

Academic Paper

# The Experience of an Embodied Metaphor-Based Positive Psychology Coaching Intervention for Transformation and Insight

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## Abstract

This research investigates an embodied metaphor-based positive psychology coaching intervention created as a method to transform perceptions and generate change. Six participants were recruited to work with the metaphor intervention; data was collected via participant journals and semi-structured interviews, with analysis completed using interpretative phenomenological analysis methodology. Results indicate that this metaphor process led to significant breakthroughs for participants under three themes: meta-position provides rationality and relieves pressure; agency prompts transformation from contractive to expansive energy; and insight is gained about one's self and situation. This study provides evidence for using metaphor as an effective coaching or positive psychology intervention.

## Keywords

metaphor, embodiment, positive psychology, coaching, insight

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## Introduction

*"It's like opening a door . . . a big, heavy door. It was all dark behind and the doors opened and . . . it's just like a beam of light that's coming through in that way . . . there's an open door now where there wasn't one before." ~Faith*

This research aims to contribute to the fields of coaching and positive psychology by seeking to understand the effectiveness of metaphor as an intervention to enhance insight and transform perspectives (Boniwell & Tunariu, 2019; Van Nieuwerburgh & Love, 2019).

Positive psychology focuses on strengths and well-being of individuals (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) as opposed to traditional psychology which is 'pathologically focused' (Boniwell & Tunariu, 2019). A positive psychology intervention (PPI) is an intentional activity that

seeks to encourage positive thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Positive psychology has been criticised for focusing solely on positive emotions; this has led to the development of what has been referred to as the second wave of positive psychology or positive psychology 2.0 (Boniwell & Tunariu, 2019). Second wave positive psychology values both positive and negative emotions. Ivtzan, Lomas, Heffron, and Worth (2015) argue that “when we engage with the ‘dark side’, there is great potential for growth, healing, insight and transformation” (p.76).

Metaphor is a substantial and ubiquitous topic. Greek in its origins, metaphor was viewed as a powerful rhetorical device to express emotion (Cairns, 2016). With the emergence of conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980a), metaphor today is increasingly used in positive psychology, therapy, and coaching (Gonçalves & Craine, 1990; Gonçalves & Machado, 1999; Quinn, Trinh, & Passmore, 2022).

This research seeks to understand participants’ experiences with a newly created metaphor-based positive psychology coaching intervention (Howitt & Cramer, 2017; Smith & Nizza, 2022; Vossler & Moller, 2015). This includes exploring the use of metaphor as a conceptual space: a space that exists in the mind and in the imagination of the beholder and is created metaphorically. It is a system of representation (Gärdenfors, 1996) in which individuals create their own meaning (Warglien & Gärdenfors, 2013), and although the conceptual space represents clients’ real-world circumstances, it is separate from them; therefore, it is a space where imagination, creativity, and exploration encourage infinite possibilities. Using metaphors creates a space where the subtle differences in visual representations can shift and change allowing for transformation (Boroditsky, 2000). This allows for the possibility of assisting clients in softening their resistance to challenges and change. Due to a lack of research in this particular approach we felt it necessary to explore the model’s effectiveness to provide some evidence for future research (Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012) with the intention of adaptation to create a stand-alone PPI and a coaching model that could be used within coaching conversations.

## Literature Review

Metaphor has long been established as a powerful linguistic device. Greek in its etymological origins, metaphor originates from the Greek word ‘*metapherein*’, which is composed of ‘*meta*’ meaning to transfer or change and ‘*pherein*’ meaning to carry or bear (“*Metaphor*”). Therefore, a metaphor is something that is carried over or beyond (Battino, 2002). Metaphor transports meaning from one thing to another (Sullivan & Rees, 2008). Lakoff and Johnson (1980a) asserted that “the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (p.5).

Furthermore, Cairns (2016) suggested that phenomenology of emotion is inherent in the language of a culture and understood through the study of metaphor. This links back to ancient Greek philosophy and Plato’s “*Allegory of the Cave*,” in which Plato sought to examine and investigate the complexities of belief, knowledge, and truth through allegory. Allegory is a conceptual manifestation of metaphor (Crisp, 2001) and Plato’s student, Aristotle, elevated metaphor by arguing that “the greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor. This alone cannot be imparted by another; it is the mark of genius, for to make good metaphors implies an eye for resemblances” (Aristotle, n.d./350 BCE, XXII).

Metaphor’s impact extends far beyond its linguistic origins. Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980a) text, *Metaphors We Live By*, was written, in part, as a counterargument to American philosophers Donald Davidson and John Searle’s criticism of metaphors and claim that metaphors were meaningless (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 271). Lakoff and Johnson (1980a) claimed that the lens through which humans view the world is metaphorical and that this metaphorical conceptual system shapes perceptions, experiences, and actions. For instance, the concept of *Time* and the

conceptual metaphor *Time is money* are illustrated in the following expressions: I've *invested* a lot of time in this; That flat tire *cost* me an hour; I have time to *spare*. Moreover, the concept of *Ideas* and the conceptual metaphor *Ideas are food* are illustrated in the following statements: That's hard to *swallow*; I need time to *digest* that; Let me *chew* on that. Furthermore, the concept of *Love*, and the conceptual metaphor *Love is a journey* are reflected in the expressions: We're heading in different *directions*; It's been a wild *ride*; Look how *far* we've come (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). This demonstrates how metaphorical language is the *glue* that binds meaning together; Gregory Bateson suggested that metaphor is "how this whole fabric of mental interconnections holds together. Metaphor is right at the bottom of being alive" (Kopp, 1995, p. 76-77).

