

AN INTUITIVE INQUIRY INTO EXPERIENCES ARISING OUT OF THE
HOLOTROPIC BREATHWORK™ TECHNIQUE AND ITS
INTEGRAL MANDALA ARTWORK:
THE POTENTIAL FOR SELF-ACTUALIZATION

by

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Abstract

An Intuitive Inquiry Into Experiences Arising Out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ Technique and its Integral Mandala Artwork: The Potential for Self-Actualization

by

Ruby Lee Cervelli

The qualitative Intuitive Inquiry research method was employed to deepen understanding of experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and its integral mandala artwork. Highlighted is this transpersonal, experientially based technique with a focus on its creative expression aspect. To qualify for participation, within 12 months of this study a volunteer was required to have completed the equivalent of a Grof Transpersonal Training Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat. A total of 15 volunteers were qualified and selected to participate in this study with no attrition. Of the 15, 7 were female, 8 were male; ages ranged from 25 to 62; average age of 50 and mode of 52; 13 were college-educated; 9 were living in the United States; 2 in Canada, 1 resided in Germany, and 1 resided in the United Kingdom. Each participant was individually interviewed, the interviews transcribed, thematically analyzed, and the findings integrated using the 5 cycles of Intuitive Inquiry. The Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and its integral mandala artwork and the use of a transpersonal research method for the study's findings both solidly contributed to the field of transpersonal psychology. The findings reveal that this technique positively impacts the process of self-actualization and self-healing. Moreover, results indicate that the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork may be effective for some individuals for spiritual development, personal-growth workshops, or as an adjunct or complement to conventional individual, group psychotherapy or spiritual guidance and direction.

Additionally, decoupled from the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique, findings suggest that mandala artwork creation is a transpersonal practice in and of itself. Hence, mandala artwork may be used independently or in conjunction with various systems associated with spiritual development and in most psychotherapeutic environments including clients of all ages. As a result, the use of mandala artwork may contribute to the field of creative expression.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my father, Leo Benedict Cervelli, a man with a wonderful presence, a big laugh, a big voice, and an even bigger heart.



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To all my guides, both seen and unseen, words fall short on how deeply I appreciate the paths you have shown and the dimensions of my Self you have revealed.

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Expertise in the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and Mandala Artwork for this study was provided by my committee members, Leonard Gibson and Judith Cornell respectively. Thank you to Leonard for his brilliant and incisive support, and Judith for her leadership, encouragement, and intentions filled with blessings.

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Bringing strength to this quantitative study through verifying my findings was an extremely important contribution. This can only be accomplished by individuals with experience, knowledge, and training in the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique. Thank you to the Resonance Panel Members who volunteered their time, expertise, and insight to support the strengthening of my researcher.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This is love: to fly toward a secret sky, to cause a hundred veils to fall
each moment. First to let go of life. Finally, to take a step without feet.
—Jeláluddín Rumi (trans. 1981, p. 25)

Employing Intuitive Inquiry, a hermeneutic, qualitative research method, is uniquely consonant with this study's topic and purpose in that it is designed to enhance the process of understanding such states of consciousness. In this qualitative study the researcher has inquired into and explored experiences resulting from the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique (Grof, 1985, 1988, 2000, 2006) concentrating on the integral mandala artwork including any archetypal symbols that were revealed. The findings support anecdotal reports that nonordinary psychological, physical, and spiritual states of consciousness are accessed through the technique and may be self-healing experiences comparable to peak experiences (Grof, 2000). Furthermore, mandala artwork created after Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions are reported to be reflective of transformation and access to transpersonal realms of consciousness (Grof, 2000). Leonard Gibson (personal communication, March 28, 2008), a senior Holotropic Breathwork™ facilitator and Transpersonal Psychology professor at Burlington College in Vermont, stated that “the mandala acts as a harbinger of the future, an important event in the process.” Hence, the vital, integrative qualities of the integral breathwork mandala artwork that may reflect the Holotropic Breathwork™ experience have been illuminated and given focus to reveal more of its meaning. Moreover, to enhance the reader's understanding, terms used in this study are defined and explicated in Chapter 2.

This study was not intended to prove anything or analyze what is experienced but to deepen the understanding of what leads to and integrates the experience. Moreover, it

called on the researcher to expose and revise her personal perspective that drew her to the topic.

Initially, in this chapter the researcher lays out the background and defines the study. Next, the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and integral mandala artwork's potential for accessing and integrating nonordinary states of consciousness (NOSC) are explicated. The importance of the often overlooked mandala artwork component is given focus and explored more fully. Moreover, the criticality of not analyzing the mandala artwork, but allowing the meaning to unfold over time, is emphasized (L. Gibson, personal communication, March 28, 2008). The research questions and a brief description of the components of Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork follow. Finally, an overview of this study's research method concludes the chapter.

Background

Most of us can relate to the frustration of coming up against our limitations. We may feel that our potential is more than we have realized and that self-actualization is a vague, unattainable notion. The angst between what we take ourselves to be and what we feel we might become may span a range of painful internal experiences and negatively affect our life choices. The split from the true Self with a capital "S" is viewed as a deep wounding and a gap in feeling whole (Assagioli, 1965; Firman & Gila, 1997; Grof, 1988; Maslow, 1971/1993). Albeit often a difficult and challenging path, self-actualization is viewed as a worthwhile pursuit. However, it is also seen as an ongoing process within reach of anyone willing to do the work (Assagioli, 1965; Maslow, 1971/1993; Ruumet, 2006; Washburn, 2000).

Holotropic Breathwork™ is a technique that has 5 aspects that comprise “group process, intensified breathing, evocative music, focused bodywork, and expressive drawing” (Gibson, 2006, p. 4). The combination of these aspects is intended to support an adventure of self-discovery through experiences of oneself. The technique provides access to NOSC in support of peak, transformative experiences that might contribute to a process leading to self-actualization (Brouillette, 1997; Gibson, 2006; Grof, 1988, 1993). Many indigenous tribal rituals that regularly access NOSC, the spirit world, and the sacred energy of the mandala might provide a key to the door and foundation for the self-actualization process (Cornell, 2006; Eliade, 1951/1974; Grof, 1993).

Mandala artwork, the main form of the expressive drawing aspect, is seen as critical to the integration of the breathwork’s NOSC experience and an integral component of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique (Gibson, 2006; Grof, 1993; Haug, 2002; Taylor, 2007b). Moreover, convincing anecdotal self-reports and now the findings of this study point to Holotropic Breathwork™ as a technique that (a) may enable and support the self-actualization process, and (b) may be available to many people (Grof, 1993). It is noteworthy to emphasize that the self-actualization process is generally viewed as a set of experiences and reexperiences that integrate over time (Ruumet, 2006; Taylor, 2007b; Washburn, 2000).

Between 1973 and 1996, an estimated 20,000 participants in the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique (also referred to as holotropic therapy) self-reported the healing effects of the experience (Jefferys, 1999). Stanislav Grof (1988), renowned Czechoslovakian psychiatrist and codeveloper of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique with Christina Grof, asserted that holotropic therapy’s “main contribution is the

recognition of the healing, transformative, and evolutionary potential of nonordinary states of consciousness” (p. 167). Due to “false identification . . . with only one aspect of his or her being, the physical body and the ego” (Grof, 1988, p. 165), people generally do not have access to the energy that would allow them to live authentic, fulfilling lives. Holotropic Breathwork™ is seen as a technique that leads to wholeness and the ability to lead an authentic life. However, the technique’s “value depends critically on the situation, the style of the subject in approaching it, and his or her ability to integrate it in a constructive way” (Grof, 1985, p. 400). Grof admitted that he did not conduct formal Holotropic Breathwork™ research studies. However, other researchers, though few in number, have conducted research studies where the results provide some support for the transformative reports about Holotropic Breathwork™ (Brouillette, 1997; Hanratty, 2002; Holmes, Morris, Clance, & Putney, 1996; Jefferys, 1999; Metcalf, 1995; Pressman, 1993). Noted amongst these studies are those demonstrating significant results in the combat of the nationwide problem of substance abuse (Jefferys, 1999; Metcalf, 1995). Although none of the Holotropic Breathwork™ studies provided a focus for the mandala artwork, Grof (1993) singled it out as an indispensable, integrative element of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique.

Purpose and Importance

The purpose of this study was to deepen the understanding of experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique with a concentration on the role of the integral mandala artwork as revealed in the experience. The importance of this exploration lies in its potential to contribute to a heightened awareness of the vital role of mandala artwork. Also, the researcher, through this study, sought to lead to an increased

awareness of how peak experiences may be better integrated as part of the self-actualization process. Maslow (1971/1993) noted that

self-actualization is a matter of degree, or little accessions accumulated one by one . . . people who fit the criteria, go about it in these little ways: they listen to their own voices; they take responsibility; they are honest; and they work hard. (p. 49)

Moreover, he encouraged society to use these people as mentors. He stated that if society as a whole modeled the values of a self-actualized person it would become better and more humane. Hence, Maslow emphasized the importance of self-actualization to society as a whole, as well as the fact that knowledge of the mystical and transpersonal is inseparable to self-actualization.

Several factors may make this study unique to Holotropic Breathwork™ research: the use of the Intuitive Inquiry method in a Holotropic Breathwork™ research study, the focus and attention on the integral mandala artwork, and the exploration into the potential archetypal symbolism of the artwork. Thus the unique characteristics of this study lend to its importance in that the findings bring to light a deepened understanding about a practice that has the potential to contribute to living a more self-actualized life.

Research Questions

The main questions of the study are about understanding experiences that arise out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork. As a result of my research into the subject matter's background literature and relevant research studies, several subquestions flowed from the main question. Springing from my engagement with this study's topic, I wondered about the nuances of the Holotropic Breathwork™ experience that are subjectively reported to be profound and transformative. I asked myself, What is the essence of the experience that makes

Holotropic Breathwork™ powerful as self-reported by the participants? How do the experiences revealed in Holotropic Breathwork™ show up in the integral mandala artwork, and what meaning does it hold? How does the mandala artwork contribute to their Holotropic Breathwork™ experience? How do the participants feel as they create the mandala artwork?

Holotropic Breathwork™ Components

Each component of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique could easily command an in-depth study by itself. The focus on the mandala artwork component was chosen for this study because the artwork serves as an expression of the full breathwork experience. Moreover, the mandala artwork's archetypal and integrative qualities have never been a focus for a Holotropic Breathwork™ study. In the interest of providing a snapshot for understanding the main Grof Transpersonal Training (GTT) Holotropic Breathwork™ technique, the various elements are briefly described in the following paragraphs and more fully explicated in Appendix A.

Kylea Taylor (2007b), author of the official GTT Holotropic Breathwork™ facilitator's manual, explained that the components of the technique were designed over time. The elements were chosen by Grof to support a safe, nondirective, and sacred environment that allowed the participants' process to unfold as needed. She described the Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat facilities requirement as needing

a large room with at least . . . 50 square feet per breathing pair . . . a good sound system . . . easily accessible bathrooms . . . a place where full expression of sounds and loud music is possible . . . no disturbance from the outside. (p. 25)

A separate room is set up for the mandala artwork. A beautiful outdoor setting where the participants can stroll during breaks is eminent to the site's selection. Ethics are central to

every aspect of Holotropic Breathwork™ facilitation. Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat facilitators are chosen for and trained in self-knowledge and a nonjudgmental orientation to provide a sacred environment that enables the depth and effectiveness of the technique (Taylor, 2007b). Introductory talks orient the participants for the exploration into unknown domains of consciousness. Hence, the talks include information about NOSC as well as a review of the mechanics of the technique and ethics, such as rules about confidentiality, remaining for the entire process, not hurting self or others, and no sexual involvement between participants (Grof, 1988).

