who was purely a coachee in the process. Instead, we were individuals who were consistently having, metaphorically, to build the sets and help with the lighting as well as perform on the stage. Although one co-researcher did attempt to use the model to coach someone through an issue, this was undertaken to further the co-researcher's understanding of the model; and so this means that we remain in a situation where no coach who has become well versed in the use of the model has actually been able to engage with a coachee 'afresh'. This ultimately means that the model was never actually utilised in any final form in what I would consider to be purely a coaching session. Due to the exploratory and iterative nature of the research, we were effectively sewing the parachute together, having jumped out of the airplane. Whilst we all managed to achieve a relatively soft landing, it is unclear whether this newly refurbished parachute will function in subsequent use. It may be that it only functioned because it was constructed during 'the descent' and that the dynamics of opening it up directly on exiting the airplane may cause flaws, small or large, to appear.

It is also likely that the richness of potential coaching resource available within the 'confines' of this framework have scarcely been touched upon. To this end I have produced a seven part 'Idealised Process' which illustrates how, at the time of writing, I believe that the model could be laid out to best assist the coachee. This so-called 'Idealised Process' was produced after all the coaching/research sessions had taken place. It is idealised in the sense that it is how I would currently approach the use of this model if I were to use it tomorrow. In this 'idealised process' I have included suggestions for what might be added, which in hindsight, I believe were either missed out or not emphasised enough.

It is probably important to note here that the reasons behind why and how the coach and coachee would find themselves in a coaching relationship and utilising this 'bravery model' approach has not been identified here. There are, of course, many reasons for a coach to be employed within an organisation. It may be that there would be a direct link between the use of this model and the requirements of the organisation. There could, for example, be a situation where a coach might be called in to assist a manager/leader to be more decisive, or courageous, or even 'braver'. However, I suspect that it is much more likely that the use of the model

would simply evolve from the on-going relationship between coach and coachee.

As with any intervention or relationship, the prospect of contamination of the coachee from the coach's beliefs, biases and desires must be guarded against. During the research and in the interpretation of it, my hopes and desires could easily have impacted each of the sessions. Despite my wish that this would not be the case, it is practically inevitable. In the case of the research, I believe that the fact that there were some strong and experienced characters involved, helped dilute any bias, as did the fact that they were co-researchers and that we were both discovering the model as we went along. In the case of the interpretation and analysis of the data, by using the strategy of 'retroduction', which I have described earlier, I hope to have reduced any interpretative skew, but from a pragmatic perspective I must conclude that this could only be a reduction at best.

I would also emphasise that due simply to the nature of the issues which the co-researchers were discussing towards the final sessions, it became apparent that we never truly had an issue which really explored the dynamic between the pulling factors and the gravitational factors (except in one case, and yet this was retrospective). I wish that this had been so, but we could only utilise the issues which were real and relevant at the time.

Further research

Whilst this research has not been positivist in nature, there is, I believe, a requirement to generate much more data, not to generate numerical outputs but to understand what trends and themes may be emerging from the lived experience of the coach and coachee. It will be important to encourage coaches to experiment with the ideas suggested by this approach and to reject or further modify the model. The gravitational factors require further exploration, particularly when there might be a real tension between them and the pulling factors. The emotional needs audit was also a factor which was never really properly 'centre stage' in any of the sessions with the co-researchers. If, as I have suggested, it is important to be in a relatively calm frame of mind to properly consider all the 'factors' within the 'landscape' from the 'sphere', then a high level of emotional

arousal is likely to be detrimental to that process, and so a consideration of this, at least, is likely to be a fundamental requirement in the use of the model.

It would also appear that there is a significant gap in the research about decision making and coaching. This was a surprising finding, given that it is likely that many coaching sessions, at least in business, would involve some form of decision-based thinking. And so I believe that not only should the braver leadership model be more fully explored in terms of its impact on decision making, but also that coaching and decision making should be researched more extensively.

Implications

As a result of this study I believe that there is an opportunity here to rethink some of the fundamentals about leadership. Although organisations should be lean and fit and innovative and adaptable (Chesbrough and Garman, 2009), this need not be an excuse for a brutalising approach to leadership.