Due to the interrelated manner of both thought and emotions, it may not always be possible to communicate events. Fainsilber and Ortony (1987) suggest metaphor may have the ability to bridge the gap between the intangible and real world and how events are communicated or perceived (Fetterman, Bair, Werth, Landkammer, & Robinson, 2016). Siegelman (1993) also recognises the importance of metaphor in 'bridging' in psychotherapy: bridging thoughts and feelings; bridging insight; symbols and language as a primary process in psychological development of a child, through dreams and consciousness. Gonçalves and Craine (1990) used metaphor systems as a tool to support clients in cognitive therapy, to restructure their perceptions and paradigms. In their constructivist approach to therapy, they further asserted that "the best metaphors are those that find their own way of construction and deconstruction, inside our clients like a kaleidoscope assuming new and ever growing meanings" (p. 147). Exploring metaphors with a client can facilitate the development of insight around perceived challenges (Kopp & Craw, 1998) and expand possibility for changes in thought, emotion, and action. Metaphor is thus linked to agency. Subsequently, this use of metaphor as a therapeutic tool evolved into *cognitive narratives* (Gonçalves & Craine, 1990). Clients who were prescribed narrative therapy gained more agency when they created their own metaphorical narrative; therefore, if metaphor is useful in the therapeutic field, it could be used to explore meaning and transform paradigms in coaching. Langer (1948) refers to metaphor as 'abstract seeing' in Siegelman (1993), Gibbs (2006) suggests that human minds make sense of the world through schematic organisation which are metaphorical in nature, and Lakoff (2003) recognises metaphor as having a simultaneous cognitive, sensory, and visual process, and therefore an embodied phenomenon.

Hammack and Toolis' (2015) research on master narratives as root metaphor suggests that not only do they construct meaning of their own, but their dynamic engagement with each other influences and transforms previously established master narratives (Hammack & Toolis, 2015). This further establishes the power metaphor can have in the evolution of a person's identity, shifting the perception of self (master narrative) by changing the lens the world is viewed through, and thus holding possibilities to transform limiting paradigms in coaching.

Ferrari (2020) has expanded the scope of metaphor research with a psychometric test measuring the transformative power of metaphor in counselling sessions, facilitating resistant clients and promoting wellbeing, awareness, and offering new perspectives (p. 221). Lomas (2018) also explored this topic in his research on the effect of spatial metaphors on wellbeing; he concluded that wellbeing was associated with the feeling of interior expansiveness. Jackson (2017) refers to Merleau-Ponty's embodied paradigm as it relates to the relationship between our sense of self as an interaction of our body in knowable, situated experiences with the world. This research will consider if embodied metaphor, i.e., using somatic awareness to put on the sensations of metaphor (Jackson, 2017), can create a sense of internal expansiveness and if this transformation can provide a feeling of hope and possibility.

## Metaphor and Coaching

Previous studies explored metaphor in therapy and sought to understand clients' emotions, build rapport and safe space, and communicate more effectively with clients using metaphor (Wezyk, 2021; Wickman, Daniels, White, & Fesmire, 1999). This type of research is now being conducted for coaching. Quinn et al.'s (2022) research on LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) and its use of metaphor found that clients felt psychologically safe and experienced greater awareness and insight during coaching conversations. Moreover, coaching clients have used small objects in the Metaphor Magic Box (Seto & Geithner, 2018) to create a metaphoric landscape as a way to explore a topic or question and access their "whole-body intelligence" (Seto & Geithner, 2018, p.108). This may indicate a potential for working with metaphors in the coaching space that could create an embodied, conceptual, metaphoric landscape for transformation of perception.

Yu, Zhang, Fan, Luo, and Zhang (2019) conducted ground-breaking research to determine if metaphorical solutions to mental distress resulted in insightful mental experience. The study used functioning magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to see if metaphorical solutions activated the parts of the brain associated with insightfulness, specifically the bilateral hippocampus, amygdala, and fusiform gyrus (Yu et al., 2019). Metaphor has previously been established as a useful tool in cognitive therapy to help clients gain insight (Kok, Lim, & Low, 2011), and Yu et al.'s (2019) study further supported this as it found therapeutic metaphor produced salient neural activities associated with insight and problem solving (Yu et al., 2019).

Thompson (2021) conducted an extensive theoretical review of metaphor's application in coaching and mentoring in which he emphasised the important role of metaphor for change and for helping clients resolve their issues. Specifically, his meta-synthesis found that using metaphor creates both a strong sense of relationship between coach and client as well as a figurative safe space. This safe space then provides for the identification of goals and desired outcomes, which ultimately allows for the resolution of issues and problematic situations (p.224-225). Thompson further concluded that there was not a commonly accepted model to effectively use metaphor in coaching and mentoring; Thompson proposed the "Metaphor Tent" Model (2021) for consideration. While the theoretical analysis was very thorough and detailed, the model was not explained nor was a procedure for coaches or mentors provided (Thompson, 2021).

Emson's (2016) research suggested that because metaphor can be a doorway to the unconscious, it can allow clients to gain insight ordinarily inaccessible. He further highlighted the transformative power of embodied metaphor in his analysis of Fletcher's (2007) work regarding how "metaphor can provide an insight into the nature of the possible self" (Fletcher, 2007, p. 80). Metaphor can, therefore, garner access to possible future selves, or best-case scenario selves. Though it does not use metaphor, the well-established Best Possible Self (BPS) (King, 2001) PPI similarly uses positive future imagining as its foundation. Moreover, in Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000) autonomy, competence, and relatedness are essential to achieve psychological growth, internalisation, and wellbeing (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Van den Broeck, et al., 2016). Autonomy is present in this newly designed metaphor-based positive psychology coaching intervention; participants all have agency in choosing their own metaphors. Competence is also present as participants feel mastery over their metaphorical environment, i.e., in their ability to change the conceptual space (Warglien & Gärdenfors, 2013) to their liking. This is reflected in the post-traumatic growth (PTG) literature, which cites the use of metaphor as a tool for reauthoring across the five domains of PTG (Hall, 2015; Spence & Joseph, 2016).

## Research Question

This study draws on extant literature and addresses the gap in the research by seeking to develop a metaphor-based positive psychology coaching intervention. A clear precedent of metaphor exists as a useful tool in both therapy and coaching (Abbatiello, 2006; Kopp & Craw, 1998; Seto & Geithner, 2018). This investigation focuses on the use of metaphor as a conceptual space for

internal transformation and insight. Considering Emson (2016) and Fletcher's (2007) work on insight and King's (2001) BPS PPI, this research questions if a metaphor process can provide access to insight for coaching clients. The proposed model for coaching encompasses a holistic approach as it considers the whole person and accommodates their varied needs through their choice of embodied metaphoric state (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980b). I was unable to find any research offering this proposed metaphor process.

Therefore, this research asks, how can conceptual metaphor be used to create a safe space for internal transformation and insight? More specifically, it asks the following questions: What is the role of metaphor in changing perceived resistances to one's current circumstances? What is the relationship between a client's innate wisdom and insight, and what is the role of metaphor in facilitating this? And can metaphor help them to transcend their circumstances? If, according to Zohar and Marshall (2000), the transcendent experience transports us beyond the present moment and "gives us a taste of the extraordinary, the infinite, within ourselves" (p. 69), metaphor may be the key to unlocking this power.