Spiritual practices throughout history have used various breathing practices to access NOSC. For the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique, a fast breathing technique that is similar to the Siddha Yoga and Kundalini Yoga bastrika's fast, continuous breathing practice is used (Eliade, 1951/1974; Grof, 1988, 1993; Minett, 2004). Grof (1988) explained that the breathing pattern tended to follow "an orgasmic curve, with a build-up of emotions and physical manifestations, culmination, and more or less sudden resolution" (pp. 208-209). Throughout the 3- to 4-hour breathwork session, the timing and cadence of the music is arranged to follow the breathwork breathing pattern and support the full spectrum of human experience (Taylor, 2007b). Bodywork is provided by the trained facilitators to help the participants move through emotions lodged in the body when requested by the participants (Brouillette, 1997; Gibson, 2006; Grof, 1988; Taylor 2007b).

Haug (2002) described the mandala artwork setting at the retreat. As part of the retreat setting, a separate space is reserved for mandala artwork. The space, used in silence, is set up with pieces of paper. Each piece of paper has a large empty circle about

the size of a dinner plate drawn on the otherwise blank paper. The preprepared circle drawings are usually set about on the tables in the room. Scattered around the empty circle drawings is a variety of art and collage supplies, including pastels, watercolors, felt-tipped pens, magazines, glue, glitter, and so on. She emphasized that the technique is completely nondirective, allowing for individual expression of the Holotropic Breathwork™ experience. Even though mandala artwork is usually the preferred expression, some experiencers prefer writing or movement. Group gatherings scheduled at the end of the breathwork days provide a context for the experiencers to share their mandala artwork or other form of expression of their breathwork experience.

Taylor (2007b) described the group work as the beginning of “the integration of a Holotropic Breathwork experience with one’s ordinary life” (p. 117). Sharing in group takes the form of a bridge between an otherwise unexplainable inner experience and an outer reality. The mandala artwork is usually the vehicle used in the group sharing to express the often ineffable experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ experience. Taylor noted that “sacred attention describes the powerful force of the group focus on an individual as that person ‘births’ an inner truth or experience into the outer world” (p. 117).

Overview of Approach, Design, and Method

Intuitive Inquiry, a qualitative research method, was employed for this study as a way for delving deeply into the experience of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork. Rosemarie Anderson (2004), developer of the method, expressly created it as “an in-depth, reflective process . . . intended for the study of complex human topics . . . characteristic of psycho-spiritual development” (p. 309).

Moreover, she called for the researcher to expose his/her relationship with the topic and the lenses from which it is viewed. The influence of the researcher's view is brought to the forefront rather than bracketed with attempts to push it aside. The researcher's personal relationship with the topic as well as the nature of the content and purpose of the study led to choosing this method over a quantitative method. Due to the psychological and spiritual orientation of Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork (Grof, 1993, 2000), Intuitive Inquiry is uniquely in alignment with the purpose and intent of this study.

Fifteen volunteers were selected to participate in this study. The main participant selection criteria (Appendix B) were that they (a) were 18 years old and over (no upper limit), (b) had access and ability to use a computer's e-mail system, (c) had already completed a generally available retreat that follows the standard format of a Grof Transpersonal Training (GTT) Holotropic Breathwork™ 6-day retreat or an actual GTT retreat (both will hereinafter be referred to as a GTT-equivalent retreat) prior to study participation, and (d) were willing to take part in a 1 hour interview within 12 months after the retreat.

Some central elements of this study included (a) the use of semistructured interview questions, (b) an allowance for individual differences during the interviews, (c) a qualitative thematic analysis (QTA) of the interview data, and (d) the use of supporting literature to ground the study. As anticipated, Intuitive Inquiry provided a support for open-ended inquiry and contemplation that led to a deepened understanding and is more fully explicated in Chapters 3 through 6. The research method is more fully described in Chapter 3. What has been discovered or the findings is presented in Chapter 4 including a

summary of the QTA. In Chapter 5 the participants' mandala artwork is displayed in a gallery-like format. Chapter 6 provides the final discussion that tie in the findings, literature, and the implications.

Summary

For the purpose of heightened awareness and comprehension, the inquiry process of this study delved deeply into and investigated the verbal and nonverbal expression of experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork. The findings of this study support the anecdotal evidence and some research results that pointed to this technique as a promising support for peak experiences that may potentially contribute to the self-actualization process. This study provided a focus for an understanding of unique and recurring themes arising out of the interviews with participants who had experienced the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork experience. Moreover, the participants' mandala artwork and its possible archetypal importance has been underscored and illuminated.

Chapter 2 grounds this study through definition and explication of terms and the use of a literature review of classic and current theorists in self-actualization, Holotropic Breathwork™, and mandala artwork. Furthermore, it provides summaries of related research results.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The whole form is simply the drawing and returning of the sword. But
when and *how* you draw it and return it is the meditation.

—Chungliang Al Huang (1997, p. 127)

For the purpose of increased insight and understanding, the inquiry process of this study delved deeply into the verbal and non-verbal expression of experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork. The findings of this research substantiate reports that this technique provides a context for accessing dimensions of the psyche normally unavailable, referred to as the unconscious. Accessing the unconscious is viewed by some as being integral to personal growth and realizing more of one's potential (Assagioli, 1965; Maslow, 1971/1993).

Classical psychology, renowned transpersonal psychologists as well as Holotropic Breathwork™ and mandala artwork peer-reviewed studies are researched and explicated in this chapter and tied into the findings in Chapter 6. Through this study, the researcher is contributing to further understanding of Holotropic Breathwork™ and uncovering and discovering more about its integral mandala artwork by adding to the current research and using the classical works of psychology to substantiate the findings. Additionally, one of Holotropic Breathwork's™ eminent integrating components that previously has had little attention—the mandala artwork is highlighted.

Initially in this chapter, some of this study's terms are defined and explicated. Next, the background of Holotropic Breathwork™ is presented and includes its precursor, Psychedelic Therapy research. This discussion provides a basis for and leads into an understanding and discussion of the development of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and integral mandala artwork. The leading Holotropic Breathwork™ literature

and the classical Jungian theory on mandala artwork are presented, as well as theories from the current leaders in the field on mandala artwork. Finally, an overview of the available research on Holotropic Breathwork™ and mandala artwork is explicated.

Definition and Explication of Terms

This section includes some key definitions and explanations of terms used in the context of this study. It is intended to clarify and enhance the reader's conceptual understanding. Additional terms are added in other chapters.

For this study, the term spirituality is based on Grof's definition and equated with the transpersonal. The identification with thoughts and ideas that keep us feeling we are separate individuals is seen as the normal, personal perspective of how we know our selves (Grof, 1998). Contrasting the term transpersonal with the word normal, Grof (1998) broke down the term transpersonal and defined it to mean to rise above or "transcend the personal" (p. 350) identification of our self. In transcending the personal we may then shift to knowing or experiencing our true Self. In this research project, such transpersonal or spiritual experience is equated with and referred to as NOSC, holotropic states, collective unconscious, expanded states of consciousness, peak experience, adults' reexperience of perinatal and prenatal, spirit world, self-actualization, and mystical experience. However, the researcher deferred to the participants' subjective determination as to whether or not their experience was felt to be spiritual or transpersonal rather than adhere to any definition or preconceived ideas of spiritual, transpersonal, or peak experience.

Peak experience is a phrase used by Abraham Maslow (1971/1993), father of humanistic psychology, to capture and generalize about a wide array of exceptional

human experiences. Without the phrase it was difficult to refer to the thousands of descriptive terms of “the best moments of the human being, for the happiest moments of life, for experiences of ecstasy, rapture, bliss, of the greatest joy” (p. 101). Some of Maslow’s descriptions of qualities of peak experiences include

honesty; reality; nakedness; . . . beauty; pure; clean and unadulterated completeness . . . benevolence. . . . *Beauty* . . . wholeness, perfection; completion; uniqueness . . . integration; tendency to oneness; interconnectedness; simplicity; organization; structure; order . . . integrative tendencies . . . transcendence of dichotomies, polarities, opposites, contradictions . . . transformation of oppositions into unities . . . noncomparability . . . nothing else like it. . . . *Perfection*. . . . *Completion* . . . totality; fulfillment of destiny . . . consummation closure; death before rebirth *Richness*. . . . *Effortlessness*. . . . *Playfulness*. (Maslow, 1971/1993, pp. 128-129)

Peak experiences might be seen as a possible doorway to and pathway throughout the process of self-actualization.

Self-actualization is defined as the state of being one’s true Self (Whitmont, 1969/1991). Inclusive in this state are a pool of unconscious psychic material and the untapped resources of divine presence and energy. Generally, people mistakenly identify with a replication of the true Self, sometimes referred to as a persona or self with a small “s” (Whitmont). Maslow (1968/1999) equated the enlightened state with self-actualization when he referred to a Buddhist who wins “enlightenment only for himself” and later referred back to his statement adding “for the sake of his own self-actualization” (p. 133). Hence, Maslow defined self-actualization as enlightenment, yet he viewed self-actualization as difficult to define (1971/1993). However, living a self-actualized life can be viewed as an ongoing process whereby certain values and virtues are modeled. The value of living such a life takes priority, but various stages or challenges are revisited as part of a growth process that aspires to self-actualization

(Ruumet, 2006; Washburn, 2000). Holotropic Breathwork™ is one technique that might contribute to the process of self-actualization.

Archetype is qualified by simplifying the meaning to a universal, historically recognizable pattern or symbol of both the collective and individual psyche (Jung, 1964). However, simplifying the term should not make it insubstantial. An archetypal symbol carries a psychic charge and a capacity of higher aspects of the Self (Whitmont, 1969/1991). Carl Jung (1968), father of Jungian Psychology which was influenced by Freud but diverged mainly regarding the libido and religion, stated that “the archetype is a tendency to form such representations of a motif—representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern” (p. 58). However, he warned,

if archetypes were representations that originated in our consciousness (or acquired by consciousness), we should surely understand them, and not be bewildered and astonished when they present themselves in our consciousness. They are indeed, an instinctive *trend*, as marked as the impulse of birds to build nests, or ants to form organized colonies. (p. 58)

Some examples of his archetypal categories include the Beauty and the Beast, the initiatory process of the hero image, and symbols of transcendence (Jung, 1964). Other influential archetypes include the shadow, anima, animus, and cycles of birth, death, and renewal. The shadow is seen as the unconscious content of the psyche and generally viewed as undesirable in some way. Anima is the feminine principle, and animus is the masculine principle. Moreover, proposing a nonjudgmental orientation toward archetypal symbols, Jung noted it is impossible to know the grand scheme or valuation of things.