Figure 2.2 illustrated a synthesis between brave leadership and the other leadership theories quoted in this study. This synthesis has, to my knowledge, never been illustrated before, nor has the common element of bravery been added in to the mix. Whilst this does not constitute a new leadership theory, it may well illustrate an up-to-now unconsidered common catalyst which may help decrease the gap between rhetoric and behaviour.

In terms of this research, the dynamic between the coach, the coachee, and this model is ultimately where the leverage of change has lain. The model has been discussed at some length, as has the further research which I believe is required to fully understand its impact in the coaching relationship. I have also suggested that the coachee's 'psychological starting point' in terms of 'personal drive' is probably a fundamental factor in determining the effectiveness of the model in relation to 'definitive outcomes'. Whilst the transferability of this finding is at present unknown, if the personal drive factor is even partially transferable to some other coaching situations then the implications of this for coaches, coachees and organisations may be significant. There may also be significant benefits for

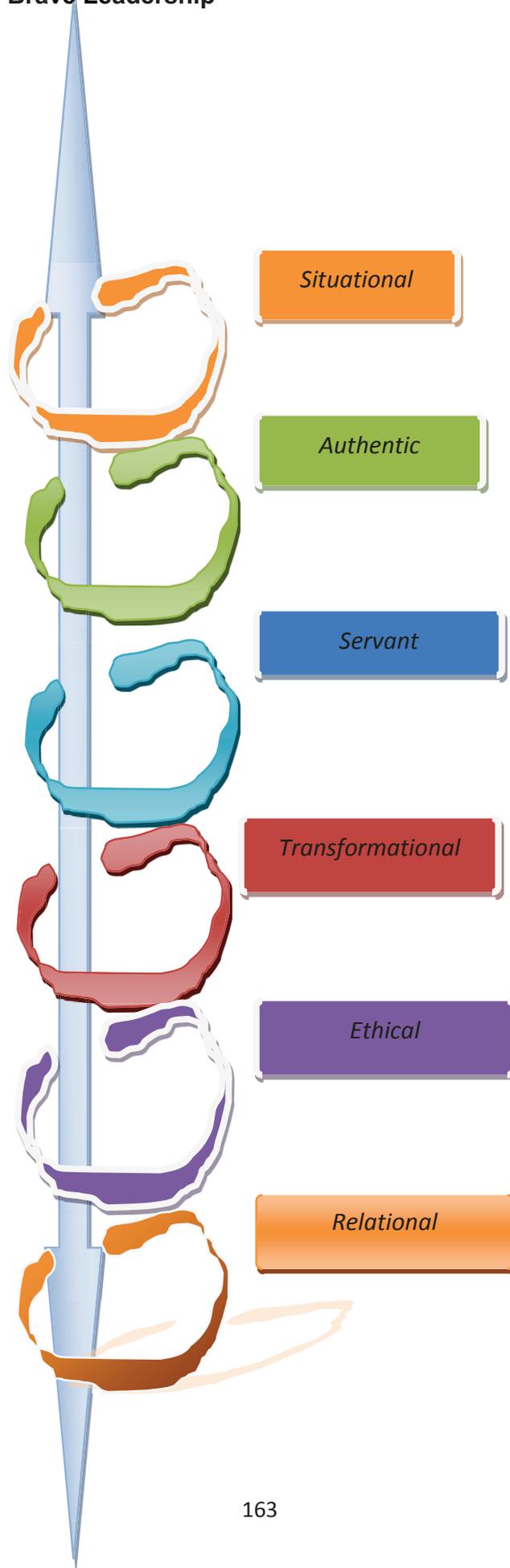
organisations whose leaders embraced the idea of bravery more readily and regularly. And the role of the coach may be central to such cultural shifts.

In summary, I believe that there is still much work to be done in using the model in different coaching situations and in refining it accordingly. It may simply be that the true power of the model lies not in systematically considering things such as pulling factors, but in simply being in the same room as the coachee and reflecting on the word 'bravery'. I suspect that there is more to it than this. I think that the role of the coach must be considered to be more central to leadership development than it has been to date. Furthermore, whilst unconditional regard (Rogers, 1959) has been considered useful by some in the field of therapy, my experience during some executive coaching sessions, and partly during the action research process, leads me to believe that leaders actually need strong coaches, perhaps even *agent provocateurs*, who may from time to time be practising anything but unconditional regard.