## Methodology

### Design

This study seeks to understand the phenomenon of participants' experience using a "personal metaphor" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a, p. 233), thus it is underpinned by phenomenology and hermeneutics as it aims to capture and analyse the participants' unique, subjective experience of working with this intervention, and understand how they make sense of that experience (Eatough & Smith, 2008). Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was chosen (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2021). IPA is influenced by the phenomenological and existential perspectives of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre (Smith et al., 2021), which consider a person as both embodied and embedded in their experience of the world, and it is therefore appropriate in discovering the embodied nature of a personal-metaphor.

### Participants

The recruitment flyer was advertised with a link to a Microsoft Form questionnaire that collected demographic data. Respondents were asked to complete an "Attitudes Toward Metaphor" (ATM) scale created for this study. This scale was adapted from Papanastasiou's (2005) "Attitudes Toward Research" scale and consists of ten short statements about metaphors, and respondents ranked each statement from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating they strongly disagreed and 7 that they strongly agreed (see Appendix A). The scale was created to determine if potential participants had a positive or negative association with metaphors. Individuals who indicated a positive view of metaphors were chosen over those who were neutral or indicated a negative view of metaphors because the essence of the research was to explore the newly formed intervention rather than a participant's ability to use metaphor. In acknowledgement of the time taken away from their other obligations (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005), and approved by the University of East London, School of Psychology's Ethics Committee, participants were given a £15 Amazon voucher as reimbursement for their participation.

To recruit a diverse group of respondents and avoid the problems of limiting the research to the singularity of only WEIRD (Azar, 2010; Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010) participants, i.e., Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, Democratic populations, I sought to engage in purposive sampling for diversity across race, sex, age, and gender. However, because participants were selected based on their responses to the ATM scale, the final sample consisted of six white female participants with a diverse age range of 22 to 61.

## Research Process

Each participant was sent and asked to watch a video with detailed instructions about the metaphor intervention. First, the participants were asked to think about an area in their life where they felt stuck or that they wanted to change or transform. They were then asked to create a metaphor that represented this part of their life; this was identified as their Point A metaphor. Secondly, participants were asked to create a metaphor to represent a positive transformation of this area of their life; this was their Point C metaphor. Lastly, participants were asked to come up with a third metaphor to represent a midway point to bridge the gap between the other two metaphors, which was identified as their Point B metaphor. An illustrative example was provided. Specific journaling questions (see Table 1) were sent each day via email, for seven days, to prompt participants to engage in the metaphor process and journal on their experience.

Participant journals captured real time participant observations and reflections as they are a viable method of collecting data (Vossler & Moller, 2015); these were collected before the interviews. On the eighth day, participants were invited to an individual interview, using semi-structured questions; these were constructed using a clean language model to avoid influencing participants' responses (Sullivan & Rees, 2008). Following IPA recommendations (Smith & Nizza, 2022), the interviews lasted between 45-90 minutes to elicit depth of understanding. When preparing for the interviews, the first author made sure not to use leading questions and followed a clean language approach in designing prompting questions (Smith & Nizza, 2022; Sullivan & Rees, 2008). The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and recordings were revisited by the first author to collect the nuanced tone, thought, and emphasis quality in responses.

**Table 1: Journal Questions**

Day	Journal Questions
1	And what is embodying Point A metaphor like? And what are you noticing? And using all your senses, what are you experiencing? And what do you see, hear, feel, smell, taste? And how does it feel to view the situation as this metaphor? And as you look out at point B what do you see and feel?
2	And what is embodying point B metaphor like? And what are you noticing? And using all your senses, what are you experiencing? And what do you see, hear, feel, smell, taste? And how does it feel to move from point A to point B?
3	And how does it feel to embody point B metaphor? And what did you do to get to point B? And as you look back at point A, what do you see and feel? And as you look out at point C, what do you see and feel?
4	And what is embodying the point C metaphor like? And what are you noticing? And using all your senses, what are you experiencing? And what do you see, hear, feel, smell, and taste? And how does it feel to move from point B to point C?
5	And how does it feel to embody point C metaphor? And using all your senses, what are you experiencing? And what do you see, hear, feel, smell, taste? And what did you do to get to point C?
6	And how does it feel to embody point C metaphor? And what are you noticing? And as you look back at point B what do you see and feel? And as you look back at point A what do you see and feel?
7	And, reflecting on this process, what did it feel like to move from one metaphor to the next? And what changes have you noticed? And how has using this metaphor process affected how you view the situation?

## Data Analysis

The first author analysed the data from the journals, which were received immediately before the interviews and not referred to beforehand, except for Barbara who sent her journal a day prior to the interview. Due to a parallel process (Bachkirova et al, 2021) between the first author and the nature of Barbara's disclosure, it was important to be compassionately detached before meeting with Barbara (Smith et al., 2021); this was achieved through supervision with the second author. IPA methodology was used due to its idiographic nature (Smith et al., 2021) to collect individualised data and analyse it (Vossler & Moller, 2015) from both the journals and interview transcripts. This approach includes a double hermeneutic; as participants endeavoured to understand their experience with this metaphor process, we endeavoured to understand the participants' understanding of their experience (Smith & Nizza, 2022). An essential component of IPA is reflexivity; keeping a journal was imperative to ensure the first author was conscious of how their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences influenced the research (Smith et al., 2021) as they moved between the participants' experience and their own descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual

thoughts throughout the process of coding, theme creation, and subsequent interpretation. Themes were created in a process of joint sense-making with the second author.

## Results and Discussion

Analysis of the data identified three master themes, each with two corresponding subordinate themes. The three main themes are: 1) Meta-position, 2) Agency prompts transformation, and 3) Insight. The master themes and subordinate themes are discussed in detail in the following section.

**Table 2: Master Themes and Subordinate Themes and Prevalence**

Master themes	Subordinate themes	Prevalence
1. Meta-position	1.1 Rational	6/6
	1.2 Relieves pressure	6/6
2. Agency prompts transformation	2.1 Release of contractive energy	6/6
	2.2 Movement of expansive energy	6/6
3. Insight	3.1 Self	6/6
	3.2 Situation	6/6

### Meta-position

The prefix ‘meta’ signifies change beyond normal limits. Meta-position has been used to bring awareness to the nature of transcendence – to rise above and beyond. This meta-position awareness transcends one’s current position in life and allows for different perspective taking and positional reflexivity (Glăveanu, 2021). This research builds on this meaning as the data indicates the meta-position allows participants to transcend their challenge by providing a new vantage point that is a) rational, and b) relieves pressure.