Jung (1959/1990) distinguished the “collective unconscious” (p. 42) from the “personal unconscious” (p. 42) whereby the collective unconscious is not made up of personal experiences but of archetypes. He repeatedly explicated transpersonal, divine

qualities in his various categories of archetypal phenomena. Jolande Jacobi (1959/1974), a founding member of the C. G. Jung Institute in Zurich, clarified:

The collective unconscious as suprapersonal matrix, as the unlimited sum of fundamental psychic conditions accumulated over millions of years, is a realm of immeasurable breadth and depth. . . . The widely accepted idea of the collective unconscious as a “stratum” situated *below* the conscious mind is therefore unfounded and misleading . . . [and] stems from failure to distinguish between the personal and collective unconscious. . . . What is overlooked is that the collective unconscious is of an entirely different nature, comprising all the contents of the psychic experience of mankind, the most precious along with the worthless, the most beautiful with the ugliest; and it is also overlooked that the collective unconscious is in every respect “neutral,” that its contents acquire their value and position only through confrontation with consciousness. (pp. 59-60)

Jung (1954/2000) was very clear about how he defined the collective unconscious when he stated “what we call the ‘dark background of consciousness’ is understood to be a ‘higher’ consciousness, thus our concept of the ‘collective unconscious’ would be the European equivalent of buddhi, the enlightened mind” (p. xxxix). Therefore, Jung pointed to reconnection and integration of the knowledge of the true Self as paramount to living a self-actualized life.

The breadth and complexity of the collective unconscious and archetypal symbolism are not explicated within this study. However, it might be argued that the collective unconscious and archetypal symbolism is this energy that may potentially be made conscious and integrated through the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork (Grof, 1988). Further discussion of archetypal phenomena is treated in this chapter with a concentration on the mandala as a primary archetype.

The term mandala is a Sanskrit word that means circle or continuous (Arguelles & Arguelles, 1972; Grof, 1993). Hence, for the purpose of this study, mandala artwork is art done in, through, and around a circle. Mandala artwork, used in conjunction with

Holotropic Breathwork™, as well as in other contexts, is acknowledged for its archetypal significance (Arguelles & Arguelles, 1972; Grof, 1988; Jung, 1959/1973). The mandala itself is held as an innate symbol, and as a symbol it has a “therapeutic effect [that] is almost magical, both during the creative process and again when the person looks at it afterward” (Jung, 1959/1997, p. 14). Artwork created with this symbol and the symbol itself has been revered for their potent, transpersonal effects on the soul throughout the ages in many cultures and spiritual venues (Arguelles & Arguelles, 1972; Cornell, 2006; Grof, 1988). Jacobi (1959/1974) warned that “the symbol as Jung sees it is a psychic factor that cannot be analyzed or apprehended on the basis of causality, nor can it be determined in advance; it is ambiguous and bipolar” (p. 90). Proponents of the use of mandala artwork seem to anecdotally agree that the acknowledgement and respect for the mandala’s sacredness directly affect its potency (Arguelles & Arguelles, 1972; Cornell, 2006; Grof, 1993). Mandala artwork is viewed as a crucial component of Holotropic Breathwork™ technique (Taylor, 2007b).

Indigenous techniques are characteristic of Holotropic Breathwork™. These techniques are reflected in the use of the fast breathing technique, music, and group setting (Gibson, 2006; Grof, 1988, 1993). However, Leonard Gibson (personal communication, March 28, 2008) shed light on a noteworthy distinction between how and why indigenous tribes use the rituals and modern human’s current needs and uses. Indigenous people not only lived in spirit but elicited NOSC to address some sort of healing for the community. Mircea Eliade (1951/1974), a former Chairman of the Department of History of Religions at the University of Chicago, pointed out that the indigenous healers’ central orientation for contacting the spirit world was for community

interests. He stated that “the Eskimo shaman’s principal prerogatives are healing . . . to ensure a plentiful supply of game, fair weather . . . and the help . . . for sterile women” (p. 289). Other examples were of the shaman of South America who “defends the tribe from evil spirits, indicates the sites for profitable hunting and fishing, increases game, controls atmospheric phenomena, facilitates birth, reveals future events” (p. 323) and “the guru [who] protects the village” (p. 347). In contrast, the indigenous components of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique encounter the spirit world for the purpose of reconnecting the individual with that world or the true Self, and it is not oriented toward community. However, although the Holotropic Breathwork™ use of a group setting was originally one of economics, the experience of connection and intimacy in the group setting is one of the reported healing experiences arising out of the access of NOSC (Grof, 1988).

Psychedelic Therapy

Psychedelic Therapy refers to the use of LSD and other psychedelics in conjunction with psychotherapeutic processes and has been viewed or considered as controversial. However, detailed information regarding psychedelics, including the types used in studies or the controversy surrounding their use, is not going to be addressed.

The nondrug Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork was a by-product of Psychedelic Therapy research and the government’s restrictions against psychedelics (Grof, 1988). In the 1960s, the United States government passed federal and state laws against the use of psychedelic drugs. Until that time, renowned researchers in the field of Psychedelic Therapy challenged the controversy surrounding psychedelic drugs by using psychedelics to address a number of

psychodynamic issues including substance abuse (Fadiman, Grob, Bravo, Agar, & Walsh, 2003). Overall they found that when used under a controlled, psychotherapeutic environment, psychedelics might be beneficial. Results of a number of research studies in Psychedelic Therapy indicated significant positive findings (Bowen, Soskin, & Chotlos, 1970; Fadiman, 1965; Grof, 1973; Mogar & Savage, 1964; Riedlinger & Riedlinger, 1994; Savage & McCabe, 1973).

Foundational Developments

Grof (1988) reported that the main advantage of using psychedelics was the direct access to nonordinary states of consciousness. Both his personal experience with psychedelics and his observations of Psychedelic Therapy clients while they were accessing NOSC led Grof to major theoretical developments. These developments continue to be the foundation of his Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork. Three of the developments that are discussed below include (a) the recognition of a fast breathing pattern that occurred while the participant was on psychedelic drugs that could be simulated without the use of drugs and still facilitate access to NOSC, (b) the development of a new theoretical model that diverged from the Freudian model that viewed transpersonal experiences as central to psychological healing, and (c) the creation of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and integral mandala artwork.

Fast breathing pattern. A fast breathing pattern was repeatedly observed by Grof in his Psychedelic Therapy clients while they were on psychedelics. This breathing pattern, along with nonverbal music and bodywork, was used to evoke and support access to and experience of an altered state of consciousness or NOSC (Grof, 2003; Minett,

2004). Psychiatrists Mark Kasprow and Bruce Scotton (1999) clarified that Holotropic Breathwork™ is different from hyperventilation in that there is no pause set in place in Holotropic Breathwork™ by the brain stem as seen with hyperventilation in response to “the lowered CO2 levels of blood circulating in the brain stem” (p. 9).

Transpersonal experiences. Thousands of mostly anecdotal self-reports, arising out of accessing nonordinary states of consciousness through participation in the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and integral mandala artwork, indicate that the experience leads to a healing process that supports self-actualization (Grof, 1993; Jefferys, 1999). Grof (2003) discriminated between the holotropic altered state of consciousness and what he referred to as a “‘trivia deliria’ or ‘organic psychoses’” (p. 51) as an altered state of consciousness. He coined the term “holotropic” (Grof, 1998, p. 343), which means “moving in the direction of wholeness” (p. 343). As the term denotes, the holotropic experience is seen as an experience that leads toward the healing of psychic wounds and wholeness. Trivia deliria or organic psychoses are associated with “general disorientation, impairment of intellect, and subsequent amnesia. . . . In the holotropic states consciousness is changed qualitatively in a very profound and fundamental way, but it is not grossly impaired” (Grof, 2003, p. 51). Grof (1988) illuminated and synthesized various self-reports of reexperiencing prenatal and perinatal states as well as transpersonal or NOSC experiences. A summary of some descriptions of these anecdotal self-reports are as follows and are listed further in Appendix C:

1. The sense of a separate self normally defined within the limits of the body became more permeable or transparent. The interrelatedness of everything

was exposed by the loss of the sense of a separate self. Increased empathy and feelings of connectedness were reported as a result.

2. Identification with the human form shifted to animals, plants, or inanimate shapes. This shift in consciousness exposed the sacred relationship between everything as well as increasing understanding about what it is like to be the animal, plant, or inanimate object.
3. Through the direct experience of the earth as a living organism, the purpose and critical role of earth-oriented healing rituals were more deeply understood.
4. Increased awareness of the effects of perinatal experiences on the ego challenged the normal ideas of the self and allowed access to creative energy.

Grof indicated that individuals who tap into some or all of the transpersonal experiences described above often report that these experiences have been healing and life changing. Highlighting the possible benefits of the technique to society at large, he argued that the long-term effects of NOSC increased and enhanced intimacy, empathic connection, social responsibility, and spiritual alignment (Grof, 1988, 1993).

Holotropic Breathwork™ technique compared to predecessor. Comparing

Holotropic Breathwork™ to Psychedelic Therapy, Grof and Grof (1990) explained that the Holotropic Breathwork™

method combining simple means, such as faster breathing, music and sound technology, and certain forms of body work, can induce the entire spectrum of experiences that we used to see in psychedelic sessions. These experiences are generally gentler, and the person has more control over them, but their content is essentially the same, although no drugs are involved. (p. 144)

Grof and Grof asserted that because the NOSC experiences arose out of the nondrug technique Holotropic Breathwork™, it may not be directly compared to the experience of Psychedelic Therapy. The main difference between Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the Psychedelic Therapy technique is the use of psychedelic drugs (Grof & Grof, 1990). However, both provide access to NOSC and both engage the same procedures, including mandala artwork, for access and for the integration of the experience.

Mandala Artwork in the Role of Integration

The mandala artwork is central to the integration of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique. Diane Haug (2002), a senior GTT certified Holotropic Breathwork™ facilitator, emphasized that

inherent in the experience of Holotropic Breathwork™ is the inclusion of the “mandala drawing” at the completion of each session.

The “mandala”—created before the mind gets too active or before too many words are exchanged—is yet another non-verbal tool that allows participants to capture essential aspects of their journey on paper with art materials. The “mandala” serves as an anchor to the NOSC experience, and it is from this place that participants often begin their verbal sharing. (p. 11)

Grof (1988) encouraged the creation of mandala art. He noted that mandala artwork is an integral part of the holotropic healing process of accessing NOSC. He stated that the mandala artwork is usually shared in the group process that takes place at the end of the day after the breathwork sessions. The mandala artwork and group process are aimed at extending and integrating the NOSC experience beyond the breathwork experience. He noted that mandala artwork can act as a diary for the experience of NOSC. Grof stressed that mandala artwork “is extremely useful when combined with various experimental approaches [and] . . . can be used as a unique device documenting unusual experiences and helping in their integration” (p. 210).

At Holotropic Breathwork™ retreats, participants are encouraged to share their mandalas during at least two of the group get-togethers. Some of the anecdotal examples are provided by Grof (2000) through Kathleen Silver's Holotropic Breathwork™ mandala artwork, which portrays the "psychodynamics of her nausea and bulimia" (p. 125) and another that reflects her experience of freedom and deep "compassion for the suffering of humanity and herself" (p. 42). Additionally, another breathwork experience was anecdotally shared through Tai Ingrid Hazare's mandala artwork "representing psychospiritual rebirth" (p. 49).

At Holotropic Breathwork™ retreats, an outline of a simple empty mandala or circle on paper is routinely provided. To create their mandala artwork, participants are allowed free expression of the art within, through, and around the circle. The size and dimension of the supplied mandala was based on the design developed by Joan Kellogg (1992), a leader in art therapy and developer of mandala psychotherapeutic diagnostic cards called MARI® Cards, a set of 12 cards with various diagnostic symbols on each card.