My hope is that when leaders get 'braver', individuals within their organisation will get 'braver'. It would be extremely naïve to expect this model to generate braver decision making and behaviours in every leader in every situation. The model was not designed with this outcome in mind. However, it was designed in the hope that its existence and application through good coaching may in some situations cause the leader to stop and think and perhaps adapt their behaviours towards a more considered form of leadership; one where the leader and others are actively encouraged to weigh up the consequences of their actions from not only a monetary perspective, but also from a humanitarian perspective. And just as the co-researchers were encouraged to consider a brave individual, which might then in turn allow them to reflect and perhaps adapt some of their own behaviours, these new, more considered, leaders may in time themselves become the individuals who are considered brave by others.

Having considered six main leadership theories/schools of thought, I would argue that brave leadership has a place in each of them, and that rather than being something which is separate, it could exist within the warp and weave of each. This is illustrated in Figure 7.3 below.

Figure 7.3 – Brave Leadership



The contribution of the thesis to the practice and understanding of coaching

This study makes three distinct contributions to knowledge. Firstly, there is a contribution to leadership coaching, in the general sense that this new model might be utilised within leadership coaching sessions, and perhaps specifically in assisting decision making within leadership coaching sessions. Secondly, there is a general contribution to coaching practice, in that a new model has been developed which can be further explored by researchers and coaches. Thirdly, there is a contribution to methodology, in that the use of retrodution is suggested as a valid form of data analysis for action research.

How might the coaching model be operationalised by other coaches?

The coaching model has evolved into something which could be followed rather religiously by other coaches, or indeed adopted in a much more laissez-faire fashion. I suspect that, given the requirement for the model to be explored by and be played around with by other coaches, and the fact that it has never been tried out in anything but a research environment, both outcomes are likely. The more process-orientated coach might wish to stick rigorously to the 'idealised process'. However, even within that structure, there is much scope for interpretation. For example, part one of the idealised process suggests that the coachee consider when they have been brave and who they consider to be brave. This conversation could simply be seen as a way to have the coachee begin to think about themselves or their environment differently between coaching sessions. On the other hand, the coach may decide to ask questions which may attempt to get closer to the essence of what bravery means to the coachee.

One very likely outcome is that some coaches will find that some things simply do not work for them, and that they will adapt and evolve the model as they move forward.

I also suggest that the main thing for coaches to consider is whether the model is actually used or not. Coaches might need to ponder on why they have been engaged in the first instance. I would not envisage that this model be used en bloc. It would be a little odd in a coaching session to suddenly make a suggestion about coaching bravery. However, given

some of the findings from the research, one obvious route for its use might be in discussing decision making. Another might be in discussing emotional intelligence. The model does, after all, suggest checking the emotional state of the coachee and also the impact of potential behaviours on the feelings of others. In due course it may be that some organisations adopt the idea of brave leadership and so specifically request coaching in this area.

I also think it unlikely that any coach adopting this approach should be advised to have a leader come up with 'the answer' after one session. There may be some answers after one session, but I think that there will be an element of iteration as the leader becomes more familiar with the structure and has had some reflection time.

Perhaps the major operational change for other coaches will be to have at their disposal a model which they could use and interpret in their own way. As has been mentioned at various points throughout this paper, there are very few 'structures' for the coach to use, particularly in the area of executive and leadership coaching. This, coupled with the fact that the model lends itself to a questioning approach from the coach, may well result in it being evolved and utilised in ways which are not presently obvious.

I believe that this model can now fill part of the gap facing coaching practitioners. A model now exists which can potentially be used in various coaching situations. As has been alluded to earlier in this paper, there is little in the way of usable coaching models at the executive and leadership level. Not only has this model been explored and evolved by a team of co-researchers as part of an academic research project, but also the model itself can be further evolved by practitioners in an on-going fashion.

Another factor which I think is of note as the model becomes operationalised by others, is that the theoretical and philosophical humanistic influences which underpin this model (as discussed in Chapter 2) may resonate quite strongly during its use. This may, in turn, bring a much needed shift, albeit perhaps in a subtle way, towards a more human-centric form of leadership which may just begin to address, at least in part, the perceived gap which was discussed in Chapter 1.