#### Rational

The use of metaphor appears to create a meta-position providing a more rational perspective through which participants can view their circumstances. This new rational reflexivity seems to allow participants to detach from the emotions they had previously felt and think more logically about their life challenge.

Here Angela describes what it is like to think about her challenge; she explains her frustration with feeling stuck and how thinking about the situation when not in metaphor form makes her feel worse. The “do it” refers to thinking about her challenge:

*So, I know (sense of past frustration) what it's like to do it without the metaphor (head nodding) and it wasn't very (pause) (head shaking) it wasn't very helpful. So, I just do (frustrated tone) end up feeling overwhelmed, anxious, like I don't really know what to do (head shaking), very lost. (long contemplative pause) But then (lighter tone), like I said before, having the metaphor, having . . . all of the pressures taken away (smiles) that (pause) that really helps with the process and just thinking more (pause) rationally. (Angela)*

Prior to using this metaphor process, Angela states she felt overwhelmed, anxious, and lost. She appears frustrated; however, when she uses a metaphor to represent her challenge, she explains that she can think more rationally. She appears relieved when describing her experience with using a metaphor to represent her challenge. The data indicates that this rational perspective is accompanied by a relief of pressure. When talking about it, Angela’s tone becomes lighter, and she smiles.

Additionally, Carol finds a similar sense of relief; she feels relief from the self-criticism she had had for herself regarding her challenge:

*It took all the (long considered response) so, the negative self-talk, I suppose, the kind of the emotion . . . I was able to see it without all the, inner critic kind of voice (sense of relief). Without the emotion, without the kind of baggage, without the (pause), well, it's hard to put it into words really. (very long contemplative pause). Yeah, I guess it just helped me to see it for what it was (sense of realisation). (Carol)*

Carol's detachment from her emotional "baggage" appears to provide a new rational perspective that reveals clarity about her situation. This has important similarities to da Silva, Rosa, and König's (2020) investigation into the role that dialogical positioning (Hermans, 2004) and meta-position played in the self-transformation of politically violent militants. Though their investigation had a very different focus to this research, both identify the significant role meta-position plays in meaning making for individuals.

Da Silva et al., (2020) describe meta-position as "a spatial concept that can provide an overview of large parts of the self-system, including patterns and inter-relationships" (p. 250). In their case study, meta-position was critical to sustaining a former militant's disengagement from a politically violent organisation (PVO) as it provided a new perspective of their involvement with the PVO. In this study, it seems metaphor creates a meta-position which is similarly crucial; it provides an overview of their circumstances allowing participants to disengage from their emotions and reach a new, rational perspective of their circumstances.

Moreover, Erica also finds the meta-position provides a way to view her situation from a distance and disengage with emotions that were not serving her. The 'elements' she refers to are feelings of "stuckness": "So, then the elements came in, but it was almost a distance from that (sense of relief) . . . It just became (pause), you know, less emotional, I think, (contemplative pause) more practical" (Erica). Later, to further emphasise this, Erica adds:

*There's definitely something about kind of more (pause) being kinder (emphasised) to me in the process as well. I think that kind of stepping back and seeing it (contemplative pause) from more of an observer's perspective, even though I was in it (sense of realisation). You still get that don't you? Using metaphor, it does give you that distance from it. (long considered pause) (Erica)*

All participants discuss how the meta-position provides a rational reflexivity allowing them to transcend their negative emotions. Erica specifically remarks on the "observer's perspective" and the distance metaphor provides. The metaphor is the catalyst for a narrative change through the creation of a meta-position.

In da Silva et al.'s, (2020) work, the concept of meta-position is linked to Hermans' Dialogical Self Theory (DST) (2004). Hermans (2004) contended that within the self, there are many I-positions that may be in a dialogical relationship with each other, and the meta-position allows the I-positions to be observed. Viou and Georgaca (2021) further asserted that meta-positions are I-positions from which the self observes and reflects upon different parts of the self (p. 209). Moreover, Bachkirova (2011) posited that it was through a multiplicity of mini-selves that we perceive and experience the world (p.78). Additionally, some literature argues that these meta-positions can be both critical and compassionate toward the different I-positions (Leiman, 2004). However, the participants in this study appear to identify one meta-position and one observer state that is singular in its positive effect.



## Relieves Pressure

This rational place of observation appears to alleviate negative self-talk and difficult emotions, such as feeling overwhelmed, anxious, and lost. It seems to relieve the pressure participants had been feeling about their situation. Angela asserts: "It just takes the pressure off (pause) **quite** a lot." Angela's emphasis on the word "quite" indicates a significant sense of relief. Whereas participants may previously have had difficulty examining their situation or avoided the subject altogether, this metaphor process appears to create a safe space, free from expectations and emotional pressure, in which participants can reflect and explore their challenging life situation in a new way.

Angela further describes a sense of peace when the pressure, expectations, and weight are removed:

*When you've got a real-life situation, there's a lot of expectations and there's a lot of weight to what you're going to do and how you're going to progress (serious tone). But, when you're thinking about it as a metaphor (pause), you kind of take the pressure off (lighter tone). You take the expectations away and you can just (pause) think (indicates a sense of relief). (Angela)*

Angela's "real-life situation" was determining what to do when she completed graduate school. Using metaphor to conceptualise her challenge appears to relieve the pressure and heavy feelings associated with expectations and worries about how she will progress. Thus, it seems she is now able to think about her situation without that weight.

Debbie, too, expresses relief in using this metaphor process to think about her situation. Debbie's challenge was feeling uncomfortable marketing herself for her new business. Here she explains how using a metaphor to contemplate her real-life challenge feels much safer. The 'it' refers to her challenge: "So, **much** safer in terms of exploring it (sense of certainty) and kind of thinking about it, (head nod) and (contemplative pause) articulating it (numerous head nods). Yeah. (sense of assuredness)" Not only is it safer to think and explore her challenge as a metaphor, but also to talk about it. The relief of pressure here appears to create a conceptualised safe space (Gärdenfors, 1996; Schwartz, 1996; Warglien & Gärdenfors, 2013) which allows her the freedom to explore her situation without worry.