With regard to the construction of a mandala, Kellogg (1992) reported that the dimensions of the mandala or circle should be about the same size as the human head to create greater resonance. Therefore, paper for mandala artwork should be 12 inches by 18 inches to fit a 10.5 inch in diameter circle. Oil pastels were seen as the optimal medium. In conjunction with therapy, her clients created mandala artwork, and she used the completed drawings in case evaluations. She reported that client mandalas provided a map of their process. Although she used the mandala therapeutically, Kellogg (1984)

posited that “the mandala is not confined [to] . . . therapeutic uses, but can be used as a valid path in its own right, as a vehicle for self-discovery” (p. 3).

Joan Kellogg, Margaret Mac Rae, Helen Bonny, RMT, and Francesco Di Leo (1977) were psychotherapists interested in verifying the validity of Kellogg’s MARI® psychotherapeutic diagnostic cards. Using one case study each from Mac Rae, Bonny, and Di Leo, the three psychotherapists provided Kellogg with the mandala artwork of their respective psychotherapy clients. Kellogg compared the MARI® Card symbols to the client’s mandala artwork to diagnose each client. Each psychotherapist reported that Kellogg, without any contact with or information about each client, was able to provide a diagnosis very similar to the psychotherapist’s own diagnosis. The psychotherapists viewed the few case studies as giving some verification for the validity of using the MARI® Cards as a diagnostic tool. However, Kellogg encouraged further research with the MARI® Cards using high-functioning test subjects as a control group. She also emphasized that “it is a mistake to think of what mandalas reveal as static. We can use the mandala most effectively when we think of it as part of an on-going process” (p. 126).

Judith Cornell (personal communication, August 29, 2007), a current leader in a mandala artwork healing process, strongly disagreed with the use of the mandala for diagnostic purposes. She stated that using the mandala for psychotherapeutic diagnosis as Kellogg attempted was not consistent with the use of mandala artwork by the sages [or wise persons] of old and is contraindicated for the mandala’s healing effects (Cornell, 2005, 2006).

Cornell (2006) emphasized the importance of holding the mandala as sacred. Her personal experience with the healing qualities of mandala artwork led to this

understanding. She was diagnosed with cancer and in 1979 began using mandala artwork as part of her healing process. Cornell indicated that the healing results were so profound that she now provides training to people in the use of mandala artwork for healing, especially for those diagnosed with cancer. Regarding mandala artwork, she explained that “when a practitioner willfully illuminates and embodies a sacred image from within the psyche while in a meditative state, spiritual transformation, physical healing, and the integration of personality fragments can result” (p. 3).

Archetypal Symbolism of the Mandala

Mandala artwork is simply art done within and around a circle. The power of the mandala may stem from its being an archetypal pattern as it is often viewed as the archetype of wholeness. Archetypal symbols are seen as carrying a sacred energy that allows us to enter into a transformative process. The energy of an archetypal symbol is the core of the Self inviting us toward wholeness (Whitmont, 1969/1991).

Recalling the definition of archetype as a pattern that repeats itself throughout time and cultures, the mandala or circle is a ubiquitous pattern in nature. The human eye is a perfect example of a mandala pattern. The eye is round, as is its cornea, lens, iris, and pupil and is thereby a perfect mandala. Every cell in the human body is a mandala. Cut a tree trunk or a flower stem and you will see a mandala. Look at a raindrop, snowflake, or flowers, and the mandala form appears. The earth, stars, and planets are all circular and therefore mandalas (Arguelles & Arguelles, 1972).

The universality of the mandala form lends to its being seen not only as part of tradition but also as knowledge of the soul prior to existence. Even before rational thinking is available, the human infant scribbles circularly and a circle is often drawn to

represent the self (Whitmont, 1969/1991). The variety of archetypal forms in nature led to the mandala being recognized as “the most important of them from a functional point of view . . . *the archetype of wholeness* . . . ‘the quaternity of the One’ is the schema for all images of God” (Jung, 1959/1973, p. 4). Jung postulated that the mandala archetype motif bridges the polarities of the psyche, however the healing effects are voided by any artificial, rigid reenactment of the spontaneous act of its creation.

José Arguelles and Miriam Arguelles (1972) saw the mandala as a matrix holding all the dynamic elements of creation. They likened this dynamism to the rippling effect of a stone thrown into the water. The water was equated to consciousness and the effect of each action and thought on the psyche. At the core, human beings were viewed as having an inner guide that leads them to wholeness and knowing their true nature. Mandalas were seen as symbols that provided access to that inner guide through the principles of centering, symmetry, and its quaternity (north, south, east, and west, four seasons, etc.). A mandala may be used as a tool for bringing together the energy of opposites that can get dispersed and wasted. The authors stressed the pivotal role of the mandala for humankind by stressing that it “is the original sign, the prime symbol of the nothing and the all; the symbol of heaven and the solar eye, the all-encompassing form beyond and through which man finds and loses him self” (p. 33). Jungian Western Psychological Integrative art, Southwestern American Indian sandpaintings, Chinese I-Ching of yin and yang, and Tibetan Meditation Art forms throughout time have tapped into the sacred energy of mandala art. The sustainability of the mandala over time and across cultures is seen as proof of its enduring power and influence on the psyche in its multifaceted form and use (Arguelles & Arguelles, 1972).

Holotropic Breathwork™ and Mandala Artwork Research

Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and its integral mandala artwork may be distinct options that enable Self-understanding and access to a reservoir of psychic energy. Below the researcher provides an overview of six research studies that highlight the importance of these techniques.

Only two of the six Holotropic Breathwork™ studies mention the integral mandala artwork, and none of the studies focus on the mandala artwork (Brouillette, 1997; Pressman, 1993). Therefore, first, the mandala research studies are independently explicated.

After exhausting the mandala research studies, overviews of the six available Holotropic Breathwork™ studies are explicated (Brouillette, 1997; Hanratty, 2002; Holmes et al., 1996; Jefferys, 1999; Metcalf, 1995; Pressman, 1993). These research studies are organized by the participant classification as follows: (a) normal functioning, (b) psychotherapeutic clients, and (c) clients with substance abuse issues. In general, there is a paucity of data on the effects of Holotropic Breathwork™ on normal-functioning individuals. Therefore, the researcher has included Holotropic Breathwork™ studies that did not use normal-functioning participants. James Goodwin (2005), a Professor at Western Carolina University, argued that we can learn about what is normal through the study of psychopathology.

Mandala artwork research. None of the Holotropic Breathwork™ studies brought the integral mandala artwork to the forefront. Therefore, mandala artwork studies independent of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique are explicated here. There is a sparse amount of research backing the observed and proclaimed benefits of mandala

artwork. However, the few informal and formal research papers summarized below indicate promising results.

For her dissertation, Elizabeth Stein (1996) studied the effects of a mandala artwork making practice. The study was quasi-experimental and quasi-qualitative. The participants included 65 middle school students ages 10 to 13, where 30 were male and 35 female. Ethnic representation consisted of 5 African Americans, 6 Latinos, 24 Asian Americans, and 30 European Americans. Assessment instruments were used demonstrating a reliability and validity of $p < .05$ level of significance. The instruments measured self-concept and self-esteem, ability to understand consequences, and social anxiety respectively.

The participants of Stein's (1996) study were summer school students at a school in the Palo Alto School District in California. The students signed up for one of three classes: the mandala-making class (Group 1); the multimedia art and creativity class without mandala artwork (Group 2); or the craft sampler without mandala artwork (Group 3). Group 1's 24 participants became the experimental group working solely with mandala artwork and used Cornell's (2006) process of using light, sound, and visualization. Group 2 had 22 participants who worked with a variety of media such as clay and paper-mâché. Group 3 had 19 participants who worked with crafts such as jewelry making and silk screen. Specific curriculums were established for each class. Classes were 1 hour each and held daily Monday through Friday for 4 consecutive weeks. Each of the assessment scales was administered to all the participants by psychologists on the first day of school and again on the last day of school. The data from the administration of the assessments were analyzed using 3 X 2 mixed between and within

ANOVAs. Stein concluded that “these tests yielded no significant changes in self-schema variables with the exception of social anxiety, on which Group 1 showed significantly greater improvements than Group 3” (p. iii). The quasi-qualitative survey data analysis of the mandala artwork group was informally assessed and found that participants and their parents reported that “they could concentrate better as a result of the treatment” (p. iv).

The controls used in Stein’s (1996) study provided a relative amount of strength to the internal validity of the study. Self-selection, higher income demographic, and ethnic imbalance decreased the study’s external validity. Overall, the results were promising, but further research would be needed to be conclusive.

Valerie Smitheman-Brown, art therapist, and Robin Church (1996), educator, wanted to provide evidence of

creative growth and behavioral changes precipitated by the work done in art therapy through the employment of the mandala as an active centering device with children who had been diagnosed with Attention-Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
(p. 252)

Focus and lack of impulse control are seen to be central issues plaguing sufferers of ADD and ADHD. Preliminary results of the study indicated that mandala artwork had a positive effect in increasing the ability to focus and decreasing impulsivity. In their quantitative study, they worked with 12 participants from the Intensity V School in Maryland for children with severe developmental difficulties. It included 8 participants in the primary group and 4 in the control group. Participants’ ages were 10 to 13 years old, the genders were not specified, and all had been diagnosed with ADD or ADHD.

The results of Smitheman-Brown and Church’s (1996) study were measured after a year of weekly art therapy sessions. At the beginning of each session (neither the length of time for the session nor its consistency were specified in the study), the participants

were provided a piece of paper with a 10 ½ inch circle drawn on it. They were instructed to begin at the center of the circle and create art using the circle. The control group used art in general without the circle, so it was not mandala artwork. Projective drawing of a person picking an apple off a tree was done by each participant of both groups every 2 months to assess progress of developmental level of integration, problem-solving, and focusing. The drawings were assessed by independent raters using Gantt's Formal Elements Art Therapy Scale (FEATS) to rate integration, problem-solving, developmental level, and details of objects and environment. Three fourths of the control group showed some improvement in integration skills, problem-solving, developmental level, and focus on details. All 8 of the participants using mandala artwork showed marked improvement in all areas with average FEATS score increases of 35%, 38%, 37%, and 22% in integration, problem-solving, focus on details, and developmental level, respectively. The researchers reported that consistent use of mandala artwork as a focusing tool in this study indicated improvement in the symptoms.

The small number of participants, quantity of 8 participants, with 4 in the control group, decreases the power of Smitheman-Brown and Church's (1996) study. Therefore, the researchers suggested that further studies similar to their study to substantiate and strengthen the study's results would be needed. External validity is also in question due to lack of random selection and assignment. Moreover, internal validity may be at issue related to selection bias.

Patti Henderson, Nathan Mascaro, David Rosen, and Tiffany Skillern (2007) did a pilot study to provide empirical data that measured the effects of using mandala artwork with people who suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Results indicated a

decrease in reported PTSD symptoms of depressive symptoms, anxiety, and frequency of PTSD-related physical symptoms and illness. For the study, 36 participants (7 male and 26 female undergraduate psychology students, ages 18 to 23) were qualified based on the use of a PTSD Scale that measured the symptoms and severity of one or more traumatic stressors. Assessment questionnaires were administered prior to, directly after, and 1 month after the study to measure changes in the participants' symptoms. Henderson et al. explained that they randomly assigned the participants to an experimental group and a control group, with 19 participants and 17 participants respectively. Each of the participants from both groups created three drawings and was allowed 20 minutes for each drawing over a 3-day period. The experimental, mandala group were directed to draw art within a circle, and the control group did not use the circle. The score for the PTSD scale was the only test indicating a significant difference. It pointed to the use of mandala artwork as decreasing reported PTSD symptoms. However, external validity is an issue in that the results might not be generalized due to the small number of participants, all participants being the same age and educational level, and all established as normal-functioning as a condition for participating in the study. Also, internal validity is in question due to the lack of controls outside the 20-minute drawing period.