How the research has informed my coaching

I have not yet, at the time of writing, had the opportunity to use the model in any coaching sessions. I have been keen to keep a 'purity' of thought from the research to the writing up to avoid any inadvertent contamination from what may have happened after the research had finished back into what I imagined had taken place during the research. I have discussed the process with people, and whilst it appears to generate interest and the thought that it might also be useful to try out with an entire leadership team, there has to date been no coaching session where it has been employed 'for real'. I will from this point, however, be beginning to look for opportunities to use it. What I have observed is that the term 'brave leadership' does seem to strike a chord with all who hear it.

What I believe is different about my coaching is that I have become much more aware of the privileged and important and responsible position which the coach can hold within organisations. My suspicion is that I am likely to become much more challenging in style as a coach. This is partly because of the journey which I have gone on in considering the current condition of leadership and businesses. It is also because, as the coach holds a unique position which may also be at least part of the solution going forwards, the coach must be accountable in the process. This may lead me into areas where I have to make decisions about which organisations and individuals I work with. It may also make me question whether being impartial is in certain circumstances actually correct, or even desirable. I suspect that I will become braver.

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Appendix A – Invitation to organisations

Invitation to participate in research

**OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY**

Date:

Dear [Organisation]

I would like to invite your organisation to take part in some coaching research. The details of the research are given in the Organisational Information Sheet below.

Essentially I wish to explore the effectiveness of a leadership coaching model designed to enhance bravery in business. To do this, I need volunteers to take part in a six month study which will involve six one to one coaching sessions and the exploration of the effectiveness of the aforementioned leadership coaching model.

I was wondering therefore, if you knew of anyone within your organisation who might benefit from taking part in such a study.

I am of course more than happy to discuss this in more detail; my contact information is given below.

Yours sincerely

Mike McLaughlin

1

Appendix B – Information sent to organisations

**OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY**

Organisational Information Sheet

Study title

An exploration of a leadership coaching model designed to enhance bravery

Purpose of the research and background

The purpose of this research is to explore the effectiveness of a coaching model which has been designed to help enhance bravery in business leaders. The background to this research is that although the numbers of individuals receiving coaching in organisations is growing, there are very few academically researched coaching models available at this time. Also, there has been little or no research done into what constitutes bravery from leaders in business.

Organisational invite

Your organisation is being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to develop and understand the effectiveness of a leadership coaching model designed to enhance bravery in business.

The participant part of this research will last over a period of six months, during this time participants will have six coaching sessions which will utilise a coaching model designed to enhance bravery in business leadership.

These coaching sessions will be approximately one month apart. The coaching sessions will take place at a location which is convenient for the participant. The duration of each coaching session will be approximately 2 hours. This means that participants' time commitment will be 12 hours over a six month period.

One more hour will be required for a final feedback interview.

After each coaching session, participants will be encouraged to keep a log-book of their reflections on the coaching model and to email their reflections to the researcher. It is envisaged that completion of the log-book will take approximately fifteen minutes. These reflections may aid the refinement of the model and will help orientate subsequent coaching sessions.

Why has my organisation been invited to participate?

Your organisation was chosen to take part in this study because either you or a colleague indicated that you might be interested in helping to develop a leadership coaching model.

Does my organisation have to take part?

It is entirely up to your organisation to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to send a letter to me on your organisations letter-headed paper with your written permission for this research to take place.

What will happen to participants who take part?

Participants will be invited to be coached in six one to one coaching sessions. These coaching sessions will be approximately two hours in length and participants will also be asked to complete a log book between sessions. It is envisaged that the completion of this log book will take no more than 15 minutes. These sessions will take place in an office environment or in a public place and will not take place in participant's homes. Please note that the research sessions are free of charge.

1

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The advantages of this are that your organisation will be involved in the development of a new coaching model and that participants will receive personalised one to one coaching.

Will what participants say in this study be kept confidential?

All information collected about any individual who takes part in this study will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). Confidentiality, privacy and will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material by de-identifying the participants. The data will be stored in a secure repository. Data generated by the study will be retained in accordance with the University's policy on Academic Integrity. The data generated in the course of the research will be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of a research project.