Erica, whose challenge was about "being fitter and losing weight," also seems to find freedom from overwhelming pressures through the use of metaphor. She reflects on the relief she feels when using metaphor with a newfound sense of being able to look at things differently:

*Stuff that you're not necessarily prepared to look at, a metaphor is helpful for that to help to actually look without getting overwhelmed by things (contemplative pause) and, so yeah, so I think there was something about (pause) self-compassion. (Erica)*

Erica indicates a link here between the relief of pressure and self-compassion.

Viou and Georgaca (2021) discussed the importance of the compassionate promoter position in the process of reconstructing one's self-identity (p. 209). The promoter position is a type of I-position, and they further asserted that the compassionate voice of a therapist can function as an external promoter position that helps clients integrate inner compassionate voices (Viou & Georgaca, 2021). In this study, the metaphor process seems to create a meta-position which relieves pressure and this functions as a compassionate promoter position. This position helps participants develop their inner compassionate voice so they can safely explore and reflect on their situation with gentleness and care. This connects to Rogers (1956), one of the founders of humanistic psychology, and his concept of unconditional positive regard. Rogers' assertion that a therapist's attitude of acceptance and caring was conducive to helping clients gain insight and find solutions to their problems has influenced coaching practices (Van Nieuwerburgh, 2017). For instance, Van Nieuwerburgh (2017) connected Rogers' 'person-centred approach' to the coaching 'way of being'; moreover, Van

Nieuwerburgh (2017) adapted Rogers' 'necessary and sufficient conditions' for therapeutic change and created five revised conditions for successful coaching, including "the coach's positive regard for the coachee must be unconditional" (p.164-165). Thus, it appears that the meta-position creates a sense of unconditional positive regard for oneself.

In this concluding passage for the meta-position master theme, Barbara explains how the meta-position is both rational and relieves pressure. Barbara articulates the implication in Angela, Debbie, and Erica's words; furthermore, the relief of pressure allows for exploration and a revealing of possibilities.

*Thinking of it in terms of a metaphor (pause) I was able to detach from (contemplative pause) the reality, the emotion, and kind of look at it from a detached perspective. Which then made it more possible for me to see what opportunities there were within that . . . The flexibility, the malleability of it, just makes all that possible, so which, therefore, means there's no right or wrong way (smile) (sense of relief). Yeah. So that, so there's no recriminations or anything. Because it only exists as a metaphor (big smile) (sense of lightness). (Barbara)*

I then asked: "And with no recriminations, what does that feel like?" Barbara responds: "Oh, great. Yeah, it feels brilliant (head nodding). Yeah, absolutely (enthusiastic smile) (sense of great joy)." Barbara indicates a great sense of pressure relief and joy as she views her situation with a "detached perspective." According to Glăveanu (2021), meta-position is a necessary "condition for our awareness of and engagement with the possible" (p. 99). Barbara's exuberant, bright smile seems to illustrate the lightness the meta-position provides as it removes the pressure of 'reality,' and reveals possibilities.

As the door to possibility opens, participants begin to consider the potential for things to be different. Then, as if in an enchanted world created by Lewis Carroll, another door magically appears: the door to imagination and wonder. The phenomenon of wonder is, indeed, a psychological process attributed to the alteration of perspectives (Glăveanu, 2021). More than a lovely sentiment, in this research it appears that a perception of possibility, imagination, and wonder leads all participants to cultivate agency, which then brings transformation (Battino, 2002; Gonçalves & Craine, 1990).

## Agency Prompts Transformation

Although the data suggests the meta-position provides a rational reflexivity free from the emotions participants have been experiencing, the next step for participants, paradoxically, appears to include a great deal of emotion. However these are emotions transformed, becoming positive, empowering, and uplifting. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980a), metaphor is a conceptual system that can shape perceptions. To shape a perception is to transform it, and in this study, metaphor does appear to transform participants' perceptions and, thereby, their emotions. The catalyst for this transformation seems to be the sense of agency participants find when they engage in this metaphor process (Chambon & Haggard, 2013; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a):

*So, because it's **my** metaphor. It's my choices. The way I design it. And therefore, I can put in there whatever I want . . . (contemplative pause) So, it's just mine to do with whatever I want it to be. (sense of empowerment) (Barbara)*

Barbara appears to emphasise her sense of agency as she states it's "my" metaphor, "my" choice, it's "mine" (Gonçalves & Craine, 1990). She further articulates this power in her use of "I" four times in relation to the metaphoric space and ends by explaining that she can create whatever she wants. Here, Angela also explains that within the metaphor's conceptual space, she feels a sense of control:

*I think that (pause) control, that level of control (pause) then kind of created this safety for me to explore anything (sense of surprise) within the metaphor (sense of ease) and think about all of these different things because I **was** (assured tone) in complete control of it . . . The process (pause) kind of gave me that safety and control (surprised tone). (Angela)*

Angela adds that this sense of control creates a feeling of safety making it possible to explore her challenge. In this exploration, participants begin to release negative, contractive energy.

### Release of Contractive Energy

In this metaphor process, participants pick a Point A metaphor representing the challenge they are facing. They are asked to embody this metaphor and describe their experience in their journal (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a, 1999; Röhricht, Gallagher, Geuter, & Hutto, 2014; Tay, 2017). Their responses are included in Table 3 below. The term “contractive energy” is used here as an umbrella term to represent the negative emotions participants feel about their real-life challenge. It seems the sense of uncertainty, doubt, and self-criticism affected participants’ confidence and made them feel small as these feelings are diminishing in nature.

**Table 3: Participants’ Experience with Embodying their Point A Metaphor**

Participant’s Pseudonym	Participant’s Point A Metaphor	What it felt like to embody their Point A Metaphor
Angela	Empty Vase	It does not feel good . . . It is reaffirming how it is not pleasant to feel confused and like there is no direction at the moment.
Barbara	Broken Train	Embodying point A is a sense of frustration . . . Viewing my life as this metaphor makes me sad and upset. (I am crying...)
Carol	Overstuffed suitcase	It is heavy, stifling, uncomfortable . . . I’m embarrassed about it and a bit ashamed, like I’m not good enough.
Debbie	Enclosed space with mouth covered	Embodying point A is stifling, constraining, frustrating, limiting. I don’t feel like I exist as I can’t be heard or seen or witnessed. I’m an observer, I’m not participating.
Erica	Quicksand	I feel stuck, heavy, immobile, dark, it’s difficult to move, forwards or backwards, it’s all encompassing, sticky . . . heavy, pulled down, weighed down, dull.
Faith	Medieval Turret	It feels hard, lonely and exhausting. I didn’t think the emotions would be so strong, but it feels really hard to change.