Janet Couch (1997), art therapist, stated that she intended to provide evidence that supported the positive effects of mandala artwork in working with people suffering with dementia resulting from Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, and Parkinson's disease, as well as substance-induced dementia. She viewed mandala artwork as an effective psychotherapeutic tool for people suffering from dementia because they have a difficult time verbally communicating their needs and feelings due to the effects of the disease.

Using MARI® Cards, mandala drawings were assessed. There were 471 mandala drawings from 71 older adult clients from Couch's art therapy sessions; 62 were women and 9 were men. Couch indicated that participants were able to use art to express themselves whereas, due to the disease, deteriorated cognition might otherwise disable the expression of needs and feelings. She stated that, through the mandala artwork, the most frequently expressed issues centered on power, powerlessness, and protection, which reflected the realistic situation of the lack of autonomy resulting from the disease. She reported that although further studies would be needed to corroborate her findings, mandala artwork seemed to provide an otherwise nonexistent communication tool for dementia patients and seemed to have a positive effect on the patients. The internal validity of Couch's study is weakened by the fact that her instrument for measuring the effects, the MARI® Cards, is not a standardized or reliable instrument. Additionally, subjectivity in determining the category of the drawings weakens internal validity of the study. The collection process of the 471 mandala drawings weakens the internal validity in that controls in the descriptions or consistency of administration were not explicated and do not seem to have been in place. However, even though the controls were not consistent and the results were subjectively determined, the findings of the study imply that mandala artwork may have a positive impact especially when used to express nonverbal or preverbal aspects of the psyche. The fact that the findings were consistent over 471 mandala drawings provides verifiability to the study as well as support for this study.

Holotropic Breathwork™ research—normal-functioning participants. Gilles Brouillette (1997), cofounder of the Collaborative Leadership Institute, indicated that

through a methodically sound, mixed quantitative and qualitative study, he intended to study the reported emotional, physical, and intellectual transformative, healing effects of Holotropic Breathwork™. As part of this study, he recruited 34 participants from a 2-week Holotropic Breathwork™ certification training. At the end of training, initially Brouillette administered an assessment test to each participant with a follow-up questionnaire 6 months later.

Brouillette (1997) described the 34 participants as trainees in one of Grof's 2-week Holotropic Breathwork™ certification trainings, with an average age of 49 and a range of 32 to 65 years old, and consisting of 9 men and 25 women who had participated in at least 23 prior Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions. Their professions varied, but most were "in the field of mental health (many were psychotherapists or massage therapists)" (p. 140). Each of the 34 participants was initially interviewed for about 30 minutes. Six month follow-up questionnaires were completed and returned by 25 of the 34 participants. Additionally, for evidence of long-term results, 2 out of the 25 participants took part in individual case studies with a 1-year follow-up after the training. The 2 participants for the case study were interviewed for about an hour and a half. Family histories for all 34 participants were provided in conjunction with the case studies. This provided data for understanding the psychodynamic structure of the participants as influenced by their families.

Results of the follow-up questionnaires from the 34 participants demonstrated 65% or greater Significant Increase (SI) responses to categories of personal transformation. The themes of the SI responses and the percentage were "(a) #12 *My understanding of myself* (SI = 78%); (b) #5 *My feelings of self-worth* (SI = 72%); (c) #10

My concerns for spiritual matters (SI = 69%); (d) #13 *My desire to achieve a higher consciousness* (SI = 67%); and (e) #23 *My sense of sacred aspects of life* (SI = 67%)” (Brouillette, 1997, p. 219). Brouillette argued that these findings indicated a significant increase of satisfaction in the areas of personal growth listed above. Referring to the 25 participants who completed the 6-month follow-up questionnaires, he stated that results demonstrated that the effects from the Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat remained for 57% of the participants, 16% experienced an increase in the effects, and 27% of the participants experienced a decrease in the effects. In the 1-year follow-up of the two case studies, Brouillette stated that each participant reported being less fearful with an increase in self-confidence and an increase in love and compassion as evidenced by one person gaining the ability to lead groups and do public speaking and the other professing a new sense of self that included love and openness.

The fact that all of the 34 participants were highly experienced breathworkers with at least 600 accumulated hours and were certified to be GTT facilitators leaves the external validity in question. Brouillette (1997) was not specific about the participants’ professional or educational backgrounds. Furthermore, he erroneously included massage therapists in the same category as psychotherapist—mental health profession. Further studies would be needed to generalize the findings.

Patrick Hanratty’s (2002) combined quantitative and qualitative dissertation study of Holotropic Breathwork™ had the goal of understanding its effect on an individual’s “general psychological distress, and death anxiety” (p. 1), described as perceived threats. The results indicated that Holotropic Breathwork™ might be a promising technique for self-growth. His study reported on 44 normal functioning participants, 32 females and 12

males, and measured perceived threat before and after participants went through one of Grof's 1-week Holotropic Breathwork™ workshops. All the participants were college educated. Educations ranged from Junior College to Medical Degree, where 44% had Bachelor's Degrees and 10% Master's Degrees. Overall results indicated significant effects in decreased symptoms ($p < .01$, $N = 42$). Assessments were used that measured a person's propensity toward anxiety as a result of negative cognition and fear of death and tested for a person's hypnosis susceptibility. Hanratty used assessment scales and questionnaires to measure the participants' level of perceived threat.

The participants showed significant results on the absorption scale, indicating a greater susceptibility to hypnosis than normal. Both preassessments and postassessments were employed, providing evidence for both short and long term change in symptoms. A subset of his findings included a decreased tendency toward negative cognition and psychological distress. Hanratty (2002) also interviewed participants and concluded that "many people reported feeling calm, peaceful, relaxed, energized, or 'cleared out' after their breathwork session. Several individuals said they felt exhausted" (p. 95). However, Hanratty's results are weakened by the fact that no control group was used. A further limitation of the study was a lack of random sample, bringing external validity into question.

Todd Pressman (1993) tested the claims of Holotropic Breathwork's™ positive effects on both psychological and spiritual well-being in his combined quantitative and qualitative dissertation research. Participants for his study were volunteers in response to his advertisement. The study was at no cost to any of the participants. His study included 25 female and 15 male normal functioning participants. All volunteers were required to

go through a psychiatric screening to meet the study's criterion of emotional stability. All participants were between 18 and 57 years old with half in the age range of 28 to 37 years. The breakdown of ethnicity was 16 Caucasians, 2 African Americans, and 2 Hispanics. Occupations included 7 administrative professionals, 8 manual laborers, 4 housewives, and 1 student. Volunteers were randomly assigned to one of two groups, a treatment group or a control group. The treatment group received six Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions, which included rapid breathing, music, body work, and postsession mandala artwork. The control group did not use the deep breathing technique and only listened to music with closed eyes. Presession and postsession assessments were administered to all the participants.

Pressman (1993) found that the “results from the questionnaires provided only partial validation of the hypothesis, while the interview responses provided strong evidence that Holotropic Breathwork™ has beneficial psychological and spiritual effects” (p. 5). Using only 6 participants as a basis for his view decreased the power of his stated results. Hence, the results of his study provide some indication of beneficial results, but further studies would be needed to strengthen both the internal and external validity of the research.

Holotropic Breathwork™ research with psychotherapy clients. Sarah Holmes, Robin Morris, Pauline Rose Clance, and Thompson Putney (1996) reported their quantitative study as demonstrating certain therapeutic changes resulting from Holotropic Breathwork™. They narrowed their study to measuring “distress associated with self-identified problems, death anxiety, self-esteem, and sense of affiliation with others” (p. 114). Holotropic Breathwork™ process was chosen because of its nonverbal,

experiential techniques, such as fast breathing, evocative music, bodywork, and creative expression.

In Holmes et al.'s (1996) study, two groups, all Caucasian, were compared: (a) a group of 5 males and 19 females between the ages of 32 and 50 in which the intervention was an experiential, verbal-oriented therapy plus six Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions once a month (hereinafter referred to as Breathwork Group or HTB); and (b) a group of 8 males and 18 females ranging from 20 to 49 years old who received experiential, verbal-oriented therapy only (Therapy Group or VG). The Breathwork Group was exposed to six Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions held once per month in addition to experiential therapy. Due to this 6-month commitment and prior to acceptance into the study, participants had to have had at least one Holotropic Breathwork™ session for the researcher to ascertain their acceptability of the method. Prior to the study, the participants' experience with breathwork ranged between 1 to 23 sessions with a group mean average of 7.6 sessions.

All of the participants of Holmes et al.'s (1996) study were clients of psychotherapists who had referred them to this study; thus they all had had prior therapeutic experience. Each participant's level of fear of death, self-esteem, and relationships with other people were measured using four different questionnaires. The participants took these tests prior to participation in the sessions related to this research project, 3 months after the sessions, and 6 months after the sessions. For the analysis, Holmes et al. reported that "an overall repeated measures MANOVER was performed using the DAS, Aff Scale, and SE Scale as dependent variable and group, time, and group-time interaction as independent variables" (p. 117). An analysis of variance

(ANOVA) compared the before and after the 6-month sessions' tests results. The preassessment results regarding fear of death indicated no significant difference between participants in either group. The postassessment sessions indicated a significant decrease in fear of death and increased self-esteem for participants in the Breathwork Group. Holmes et al. stated that overall results indicated "that Holotropic Breathwork may be particularly useful with individuals who have difficulty making progress in therapy" (p. 119). There was a significant effect found for the Breathwork Group indicating greater changes over the 6-month follow-up period than for the Therapy Group.

In the Holmes et al. (1996) study on the efficacy of Holotropic Breathwork™ external validity is in question. The researchers acknowledged the limitations of selection in their process whereby participants were not randomly selected nor assigned to the groups and all were Caucasian. Additionally, a control group was not used, which weakened the internal validity. Overall, further studies are needed before any conclusions can be made.

Holotropic Breathwork™ research and substance abuse. There will not be any attempt to substantiate or demonstrate the effect of Holotropic Breathwork™ on substance abusers. However, research studies are provided to demonstrate the salubrious effects and potential of Holotropic Breathwork™ technique.

Gary Fisher and Thomas Harrison (2005), leaders in substance abuse counseling, pointed out that theories regarding the root causes of substance abuse are controversial and vary in conclusions. Socioeconomic, emotional, cognitive, and physical factors are seen as contributors to the variance. Grof (2000) posited that the desire to return to one's

spiritual nature is a reason for substance abuse and that addressing the perinatal issues as Holotropic Breathwork™ does is viewed as critical to resolving addiction issues.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services (2004) and National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (2005) statistics indicate that substance abuse is known to affect millions of people throughout the population. The research results of Brack Jefferys (1999) and Byron Metcalf (1995) demonstrated supporting evidence for the promise held by Grof's Holotropic Breathwork™ as a treatment technique to address substance abuse issues.