What should I do if my organisation does wish to take part?

If your organisation does wish to take part in this study, please confirm this in writing on letter headed paper to me at the address given.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research will form part of my thesis for the Doctorate of Coaching and Mentoring. The thesis will be available from Oxford Brookes library. A summary of the research findings will be available on request.

My supervisory team consists of:
Dr Elaine Cox, Principal Lecturer, Business School, Oxford Brookes University
ecox@brookes.ac.uk
Dr Jan Harwell, Senior Lecturer, Business School, Oxford Brookes University
jharwell@brookes.ac.uk

Data Protection

Any laptops or memory sticks used in field research will be securely code encrypted so that they comply with the Data Protection act in the UK and will be secured in a secure place. All data will be transferred to Oxford Brookes University for safe storage for 5 years after the conclusion of this research. There are likely to be six research participants.

Who is organising and funding the research?

I am conducting the research as a part-time student at the Business School, Wheatley Campus of Oxford Brookes University. I am self-funded.

Who has reviewed the study?

This research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University.

Contact for Further Information

My email is: ethics@brookes.ac.uk Mobile: [02035922600](tel:02035922600)
If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, you should contact the Chair of the Oxford Brookes University Research Ethics Committee on ethics@brookes.ac.uk.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet.
Mike McLaughlin

Appendix C – The pulling factors and the gravitational factors; a description.

The Braver Leadership Coaching Model

This part of the model is a more detailed perspective on the 'You' part which has been placed in the middle of the 'Pulling Factors' which we have now identified.

To help make the model as clear as possible, let me explain my thinking in designing the model this way.

The Pulling Factors

Firstly, the 'Pulling Factors'. It occurred to me that there are always several at work, pulling us in different directions when we want to make a decision. These 'Pulling Factors' could also be thought of as needs that require to be met to a greater or lesser extent.

We have now done work on these 'Factors' and there are now six different versions of this.

A couple of people have probably heard me say that I thought that it was important not to bring in an 'all singing – all dancing' model (like a toy spinning solar system) as this was being co-created and co-researched, and so it was important to allow the model to evolve separately for each co-researcher.

It suddenly dawned on me that whilst the planets and their distances and sizes etc. may not have been pre-defined, the idea of a solar system may actually be a good way to represent the complete model, at least for your initial consideration.

This brings me on to 'The Gravitational Factors'.

The Gravitational Factors

I would like you to imagine that you are standing on the surface of a planet, and that around you was a system of planets. These planets are the 'Pulling Factors'. They can have a tendency to affect, distort and change your thinking. Keeping you 'grounded' to a lesser or greater degree is the gravitational force of the planet.

I have used gravity and 'grounded' deliberately because I wish you to consider that much (but not all) of leadership and management and business in general has a tendency to be pulled away from these 'grounding' factors. I am suggesting that these factors are a requirement to consider the human cost of any decision.

There are many different ideas and models from what is loosely called Humanistic Psychology which could be used here. I have long been attracted by the concepts surrounding Positive Psychology and its suggestion that psychology should be concerned with promoting wellbeing and not simply focused primarily on understanding various pathologies.

Although I hadn't initially intended to use the 'model' shown below, it struck me that 'cannibalising' it would, if nothing else, be a good place to start.

This information can be found in an article entitled, 'Positive Psychology: The Science at the Heart of Coaching' by Carol Kauffman (page 233) which is in the book 'the Evidence Based Coaching Handbook' (2006) edited by Stober and Grant published by Wiley.

What follows is a list of VIAs (Values in Action) which are a classification of character strengths identified in six primary categories of strength (described as core virtues). Each of these has a number of subcategories, resulting in 24 potential signature strengths. Individuals are asked to take the test and can be helped to harness and develop these strengths. I am not asking you to take the test (but please do so if you wish) and we are not going to be dealing with each of these signature strengths, but please read the list so that you can understand the context for the next part of the model.

1. *Wisdom and knowledge*: cognitive strengths related to accruing and using knowledge.