Participants are asked to embody Point B and C metaphor points during the process (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a, 1999; Röhricht, Gallagher, Geuter, & Hutto, 2014; Tay, 2017). To embody is to use all five senses to connect with a somatic awareness (Jackson, 2017) which includes a felt sense of the whole (Gendlin, 1978/2003). While all three points are conceptual and imagined because they are happening in a conceptual space of the mind, the experience of Point A differs from Points B and C. Point A is a detachment from what they do not want, i.e., their current real-life challenge, and Points B and C are embodying what they do want, i.e., imagining and wondering what they would like transformed in their life (Glăveanu, 2021).

Faith describes her experience with Point C: “The sense of that space is showing me that there’s a **different** way to exist (sense of curiosity). So, there’s a lot of insight in that for me.” Her statement indicates that in order to wonder about a “different way to exist,” participants must first release the contractive energy and limiting paradigms associated with Point A. Here Carol describes how the metaphor process transforms her perspective, which helps her to release negative, self-critical thoughts and be gentler with herself (Hammack & Toolis, 2015):

*It helped me to see things in a different way (sense of certainty) how it helped me to hold the concept in my brain in a different way. . . So, the thought would normally be more of a nagging thought, sort of a bit of a self-critical thought like, oh, you need to do that . . . why haven’t you done that? Oh, it’s probably, you know, all the baggage that goes with it (speaking quickly). Whereas this was just sort of held it in my head in a different way (speaking slowly), and that was really nice (sense of relief), and it was gentler, and it was more motivating (sense of ease). So that, I really liked. (Carol)*

Carol and all others appear to release this contractive energy and consequently begin to move expansive energy.

### **Movement of Expansive Energy**

The term “expansive energy” is used here as an overarching term to represent the positive emotions participants’ feel when moving through the metaphor process (Gendlin, 1978/2003; Jackson, 2017; Samur, Lai, Hagoort, Willems, 2015). When embodying their Point A metaphor, participants describe the contractive energy they felt prior to detaching from it and reaching a logical meta-position. Thus, there appears to be a movement between detachment and embodiment which provides insight and perspective for all participants. When they embody Point B and Point C, they describe the positive emotions, or expansive energy, they experience. The participants’ sense of agency when moving through the process is an example of expansive energy. Similar findings have been reported in Carney, Cuddy, and Yap’s (2010) investigation into the embodied effects of expansive and contractive nonverbal displays. Their research found that nonverbal expansiveness, unlike nonverbal contractiveness, increased participants’ subjective feelings of power (Carney, Cuddy, & Yap, 2015).

An integral component of this metaphor process is participants’ use of their imagination to embody the metaphor. Sobel and Ornstein (1996) asserted that often the brain cannot distinguish between an imagined experience and actual experience. Faith describes her experience in this imagined metaphoric experience, “It felt encouraging. I felt optimistic. It felt positive (light tone). It felt like it was doing the right thing . . . It felt hopeful (big smile and nodding head).” Although the experience is imagined, the emotions she is feeling appear very real.

Participants are asked to use all their senses to develop a significant felt sense of their metaphor (Johnson, 2014). Gendlin (1978/2003) postulated that focusing with a felt sense led to internal transformation. This research builds on Gendlin’s theory as the data indicates it is participants’ connection to a felt sense when embodying their Point B and Point C metaphors that expands their positive emotions and creates an internal shift. In her journal, Debbie describes what it is like to move from her Point A metaphor to her Point B metaphor:

*The movement that has taken place gives me a sense of freedom in reach, I feel less constrained. I feel nervous, but brave – putting self out there. I feel like I’ve achieved something by moving to this point, despite this sense of nervousness. (Debbie)*

Debbie acknowledges that while she does feel a little nervous, moving to and embodying Point B feels brave and freeing. Erica, in her journal, also describes her experience as a movement of expansive energy:

*Light, free, full of possibility, effortless, leaping carefree. Things feel easier, movement is flowing . . . I actually found myself being kinder to the me of now and seeing my 'now' with more loving and appreciative eyes. (Erica)*

Carol, too, in her journal, emphasises a sense of movement and positive emotions in her Point B metaphor:

*Anticipation, hope, excitement. Motivation. Clarity. Momentum. Forward motion. Lightness. Colour. Joy. Fun. Light & bright. It brings choices. It feels good. Satisfying. Anticipation & hope. Being kind to myself. New insights. New beginning. Clarity. Soothing. Relaxation. Self-compassion. Able to think about what I want, where I want to go and who I am . . . Another step forward. (Carol)*

The participants appear to enjoy the felt sense of movement and corresponding expansive emotions. The conceptual space of the embodied metaphor appears to connect to their somatic

experience. The data indicates these are not theoretical feelings, and participants feel them in their soma. As Yuasa (1987) asserted, it is only through “bodily recognition or realisation,” and not just by theoretical thinking, that true knowledge can be obtained (p. 25).

For each participant, their somatic experience does appear to lead them to find knowledge, i.e., insight. All participants describe insights they discover during the metaphor process.

## Insight

The data indicates all participants gained insight from the metaphor process, both in terms of their situation and themselves. Similar findings have been reported in studies which proposed a link between metaphor and insight (Emson, 2016; Fletcher, 2007; Thompson, 2021). Additionally, the study by Yu et al. (2019) found metaphor can activate parts of the brain associated with insight.