In Jefferys' (1999) quantitative study of the use of Holotropic Breathwork™ as the transpersonal element of a 12-step program used to address substance abuse addiction, he highlighted the need for addressing chemically dependent clients' well-being on many levels: social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual. Results indicated that difficult prenatal and perinatal experiences contributed to chemical dependence. Jefferys' goal was to build a case for the use of a "much more powerful therapeutic approach to addiction treatment than was previously considered" (p. 31). He wanted to bring the importance of transpersonal dimensions into conscious awareness. In support of his position, he cited Grof's insight:

Experiential sequences of death and rebirth typically open the gate to a transbiographical domain of the psyche that can best be referred to as transpersonal. The perinatal level of the unconscious clearly represents an interface between the individual and the collective unconscious. (Grof, as cited in Jefferys, 1999, pp. 37-38)

Jefferys (1999) pointed out that Holotropic Breathwork™ is not the only transpersonal psychotherapeutic method proving itself effective in substance abuse treatment. However, it is one of the few that deals with the cycle of birth and death.

Additionally, he stressed that optional methods are needed due to the unique configurations of individual client needs. He had been part of a team study that had provided strong evidence for the use of transpersonal methods, especially with respect to decreasing long-term relapse.

From 1988 through 1989, Jefferys (1999) was a member of a multidisciplinary treatment team study for substance abuse at St. Joseph's North Carolina Addiction Recovery Program (ARP). The team's study included 29 adult participants: 20 male and 9 female. Twenty-seven of the 29 participants had sought out addiction recovery programs through their employee assistance programs on their own recognizance. The other 2 participants had been required to attend by their employers. Treatment and the study were conducted over 13 months and divided into three phases of participation requirements.

Phase I of Jefferys' (1999) study required 21 hours of therapeutic intervention per week for 5 weeks. Phase II consisted of group work for 3 hours per week for 13 weeks. In Phase III, participants met in the group for 4 hours once a month for 8 months. Prior to the study and as an ARP requirement, all participants went through a detoxification program. The intervention of Holotropic Breathwork™ was used as the spiritual component of the 1939 Alcoholic Anonymous 12-step program. The first three steps encourage surrender, the next five steps address looking at the psychological and sociological causes of the addiction, the tenth step puts the prior steps into action, the eleventh step incorporates prayer and meditation, and the twelfth step includes transpersonal relatedness with others (Jefferys, 1999). Jefferys emphasized that

Combining clinical interventions with the self help model as developed by twelve step programs has increased the effectiveness of alcohol and

chemical dependency treatment. Unfortunately most clinical models do not include the therapeutic technology to facilitate authentic transpersonal experiences such as surrender and transcendence. This has created a double bind situation for both clinicians and clients. Spirituality is given either a theoretical treatment and relegated to a time *when the client is ready* or simply denied as important. (p. 61)

Participants completed a variety of assessment tests. One-year follow-up outcome data were presented and categorized as (a) improved, (b) unchanged, or (c) declined. The data demonstrated that 76% of the 29 participants reported improvement. Participants' self-reports were substantiated by family and friends as well as master's level clinician testing based on a nationally certified process by the employee assistance programs. Jefferys noted that the internal validity of his study was confounded due to the use of archived research data and the lack of a control group. Moreover, external validity was compromised due to the lack of random sampling.

Metcalf's (1995) research seemed to provide additional support for the use of Holotropic Breathwork™ for addressing problems associated with substance abuse. The purpose of his study was to provide empirical evidence for the observed, albeit unsubstantiated, benefits and successful use of Holotropic Breathwork™ to address alcohol and drug addictions.

Metcalf (1995) described his study as an independent research project "utilizing a self-reporting, structured survey" (p. 1). The survey consisted of interviews using a Likert-type scale to measure the participants' perceived changes categorized as craving, emotions, depression, anxiety, feelings of grief and loss, stress, physical or somatic shifts, and shifts in other addictions such as smoking or food, interpersonal relationships, self-esteem, and well-being and spirituality. The resulting data were organized by the

aforementioned categories and then quantified numerically. The responses were measured by a scale of 1 through 7, with 1 indicating the least amount of change.

Included in Metcalf's study were 19 adult recovering alcoholics and 1 recovering drug addict. The participants' demographics included 19 Caucasians and 1 Hispanic (10 females and 10 males). All were middle class with approximately 16 years of education each. The participants' vocational backgrounds were varied, including some in mental health, construction, education, and investment fields. The participants had been either Metcalf's psychotherapy clients or those of his colleagues, and all the participants had an interest in Holotropic Breathwork™. With each participant, the same survey questions were consistently administered. Overall, the participants' responses indicated an increase or improvement in their (a) ability to handle stress, (b) ability to access emotions including grief, (c) self-esteem, (d) interpersonal relationships, and (e) interest in spirituality. In addition, there was a decrease in depression, anxiety, and craving. An initial increase in symptoms was expected and considered to be part of the healing process. Metcalf considered the essential healing element of Holotropic Breathwork™ to be the induction of a NOSC.

The small, nonrandomized sample affected the power of Metcalf's (1995) study. He admitted that this was a limited study and that further studies would need to be conducted to verify his findings. However, Metcalf maintained a sense of consistency throughout the research. His use of a Likert-scale questionnaire provided a consistent self-report measurement between all clients. In addition to the questionnaire, Metcalf interviewed the participants and provided quotes from his interviews to provide supporting evidence for the Likert-scale results.

The lack of a control group weakened the internal validity of his results. Also, the participants had varied Holotropic Breathwork™ experiences without control over the variables including whether or not mandala artwork was used as part of the process, adding to the degradation of internal validity.

Indications of Research Findings

Overall, the results of the preceding six Holotropic Breathwork™ studies (Brouillette, 1997; Hanratty, 2002; Holmes et al., 1996; Jefferys, 1999; Metcalf, 1995; Pressman, 1993) and the mandala artwork research (Couch, 1997; Henderson et al, 2007; Smitheman-Brown & Church, 1996) indicated a positive trend. Although the studies are few in number, they suggest that Holotropic Breathwork™ and mandala artwork might have a positive impact on the self-actualization process. Moreover, the findings of this study presented in Chapter 6 agree with the general trend of prior studies.

Self-Actualization as a Process

Acknowledgement of that which is unconscious, including the sacred and the symbolic, is proposed to be essential to leading a self-actualized, authentic life. Leading a life engaged in the self-actualizing process is seen as necessary not only for a more fulfilling individual life but also for the betterment of society as a whole (Assagioli, 1965; Maslow, 1993).

Experiences arising out of Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork are posited as powerful, peak experiences that access dimensions of the unconscious not otherwise available (Grof, 1993). Peak experiences are seen as necessary steps toward self-actualization. Moreover, self-actualization is seen as primary to the betterment of people's lives and society as a whole (Assagioli, 1965; Maslow,

1971/1993). Edward Whitmont (1969/1991), psychoanalyst and a founding member of the C. G. Jung Institute, asserted that with movement toward wholeness as its intent, the Self reveals itself through symbolism. This influence on individuals is both unique to the particular individual and ubiquitous to all throughout time and between cultures collectively.

Contrasting living a self-actualized life with a normal life, Abraham Maslow (1971/1993) equated normal to a “kind of sickness or crippling or stunting that we share with everybody else and therefore don’t notice” (p. 25). A person who is thriving and reaching full humanness is one that transcends self and goes beyond normal existence. He viewed the United States as having reached an economic level of comfort that few other nations enjoy, yet few of its citizens had reached an exemplary, self-actualized state and cited the need for virtue and authenticity (Maslow).

Martin Seligman (2002), a Professor of Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania and director of the Positive Psychology Network, stated that authenticity is essential to well-being. He substantiated his view of authenticity by pointing to a study of fake versus authentic smiles of 141 college seniors. Each senior’s yearbook picture was coded as authentic or inauthentic by whether or not the eyes crinkled simultaneous to the corners of the mouth being turned upward in a smile. If the eyes were not crinkled the smile was classified as inauthentic. Of the 141 seniors, 3 did not smile, and of the remainder the smiles classified as authentic versus inauthentic were split down the middle. Follow-up studies at ages 27, 43, and 52 were conducted for each of the graduates. The findings indicated that the authentic smilers were in more stable and long-term marriages. They reported an overall greater sense of well-being than the

inauthentic smilers. Seligman used this study as an example to substantiate his position that authenticity is a key factor to well-being. Moreover, Seligman emphasized that substantial character values, such as strength, compassion, and courage lead to a fulfilling, authentic life. Without substance a person falls into feelings of emptiness. This viewpoint was also reflected by Maslow (1971/1993) when he stated

that the perception of the Being of otherness, or the intrinsic nature of the person or thing occurs more often in healthier people and seems to be not only a perception of the deeper facticity, but also, at the same time of the oughtiness of the object. That is to say, oughtiness is an intrinsic aspect of deeply perceived facticity; it is itself a fact to be perceived. (p. 118)

According to Maslow (1971/1993), authenticity is more than just being honest. He pointed out that there are people whose goals and values come from a place of selflessness. The self-actualized person is seen by Maslow as devoted to a cause greater than the self. Maslow emphasized that self-actualization is intended to be an ongoing process which may include transitory, peak experiences. Courage was seen as intrinsic to the process of self-actualization in that the person must make choices between personal growth and fear. He viewed awareness and understanding of ego identity as essential to accessing the authentic or true Self. Honesty and taking responsibility were emphasized as paramount to the process. He warned that the process was not easy. Knowledge and experience of transpersonal, mystical experiences was seen by Maslow as crucial to the exploration of all aspects of the Self. Maslow's view can be augmented by a statement from Whitmont (1969/1991), a prominent Jungian analyst, who stated, "when we find ourselves facing only obstacles and hindrances and sterility, we may consider whether or not we may be in an uncooperative position in respect to the Self" (p. 264). Through an interview process, William Kueppers' (2004) qualitative, organic inquiry dissertation

research study included an exploration of authenticity with nine pairs of participants. Overall, all the participants reported that to be authentic they had to face and overcome fear and resistance, but having the courage to do so enhanced their lives.

Furthermore, Roberto Assagioli (1965), Italian psychiatrist and founder of the psychosynthesis movement, emphasized that the process of self-transformation propels a person out of the normal. He also emphasized that it is not an easy journey and takes courage. Spiritual experiences were seen by him as varied and often not well integrated into a person's life. However, Assagioli warned against denial of both the experience and the difficulty of incorporating spiritual experiences into one's life. In support of the inclusion of the transpersonal in psychotherapy, he asserted that psychotherapy's

pathological approach has, besides its assets, also a serious liability, and that is an exaggerated emphasis on the morbid manifestations and on the lower aspects of human nature . . . many important realities and functions have been neglected or ignored: intuition, creativity, the will, and the very core of the human psyche—the Self. (p. 35)

Thus he pointed to the significance of becoming aware of all aspects of the psyche and stressed that people's internal experiences shape their external worlds. Whitmont (1969/1991) noted that

conscious and unconscious do not make a whole when one of them is suppressed and injured by the other . . . the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given the chance of having its way too—as much of it as we can stand. (p. 264)

Jung (1961/1983) stressed that, left unattended, unconscious projections may deplete our energy and limit our freedom of choice. Jung gave an example of this restriction:

In the case of the son, the projection-making factor is identical with the mother-imago, and this is consequently taken to be the real mother. The projection can only be dissolved when the son sees that in the realm of his psyche there is an imago not only of the mother but of the daughter, sister,

the beloved, the heavenly goddess, and the chthonic Baubo. Every mother and every beloved is forced to become the carrier and embodiment of this omnipresent and ageless image, which corresponds to the deepest reality in man. (p. 109)

Hence, projection consists of but a small piece of the real father or mother. Jung exemplified not only why awareness of repressed psychic material is crucial to living an authentic life but also the critical role archetypal symbol plays. All the collective ideas and images of the symbolic father, mother, or other archetypal image are included in projection. The symbolic world appears to be a gateway to deep recesses of the soul inaccessible from a purely empirical, cognitive orientation (Jung, 1961/1983).