- *Creativity*: thinking in novel, productive ways, with originality or ingenuity.
- *Curiosity*: interest in experience for its own sake, openness to experience, finding things fascinating.
- *Open-mindedness*: thinking things through, not jumping to conclusions, having good critical thinking and judgment.
- *Love of learning*: enjoying learning and systematically organizing experience; also surfaces as love of teaching others.
- *Perspective*: being able to make sense of the world to oneself and others, having wisdom.

2. *Courage*: emotional strengths that involve the will to accomplish goals in the face of external or internal opposition.

- *Bravery*: not shrinking from challenge or pain; speaking up, standing up for convictions.
- *Persistence*: finishing what you start and getting it out the door.
- *Integrity*: presenting oneself in a genuine, honest way, taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions.
- *Vitality*: feeling alive and activated, with zest, vigor, and energy.

3. *Humanity*: interpersonal strengths, tending and befriending others.

- *Love*: valuing close relations.
- *Kindness*: doing good deeds for others, nurturance, compassion, and altruism.
- *Social intelligence*: being aware of motives and feelings of others and oneself.

4. *Justice*: civic strengths that would foster healthy community life.

- *Citizenship*: working well with a team, loyalty, social responsibility.
- *Fairness*: treating people equally, not swayed by personal feelings.
- *Leadership*: encouraging your group to get things done while maintaining good relations.

5. *Temperance*: strengths that protect against excess.

- *Forgiveness and mercy*: not being vengeful; giving others a second chance.
- *Humility*: not seeking the spotlight; modesty.
- *Prudence*: farsightedness; being careful about choices.
- *Self-regulation*: controlling appetites and emotions.

6. *Transcendence*: strengths that provide meaning and connect with a larger universe.

- *Appreciation of beauty and excellence*: notice and appreciation of nature, performance; able to experience awe and wonder.
- *Gratitude*: being aware and thankful for the good things that happen and for life itself, accompanied by warm goodwill.
- *Hope and optimism*: expecting the best and believing a good future is something you can help bring about.
- *Humor*: playfulness, enjoying laughter, making people smile.
- *Spirituality*: coherent beliefs about the higher purpose in life and connection to the purpose and meaning.

The Gravitational Factors – based on a selection of signature strengths

I had intended to access more of the work of Abraham Maslow, but many people, particularly those who have had some form of management training get hung up in his work being about a hierarchy. I don't think that he was really saying this, although it could, from time to time, be just that. Also, Maslow's work has been interpreted in many different ways which are often too vague for our purposes here.

Therefore, I was interested to see what Positive Psychology (which is in part based on Maslow's work) had to say about our humanistic needs. Hence I was drawn to the signature strengths model. This strengths model has not, as far as I am aware, been used for the purpose which I am suggesting here. Firstly, I have extracted only parts of it and also, although bravery and courage are mentioned I am (perhaps counter-intuitively) going to ignore them for the moment. Instead, I'd like you to consider the following headings.

Humanity: interpersonal strengths, tending and befriending others.

Love: valuing close relations.

Kindness: doing good deeds for others, nurturance, compassion, and altruism.

Social intelligence: being aware of motives and feelings of others

and oneself.

Justice: civic strengths that would foster healthy community life.

Citizenship: working well with a team, loyalty, social responsibility.

Fairness: treating people equally, not swayed by personal feelings.

Hope and optimism: expecting the best and believing a good future is something you can help bring about.

Humor: playfulness, enjoying laughter, making people smile.

Spirituality: coherent beliefs about the higher purpose in life and connection to the purpose and meaning.

I am going to suggest that these should be considered as the other forces at work in our model, and also (from my experience) are the factors which are most often ignored. I am not suggesting that you think about these as a strength or not, although that may a worthwhile process, but that instead we focus here on what *must* be considered in the decision making process.

Quick summary

So, at the moment you are standing on the surface of a metaphoric planet. The gravitational pull of this planet, those things which should keep you 'grounded' are the 'Gravitational Factors' mentioned above. However, there are also celestial forces at work, the 'Pulling Factors' which we have also been discussing. These forces must be considered before a balanced decision can be made.

The Emotional You.

During one of the action research sessions which took place recently, someone suggested that what they decision they made were based very much on their emotional state. Someone else said that they had made decisions based on their need for excitement and adventure. It had therefore become clear that an understanding of where we are emotionally is crucial in reaching balanced, and as we'll see ultimately brave decisions.