### Situation

Angela's insight about her situation seems to connect back to her sense of agency (Gonçalves & Craine, 1990). “That” refers to her sense of control and safety when in the metaphor:

*And then **that** (strong inflection followed by contemplative pause) kind of flipped into the reality a little bit where I thought, well, if I'm in control of the metaphor, I'm in control of the reality because it's my life, it's my career (sense of strength and authority) . . . the process kind of gave me that safety and control (sense of surprise). (Angela)*

For Angela, it appears feeling empowered in the conceptual metaphoric space leads to feeling empowered in her actual life. This finding connects to Chambon and Haggard's (2013) assertion that “agency refers to the sense of controlling one's own actions and, through these actions, events in the outside world” (p. 360). In this study, it seems taking action in the metaphor's conceptual space leads participants to take action in their outside world, i.e., their actual life. Angela further supports this notion when she describes the action she takes following her insight:

*I kind of realised that actually (sense of realisation) the only thing that was stopping me moving from A to B was just the decision to actually start (sense of surprise) . . . I think when something seems like such a big thing . . . I kind of feel like everything needs to be lined up perfectly before I can (pause) progress (sense of heaviness). But **actually**, I realised no (sense of relief), all I actually have to do is just **start** the process (sense of excitement) and so (pause) that's what I did (big smile and sense of pride) . . . I just thought, you know what? today I'm going to start and so I started planning a whole business model and getting organised (sense of excitement). And so I've **already** started that process **because of** the metaphor interventions, which was great (smiling and laughing) (sense of joy and surprise).*

The method of embodying her metaphor in a conceptual space, allows Angela to see and connect to possibility and she appears to then begin easily planning her business model. (Röhrlich et al., 2014; Tay, 2017). The imagined possibility of completing her goal leads to her taking action to complete the goal in her actual life (Battino, 2002). In this case, as stated by Chambon and Haggard (2013), “the expectation of a result is by itself sufficient to trigger an action” (p. 361). Angela's action can be referred to as ideo-motor action (James 1890/1950) because the action follows directly from the idea created during the metaphor process.

### Self

Along with situational insights, all participants have personal insights. Faith describes the surprising insight she has about herself:

*I (contemplative pause) didn't realise, I don't think, until I started this metaphor journey that what I was doing was a defence mechanism. I didn't really realise it was a form of protection . . . I suppose there's also some comfort in kind of knowing yourself as well a bit (long considered pause) . . . Having that insight to say oh, okay, yeah (light tone), so you've got these defence mechanisms that now you know about (relaxed tone). (Faith)*

Faith appears to feel surprised and somewhat comforted by her unexpected personal insight (Emson, 2016; Fletcher, 2007; Kok et al., 2011; Yu et al., 2019). Participants also discuss gaining insight into both themselves and their situations. Debbie explains the insight she has about her business, “nothing is going to change, unless you do it. Unless you put yourself out there,” as well as insights she appears to have about herself:

*As I (long considered response) kind of progress this bit of work to move my business forward. In particular, I'll have this in mind to kind of help me with that (long contemplative pause) and hold in mind that not everyone's going to like everything that I do. You know, we're not here for everyone (sense of lightness). We're here for a certain group of people when we're, you know, promoting our work and our business, aren't we? And that's okay (sense of acceptance). (Debbie)*

Debbie's insight seems to bring feelings of acceptance and relief. The participants' insights connect to Bachkirova's (2011) notions of self, i.e., there is an initial, basic “pre-reflective sense of self” which emphasises a first-person sense of self (p.78). After their experience with this metaphor process, there is an indication of seeing “various versions of ‘me’, created by the narrator” (Bachkirova, 2011). The metaphor's meta-position appears to align with the perspective of the narrator and brings insight into their notion of self.

Here, Carol explains a discovery she's made; her challenging situation, cleaning a cluttered room, is not the real issue:

*I started off with thinking, I've got to clear this room full of boxes and then (pause) I realised that it became more about not just clearing that kind of physical clutter, but the sort of emotional clutter (long contemplative pause) . . . you know, I've been trying to get a bit fitter, so it almost became about that, about losing a bit of excess weight that I put on . . . I felt like it spread into my life in a really positive way (sense of lightness), just to make me realise what I need to let go of . . . It's not just those boxes that have got to go . . . And also, that my endpoint became much more about self-expression and letting myself, my true self, sort of shine through (sense of joy). So, it came really like much bigger than just clearing out these boxes. Yeah. (Smiling with a sense of light-heartedness) (Carol)*

Carol's insight is realising the deeper situation is about her “emotional clutter” she would like to let go of, and she seems to find relief in this new awareness as it helps her connect to her “true self” (Emson, 2016). Barbara seems to also garner surprising insights about both herself and her situation:

*It was **really** eye opening. Really, it was almost a bit of a release . . . it was that realisation that rather than taking that pressure, taking that stress, taking that ownership of something that's not mine to own. It was all wrong (sense of realisation). You know it was, how on earth can anybody try and change something that's not theirs to change? And so therefore the guilt was no longer there (sense of calm) . . . I can be a supporting role, but it can't be my role (sense of empowerment). (Barbara)*

She explains the insight into her challenging situation gives her insight into releasing her own guilt. She, too, seems to find significant relief in this insight. Kok et al., (2011) established that metaphor was a useful tool to help clients gain insight in cognitive therapy; this research builds on this finding as all participants gain insight from their experience with this metaphor process (Emson, 2016).

Furthermore, the acceptance that participants experience connects to Hayes, Strosahl, and Wilson’s (1999) Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and the assertion that acceptance is a component of psychological flexibility (Hayes, Luoma, Bond, Masuda, & Lillis. (2006).

At the conclusion of the interviews, participants were asked to think of a word and metaphor to describe the process. In Table 4, participants’ responses are presented.

**Table 4: Participants’ Word and Metaphor Used to Describe the Metaphor Process**

Participant’s Pseudonym	Participant’s Word(s)	Participant’s Metaphor	Participant’s Description of the Metaphor
Angela	Insightful and surprising	Electric circuit with lightbulb	So, you know in school when you were in physics . . . and you had to make the circuits and you had the battery cell and the wires and the light bulb. . . I think it’s a lot like that. And kind of the cell is me. And . . . some days the light bulb might be a little bit brighter, and you might get a lot of insight and it will light up the room a lot. Other days it will – the light bulb will always come on, but you might get a little bit less.
Barbara	Eye-opening	Arched bridge	So, it’s like this process of going up and over and coming down the other side . . . There’s a step to take that looks a little bit daunting because it’s going over and actually, you know, can I do this really? . . . The first few steps are fine and . . . I think this looks great. I can see around as well. I can see really clearly. Look, I’m right up here and I can see everything that’s going on now.
Carol	Uplifting	Blossoming	Starting in a really tight kind of rigid kind of bud. And then the middle stage kind of, you know, just sort of starting to sort of burst through and then my end point is like a really big kind of beautiful rose.
Debbie	Freeing and insightful	Blooming flower	Something opening up, something growing.
Erica	Insightful, rich perspective	Butterfly emerging from a chrysalis	And you can’t shortcut the process. If you try and help a butterfly to emerge, it can’t fly. And I think sometimes there’s a temptation to skip the midpoint. And I think the midpoint is what gives you wings, and I think that’s really helpful. To have broken that down into those three points.
Faith	Insightful	Opening a heavy door	It’s like opening a door . . . a big, heavy door. It was all dark behind and the doors opened and . . . it’s just like a beam of light that’s coming through in that way . . . there’s an open door now where there wasn’t one before.