Jung's (1961/1983) view of the pivotal nature of the symbolic world contributes to the importance that this study places on the symbolism of mandala artwork. Additionally, the vital role of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique in accessing NOSC and unleashing reserves of energy from the unconscious becomes more apparent.

Conclusion and Summary of Literature Review

The background and supporting research reports on Holotropic Breathwork™ and mandala artwork emphasize a positive trend toward greater health and well-being through the use of the technique. This trend enhances the prospect of Holotropic Breathwork™ with mandala artwork as a noteworthy technique that may support the betterment of humankind through self-actualization. However, only a handful of evidence resulted from the research, and most of the reports remain anecdotal. This researcher's exploration into the Holotropic Breathwork™ and integral mandala artwork is important in that it fills a gap in (a) the verification and documentation of the subjective experience, (b) the highlighting of recurring themes that may deepen the understanding of the experience, (c) the revealing of unique characteristics of the experience that may be helpful for certain

individuals, and (d) bringing focus and attention to the integral mandala artwork experience. Moreover, consistent among most of the research studies was the acknowledgement of the need for additional research. Intuitive Inquiry is the research method employed for this study, as it provides a support for open-ended inquiry and contemplation that may lead to a deepened understanding. It is more fully explained in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Research Method

There is a Secret One inside us; the planets in all the galaxies pass through his hands like beads. That is a string of beads one should look at with luminous eyes.
—Kabir (trans. 1977, p. 29)

Intuitive Inquiry, a qualitative, hermeneutic research method, was employed to explore and more fully understand the topic of this study. Intuitive Inquiry is a method with not heart only, but also intellectual rigor. How this study was carried out is fully laid out in step-by-step detail in this chapter along with a more complete description of the method. Included are how the participants were recruited; how the interviews were conducted; and how the data were collected, analyzed, and presented. The researcher not only has illuminated her relationship with the topic but has also enumerated the lenses from which she views the topic. Concluding this chapter is a brief summary and a statement about the basic premise of Intuitive Inquiry. The premise enabled the researcher to explore diverse and changing psychological constructs of human consciousness about a topic that calls to her from a soul level.

Robert Romanyshyn (2007), an Affiliate Member of the Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts and Professor at Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara, California, expanded research to include the researcher's response to a calling of the soul. He emphasized that "the work begins to come into its own and becomes wholly psychological with the dismemberment of the researcher, who has to let go of the work . . . the researcher is worked on and . . . over" (p. 76) by surrendering to the soul. Soulful research plays havoc with the researcher by pulling on the unspoken to be revealed. The researcher who responds to the soul's calling falls into chaos and moves into the

unknown. The befuddled researcher finds him/herself pulled into a transformative path of nondoing where his/her personal process signals what needs to be illuminated.

The topic and design of this study asks the researcher to bare her soul in the process. It is based on a method and process that supports what Maslow (1971/1993) referred to as

love knowledge” . . . love . . . permits him to unfold, to open up, to drop his defenses, to let himself be naked not only physically but psychologically and spiritually as well. . . . But finally, and perhaps most important of all, if we love or are fascinated or are profoundly interested, we are less tempted to interfere, to control, to change, to improve . . . you are prepared to leave alone. (p. 17)

As a research method, Intuitive Inquiry supports Romanyshyn’s (2007) view of research with soul that parallels Maslow’s view of love knowledge.

Intuitive Inquiry, a hermeneutic research approach, is reported to be effective in supporting a study poised for the discovery and understanding of human experience. Gerald Bruns (1992), a William and Hazel White Professor of English at the University of Notre Dame, defined hermeneutics as “a tradition of thinking or of philosophical reflection that tries to clarify the concept of . . . understanding. . . . What is it to make sense of anything?” (p. 1). He emphasized that hermeneutics is the art of understanding something and not an investigation of understanding itself. Bruns distinguished it by clarifying the purpose of hermeneutics as responding to a call from questions pulling to be explored, not questions that are thought up. Anderson (2004) explained that “Intuitive Inquiry is an epistemology of the heart that joins intuition to intellectual precision in a hermeneutical process of interpretation” (p. 308). The method “is intended for the study of complex human topics . . . often characteristic of psycho-spiritual development” (p. 309). She likened the Intuitive Inquiry method to an in-depth psychoanalytic process that

bridges the creative and scientific mind. This qualitative study satisfies what Grof (1995) described as “the call” (p. 519) for methodically sound transpersonal research. Anderson argued that it is a dynamic method that engages the researcher’s passion for and personal experience with the research topic.

Intuitive Inquiry Method

The Intuitive Inquiry method consists of 5 cycles (Anderson, 2004). Cycle 1 is a process of claiming the text. Cycle 2 further clarifies the topic and the researcher’s lenses by using a creative process that explicates the researcher’s experience of the topic. In Cycle 3, the researcher collects original interview data verbatim, allows the participants the option to review and change their original transcribed interviews, and summarizes the data’s meaningful domains as it pertains to this study. Cycle 4 reflects the researcher’s intimate interaction with and interpretation of the data. For this study, the results are presented through a final set of findings that emerged from a qualitative thematic analysis (QTA). In Cycle 5, the researcher integrated the results of Cycle 4 through discussion about and connection with the reviewed literature in Chapter 2 and the newly relevant data. The 5-cycle process provided a forward arc of formulation and clarification in Cycles 1 and 2 as well as a returning, transformative arc through the revisiting of prior cycles and completion of Cycles 3, 4, and 5.

The nature of this study’s questions called for a method like Intuitive Inquiry that could support a personal, unique yet methodically sound exploration into the understanding of the essence of the experience of Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork. Michael Washburn (2000), then Professor of

Philosophy at Indiana University South Bend, compared cognition to intuition, noting the linear quality of cognition versus intuition's capacity to take in the full picture all at once.

Washburn (2000) argued that functioning on a strictly cognitive level without intuition

is an imagination stripped of the plenipotent energy, spontaneity, and autosymbolic creativity of the deep psyche, which is now submerged and quieted. And because of the ego's reliance on visual perception, it is an imagination stripped of its former intermodal and multimodal character and reduced to an exclusively image-producing function (p. 190).

Anderson's (2004) *Intuitive Inquiry* invited this researcher to use more than just her intellect by tapping into the multimodal sensitive preconscious structures of the mind. To tap into these other layers of knowing, Anderson suggested that researchers engage the "unconscious and symbolic processes. . . . *Psychic and Parapsychological Experiences*. . . . *Sensory Modes of Intuition*. . . . *Empathic Identification* [and]. . . . *Through Our Wounds*" (pp. 311-312). Kaisa Puhakka (2000), Professor at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, California, argued that as children we give up our true Selves for security and safety in an effort to cope within an environment where we usually have little power. She emphasized that accessing and claiming our true knowledge is usually taboo, and there is tremendous social pressure to give up our authentic Self and knowledge. If Puhakka is correct, then Anderson's suggestion to the researcher to access and expand his/her ways of knowing may naturally tap into childhood wounding, especially the wounding around the loss of the Self. Therefore, the *Intuitive Inquiry* method could be seen as a process in itself that could move one toward self-actualization and that is supportive of Romanyshyn's (2007) research with soul in mind.

Reflecting back on the main questions of the study—to understand more fully experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique with a focus on the integral mandala artwork—one can argue for the appropriateness of using a method that acknowledges the soul. Even the subquestions suggest the benefits of using such a method that allows for the expression and understanding of the uniqueness of human experience. The subquestions encourage the exploration of the nuances of the experience of Holotropic Breathwork™ bringing attention to the mandala artwork—What is the nature of the experience that makes Holotropic Breathwork™ powerful as self-reported by the participants? How does the mandala artwork relate to their Holotropic Breathwork™ experience? What is the personal meaning of the symbols, colors, and layout? How do participants feel as they create the mandala artwork?

Intuitive Inquiry's creative and open-inquiry process provided this study with a method that reflects and mirrors the process of the sacred technologies, Holotropic Breathwork™ and mandala artwork used in this study. In Cycle 1 of Intuitive Inquiry the creative process includes contemplation on a symbol or text intended to deepen the researcher's resonance with her or his topic. Cycle 1 sets in motion a process that prompts the researcher to look at how the text has claimed him/her. Cycle 1 resonates with the purpose of hermeneutics creation, a process that responds to a question pulling at you for understanding (Bruns, 1992). Moreover, Cycle 1 also resonates with Romanyshyn's (2007) concept of "falling into the work" (p. 1) where "there is also an obligation, an internal imperative that is more about the work than it is about me. There is a vocation in this work that requires a response" (p. 3).

Anderson (2004) asserted that the Intuitive Inquiry method is a dynamic process that uses a forward and returning arc that may be seen as creating a circular effect. She described the dynamism of the process as a spiral. Both Washburn (2003) and Hillevi Ruumet (2006) view self-actualization as an ongoing process. They each described the process as having a spiral effect where there is a return to diverse issues as healing takes place on multiple dimensions, levels, and phases. The spiral effect can be seen in the researcher's use of a soulful process. Romanyshyn (2007) viewed a study that engages the researcher's soul and issues as opening "a place where the researcher encounters not only his or her complexes but also the 'others' in the work, the 'strangers' who carry the unfinished business of the soul of the work" (p. 146). Thus this study reflects the researcher's personal journey and is a work pulling from the depths of her soul.

Validity and Verification

In distinguishing between a quantitative and a qualitative research method, Donna Mertens (1998), Professor at Gallaudet University in Washington DC, qualified the former as viewing reality within knowable parameters and the latter as seeing reality as having multiple constructs. Hence, the terms used for a qualitative method necessarily differ from those used for a quantitative study. Both value and align with establishing validity; however, whereas quantitative studies focus on validity alone, qualitative studies also use the term verification.

Verification is intrinsic to the entire qualitative research procedure from the "data collection, analysis, and report writing of a study and standards as *criteria* imposed by the researcher and others after a study is completed" (Creswell, 1998, p. 194). Some of the standards that support verification, and described by Creswell, include (a) "honesty and

authenticity” (p. 196), (b) service to the community where the study is being done, (c) giving voice to the community, (d) scrupulous subjectivity, (e) mutual benefit between the researcher and others participating in the study, and (f) sharing in resulting rewards. This study includes the above standards by way of (a) the researcher maintaining a detailed diary and self-disclosure, (b) potentially contributing to understanding and supporting an experience seen as pivotal to the Holotropic Breathwork™ community, (c) verification of the qualitative thematic analysis (QTA) by the Resonance Panel, (d) the dynamic quality of the Intuitive Inquiry’s forward and returning arc that requires the scrutiny of the researcher’s subjective perspective or lenses, and (f) written confidentiality and consent forms for the interviews to be conducted.

Intuitive Inquiry method includes two ways of establishing validity within the study: resonance and efficacy (Anderson, 2007). Resonance validity is measured by the effect of the study on the reader. If the study resonates with a reader, it is viewed that the authenticity and depth will be felt or perceived. To test the resonance of a study, a Resonance Panel of qualified people can be and was established for this study. Anderson referred to efficacy validity for a qualitative study as the indicator of whether the study adds value or understanding to the researcher’s life. Moreover, a study has efficacy value if it not only transforms the researcher’s life but affects the readers’ understanding of themselves. Resonance also comes into play when a study has efficacy. Readers should feel they know the researcher as they read the study and are moved by what they read.