Therefore, I am including the Human Givens 'Emotional Needs Audit' for your consideration. This can be accessed online if you wish. It is a quick and useful litmus test of whether your emotional needs are being met in balance. Low scores should tend to ring some alarm bells and they may imply that corrective action (whatever that may be) is likely to be required. It will also allow for some self-reflection about our emotional state whilst making decisions, and whether this warrants a tempering or adjustment to our thinking and/or behaviour. I can explain more about these needs as and if required.

The Sphere of Bravery

As I mentioned earlier, it suddenly dawned on me that the idea of a solar system type model may be really useful. I also mentioned to a co-researcher the possibility of attempting to get into a 'quiet place' to make decisions, alluding to the 'eye of the storm' in an earlier document. This fellow researcher said that he had liked a model which he had used years before in which you could retire to your 'Sanctuary'. I haven't called this a sanctuary, but instead a 'Sphere' but if sanctuary works for you please use it.

I am going to suggest that the model be used as follows:

The Planet

Find a quiet space and place, where you are unlikely to be disturbed.

Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Imagine that you are standing on the surface of our metaphoric planet and can feel the gravitational factors at work.

The Pulling Factors

Be aware of the pulling factors which are tugging on you, perhaps from different directions.

Also, remain aware of the gravitational factors, or needs, which seek to ground you, to ensure that the humanistic perspective is considered.

Your Emotional Needs

Imagine now holding a piece of paper which displays your latest emotional needs audit.

Are there any areas which may be affecting your thinking and decision making?

Are there any things that you need to do to ensure that you are having these needs met in balance?

Is there anything which you need to consider before continuing?

The Sphere

Now imagine stepping into a sphere. The sphere is safe and secure, the sphere can move anywhere and at any speed. The sphere is the calmest place in the universe. The sphere is where brave leadership can take place. Imagine allowing the sphere to be buffeted and moved by the various factors which are acting upon this present situation. Notice where you go. Notice where the tension and torsion is on the sphere. The sphere is indestructible and the sphere will take all of the load. You can simply observe, and think.

Now take from your pocket or bag a note of what you considered to be the important statements about bravery from the key advisors. Notice what draws your attention. Also on this note are your thoughts on bravery and what you consider bravery to be. Be aware of that which you focus on.

Ask yourself the following questions:

What is the right thing to do?

What is the brave thing to do?

What will it cost me if I don't take action?

What will I gain if I do take action?

What must I do?

What is the first step?

When will I take it?

As you ask yourself these questions, notice if the sphere moves, and where the sphere moves to. Imagine that the sphere were resting where it had to rest to make the bravest decision. Where would that be? What would it look like? What other actions may be required to ensure that your proposed course of action was successful?

Imagine that the sphere could now rest somewhere that would allow you to leave safely. Please leave the sphere and open your eyes. Now please write down your proposed action or actions.

Next steps in the use of the model

Please consider this model before our next meeting. I would like to have your thoughts and to make adjustments where necessary. Once this has been tailored to your requirements, I am considering producing an audio track to assist with the use of the model.

Appendix D – The Human Givens Emotional Needs Audit

ena emotional needs audit

The Emotional Needs Audit

Now answer the questions below, rating, in your judgment, how well each emotional need is being met in your life at the moment.

To do this, select the appropriate number on a scale of one to seven (where '1' means a need is not being met at all, and '7' means it is being very well met) which best reflects how well you feel each need is being met.

Do you feel secure in all major areas of your life?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Do you feel you receive enough attention?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Do you give other people enough attention?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Do you feel in control of your life most of the time?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Do you feel connected to some part of the wider community?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Can you obtain privacy when you need to?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Do you have an intimate relationship in your life (one where you are totally physically and emotionally accepted for who you are by at least one other person)?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Do you feel emotionally connected to others?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Do you feel you have status that is acknowledged?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Are you achieving things and feeling competent in at least one major area of your life?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Are you mentally and/or physically being stretched in ways that give you a sense that life is meaningful?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Before continuing, please **print out this page now** so that you have a permanent record of how you rated your different emotional needs.