Participants’ answers were thoughtful and illuminating. Four chose the word “insightful,” and “eye-opening” and “uplifting” were also used. Perhaps most interesting were the metaphors they chose to describe their experience as they all represented a type of transformation through a change of state. It appeared that each participant felt a strong emotional connection to their metaphor (Samur et al., 2015). Participants responded quickly and appeared eager to answer the question; the felt sense from the participants was lightness and even joyousness. Metaphor also appears to create a space akin to the three domains of ontological coaching (Shabi and Whybrow, 2018) creating a coherence through language, body, and emotions (p. 221).

## Limitations

I was cognisant of researcher bias (Vossler & Moller, 2015). For instance, I had previously used this metaphor process myself and two friends had tried it; the results were very positive, and this could have affected the results of the study as I may have unconsciously expected positive results. To address this, I practised reflexivity (Smith et al., 2021; Smith & Nizza, 2022) in terms of data analysis in the inductive approach to discern themes and deductive approach to make sense of them; this was checked against the second author’s interpretation of the raw data, analysis, and theme creation. I was also aware of my own processes in the deductive phase of making sense of the themes (Vossler & Moller, 2015); discussion with the second author helped me gain clarity on the themes’ validity.

## Impact and Implications for Future Research

The impact of this study is noteworthy with each of the six participants experiencing a distancing from their challenge which allowed for insight, an embodied sense of a full range of emotional complexity, transformed perspectives, and a gaining of possibility through rational thought and observation. These results help to reconfirm the thoughts of Langer's (1948) 'abstract seeing' (in Siegelman 1993), Gibbs' (2006) schematic organisation, and Lakoff's (2014) embodied phenomenon, which recognise metaphor as having a simultaneous cognitive, sensory, and visual process. A key point to note is it seems taking action in the metaphor's conceptual space leads participants to take action in their outside world; actual change is occurring. The results are significant and implications for practice and future research are extensive. We believe in the following possibilities: embodied metaphor as a stand-alone PPI; metaphor-based coaching conversations; metaphor as a process in coaching to engage and embody compassion, love, and being in the world for those with neurodivergence; as a process for those experiencing houselessness to embody and create hope, safety, and a felt sense of belonging. A further possibility is to explore metaphor as a tool within body-psychotherapy for trauma healing (Levine, 2010).

## Conclusion

The aim of this study was to develop an initial concept for a coaching model and PPI using metaphor to create a safe space for internal transformation and insight. Based on the findings, this metaphor process provides an effective foundation for both a coaching model and as a PPI. This work builds on and connects to Lakoff and Johnson's (1999) concept of embodied truth and knowledge in which, they theorise, truth and knowledge come from embodied understanding and action. It is through the ineffable concept of metaphor and embodiment that this understanding arises, and it is in the resulting embodied transformation that new perspectives and insights can be found, for metaphor appears to be a powerful embodied process.

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## Appendix A: Attitudes Toward Metaphor Scale

### Potential Participants' "ATTITUDES TOWARD METAPHOR" SCALE

The following statements refer to some aspects of Metaphors.  
Please answer all the questions sincerely.

**Circle one of the numbers opposite each of the statements that follow.**

By selecting number 1 you indicate that you strongly disagree.

By selecting number 7 you indicate that you strongly agree.

1. I enjoy using Metaphors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Metaphors are pleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I find it difficult to understand the concepts of Metaphors *	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I am interested in Metaphors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Metaphors are very valuable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I use Metaphors in my daily life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Metaphors are irrelevant to my life *	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Metaphors are complicated *	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I feel insecure concerning the understanding of Metaphors *	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Metaphor-orientated thinking plays a role in my life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

\* The items with an asterisk are items that will be scored in reverse.

Adapted from Elena C. Papanastasiou's (2005) 'Attitudes Toward Research' Scale.

## Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

The following is a list of major questions and small prompt questions that the first author used in semi-structured interviews with participants. I did not use every question as participants sometimes volunteered information. Furthermore, clean questions (Sullivan & Rees, 2008) were used in the moment such as: And what did x feel like? And what is the relationship between x and y? etc.

1. And what was it like creating starting point A metaphor?

- And what did it feel like?
- And how did point A metaphor feel in terms of being a safe space?
- And what was it like in terms of insight?
- And where did point A metaphor come from?
- And how did it serve you?
- And how did it not serve you?
- And what else would have been useful?

2. And what was it like creating outcome point C metaphor?

- And what did it feel like?
- And how did point C metaphor feel in terms of being a safe space?
- And what was it like to embody and use all your senses to experience point C metaphor?
- And where did metaphor point C metaphor come from?
- And how did it serve you?
- And how did it not serve you?
- And what else would have been useful?

3. And what was it like creating the midway point B metaphor?

- And what did it feel like?
- And how did point B metaphor feel in terms of being a safe space?
- And what made point B metaphor different from point A metaphor?
- And what effect did point B metaphor have on point C metaphor?
- And where did metaphor B come from?
- And how did it serve you?
- And how did it not serve you?
- And what else would have been useful?

4. And what was it like when you had all three metaphors?

- And what did it feel like?
- And what did you notice?
- And what was it like in terms of insight?
- And how did it serve you?
- And how did it not serve you?
- And what else would have been useful?

5. And what was this entire metaphor process like for you?

- And what was it like to create metaphors in stages?
- And how do you feel about your topic after using this metaphor process?
- And what was it like to experience this process as a video?
- And what might it be like to explore your topic without metaphors?
- And what else would have been useful?
- And what was not useful?

6. And what do you think you will do with your 3 metaphors now?

- And tell me more.
- And in what other areas in your life could this metaphor process be useful?
- And what will you do with this metaphor process now?
- And what one word would you use to describe your experience?
- And what metaphor would you use to describe your experience?