For a qualitative study, Mertens (1998) emphasized the use of the word “credibility” (p. 180) rather than the term “internal validity” (p. 180) used in a quantitative study. She reasoned that “the credibility test asks if there is a correspondence

between the way the respondents actually perceive social constructs and the way the researcher portrays their viewpoints” (p. 181). The accuracy and completeness of the participants’ initial interview are foundational to the analysis. Due to the fact that the interviews are the participants’ experiences, the participants of this study provided verification of the transcripts of their interviews. When changes, corrections, or additions were seen as necessary by any participant, the transcript was changed accordingly.

By clarifying the researcher’s position ahead of time the initial criteria for the credibility test are provided (Anderson, 2004; Creswell, 1998). For Cycle 2, Anderson stresses exposing the researcher’s perspective by placing the “preliminary lenses in full scrutiny and invites their transformation, revision, removal, amplification, and refinement as cycles of interpretation proceed” (p. 318). Thus, the return arc from Cycle 4 to Cycle 2 utilized the data from the interviews to verify the credibility of the researcher’s lenses and consonance with the literature review. The preliminary lenses were changed and presented in light of new evidence revealed in Cycle 4. Hence, recording the researcher’s background and lenses early on in the process, as well as providing a description of the Holotropic Breathwork™ and integral mandala artwork, were vital to establishing credibility for this study.

Cycle 1: Clarifying the Research Topic

Cycle 1 of the Intuitive Inquiry method confronted the researcher with his/her personal journey. It was intended to aid the researcher in clarifying both the relationship with the topic and the topic itself. Anderson (2004) is a proponent of the researcher being honest and upfront about her or his viewpoint of and experience with the topic. She recommended sitting with a meaningful piece of text, symbol, poem, or piece of artwork

(hereafter referred to as “text” to cover any and all of the researcher’s choices to sit with) as a way to inform the researcher’s relationship to the topic. To enhance this sitting, Anderson suggested using meditation, music, and visualization. She stated that Cycle 1 is a creative process set in place to look at how the text or symbol has claimed the researcher. In support of bringing the researcher’s personal journey to the forefront, Mertens (1998) points out that “the exact nature of the definition of research is influenced by the researcher’s theoretical framework and by the importance that the researcher places on distinguishing research from other activities or different types of research from each other” (p. 2). For this research, my background and my current process are strong components of how this topic and text or symbol claims me and why I chose this topic. Both fuel a great passion for this topic and guided the research process.

Researcher’s background and current process with the topic. For this researcher, the journey began in the late 1970s when I became acutely aware of the painful limitations of my biographical sense of self. My successes with job, family, and friends were overshadowed by the feeling that there was a depth of my soul that had been grossly overlooked, and the partnership aspect of my life seemed to keep falling apart. With regard to things not coming together, Romanyshyn (2007) states there is another

wisdom than that of our ego-conscious minds. This other wisdom is an archetypal pattern within every act of behavior and every experience of fantasy within which who I am resembles who I am like when I act and feel in a certain way. (p. 47)

I am convinced that it is this wisdom that has driven my personal adventure into self-discovery as well as guided my choice of topic for this proposal. At the age of 4 I lost my mother. On the surface it might have looked as though the sudden loss of my mother in an automobile accident was the wounding that led to my difficulties in finding

a partner. However, I came to discover that it was the loss of the knowledge of my true Self that was the real wounding. Because of the loss of my mother, I tapped into my passion for the adventure of self-actualization. I also believe it was my adventures with the self-actualization process that eventually enabled a long-term, fulfilling partnership of 15 years to ensue and, more importantly, the reclamation of my inner value.

Archetypally, I am on the heroine's journey. I often feel like a warrior for the truth and relate well to Durga, a Hindu goddess, mother of the universe and destroyer of what is false (Eliade, 1987; Tucci, 1961/2001). Durga is sometimes pictured riding a lion with a golden rod reaching to the heavens. She is a symbol of connecting our animal nature to our heavenly nature. The energy of the symbol of Durga erases the false ideas of our self so we may know our true nature. It is this archetypal energy that led me to the Native American sweat lodge over 30 years ago.

Native American sweat lodge sacred ceremonies were the precipitation of my adventures in Self discovery and passion for the topic of this study. Through this tradition, I experienced a sacred presence that enveloped and penetrated every cell of my body, and I knew what my aching heart had desired. The subtle light that filled the space was unworldly and delicately loving. I was in communion with life, and the aching sense of emptiness was worlds away.

Eventually I knew I needed a teacher and teaching that could integrate this knowledge of my Self. I soon met a Ridhwan teacher. Ridhwan is now most commonly known as the Diamond Heart School or the Diamond Approach (Almaas, 1998). The Diamond Approach led me to practices for knowing my essential nature and living my life aligned with my true Self. I found that spiritual experiences shifted my

consciousness, sense of identity, and how I viewed my life. Later, I moved into a parallel track in Almaas' Diamond Approach and the Hindu practices of Siddha Yoga (Muktananda, 1978). Siddha Yoga and the Diamond Approach took me into deep experiences of love, clarity, and courage that enabled me to move through life more freely. The many experiences of my Self at deeper levels engaged my passion for the human development and growth process. I saw the process as a lifestyle not just an event, and I tended to immerse myself in the process of Self discovery. It was in this process that I have found meaning and fullness in my life. The process had no end or exact answer, but it was filled with joy that permeated my life and strength to see difficulties as opportunity. The process provided a support for me to be authentic beyond false identification and learned behavior and still does.

Involvement in the Diamond Approach meant being steeped in dynamic, interpersonal, psychoanalytic psychology, Reichian bodywork, and a variety of spiritual traditions that included Sufism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Native American Spirituality, and Christianity. The 20 plus years of personal and professional training in the Diamond Approach has provided a strong springboard for formalizing my knowledge of psychoanalytic work and integrating transpersonal knowledge through my attendance at The Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (ITP).

ITP has become my current road to a profound shift in personal growth incorporating the knowledge of my true nature gained in the previous 20 years of my personal adventure into my lived life. It was my time at ITP that led to my first meeting with Stanislav Grof. Grof (2000) and his Holotropic Breathwork™ technique intrigued me, and I was drawn to taking my first GTT Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat. The retreat

process and integral mandala artwork provided a context to access and integrate the experience of nonordinary states of consciousness. I found a holding place for a complete expression of the depth of my nature and support for my passion in the process toward self-actualization. The ITP dissertation process, which includes the Intuitive Inquiry research method, further provides me with a platform for immersion and support for greater personal growth and movement toward a more self-actualized life.

Recent Holotropic Breathwork™ retreats have supported the emergence of a spirit guide in the form of a peacock. The image of a blue-green peacock flew into my heart and consciousness. This beautiful symbol was palpable and concrete. As this image of a bird appeared, the experience of my consciousness and physical sense of my self shifted to pure blue light that led to an array of experiences of polarities such as deep grief and bliss, birth, death, and renewal. My integral retreat mandala artwork reflected the integration of the experience of the peacock guide. I came out of the recent Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat with a heightened sense of awareness and feeling grounded and centered. Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant (1969/1996), UNESCO Director of Relations for Member States and well known poet and traveler, respectively, stated that the peacock is sometimes seen as “the symbol of beauty and the power of transmutation, since the loveliness of its plumage is believed to derive from the natural transmutation of the poisons which it swallows when it destroys serpents” (p. 741). The authors also pointed to the archetypal symbolism where the peacock is seen to represent “either the whole universe, or the full Moon, or the Sun at its zenith” (p. 742). The peacock image seemed to be persistent about becoming my guide for this dissertation process and continued to show up in my meditations and through my mandala artwork.

Cycle 1 and the peacock guide. The image of a peacock and my dissertation process seem to have taken on quite a playful, trickster side. Anderson (2004) referred to the trickster as “auspicious bewilderment” (p. 326). Romanyshyn’s (2007) description of the researcher’s dismemberment where “the researcher who in service to the soul of the work undergoes a descent and dismemberment” (p. 52) sounds much like the trickster element at work. I must confess that the proposal process was definitely bewildering. In defense of the method’s bewilderment state, Anderson noted that “the nature of Intuitive Inquiry sets the stage for new ideas to happen” (p. 327), and the bewilderment heralds opportunity for insight.

My bewilderment process began last year. Initially, I wanted to do an exploration of the experience of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique using a qualitative study. Due to my lack of experience with qualitative research, I was influenced by an instructor to use a quantitative method to get through a required class. With a quantitative proposal close to completion, I began the process of pulling together a committee. I found I could not justify the method to potential committee members in light of my true interest. I floundered trying to convince someone to be on my committee. I knew that I had to move back to my original impetus. My passion was in exploring and understanding the essence of the experience. I discovered Intuitive Inquiry and my passion for the topic as well as the method came alive. As I followed the passionate impulse of my heart, my original proposal persisted in falling apart and coming together in stages of its own timing. With my mind stimulated by the passion, I continued to move between various texts, mandala drawings, and repeatedly asking myself open-ended questions. I did not answer myself but attempted to stay open to whatever answers spontaneously came forth in the timing

and manner they wished to manifest. I asked myself about what I wanted to know. How can I put this into a scholarly format? What is the significance of what I want to know? How are the text and symbol claiming me? What are my resistances?

Donald Rothberg (2000), faculty member at Saybrook Institute in San Francisco, noted that in spiritual contemplation certain orientations such as being nonjudgmental and open are known to enhance the prospects for deepening awareness. While using the Intuitive Inquiry method and its creative process, I have maintained a nonjudgmental and open contemplative orientation. This orientation seemed to propel my psyche into a flow that brought images, mandala drawings, text, dreams, the repeating of open-ended questions, and revelations from the environment. Answers and words flowed in a seemingly magical oceanic rhythm, and my topic was truly alive. Insights appeared from all corners of life and at strange and unpredictable times. I now have quite a collection of coffee house napkins laced with insights as a testimony to my affinity for and immersion in the process. Throughout my creative process the image of the peacock continued to emerge, disclosed and deepened my relationship with the topic as well as the method for this research. The peacock revealed itself in a variety of ways including leading me to other inner and outer symbols as well as toward various texts and shifts in the focus of the topic to self-actualization.

The creative processes I used to engage my symbol of the peacock has varied. Normally, I meditate for at least 20 minutes a day, generally using a simple meditation whereby I follow my in breath and out breath. As part of Cycle 1, for several months I oriented my regular meditation to understanding how a peacock mandala from a Holotropic Breathwork™ session in a retreat I had done some months before informed

my topic and what submitting to this guide meant. Using both my regular meditation periods as well as submitting to this peacock guide also meant employing an open-inquiry practice to elicit insight and meaning. I set aside time to enter into music visualizations and use mandala artwork to express and enhance my experience. The time periods between doing the mandala artwork were used as incubation periods. During the incubation periods, I set out my already completed or partially completed mandala artwork, added to my artwork, pondered the symbols and the experience, and usually wrote about my experiences in my diary. I knew that a set schedule for this kind of creative work would not be congruent with the spontaneity I needed for my creative impulse. I needed additional time for integration and space for nondoing to move beyond a comfortable, standard response. I noticed that this need came through in attempting to write about Cycle 1 as I seemed reluctant to set out the details. I found I had to write about the experience in my diary before putting it into the computer. As my diary and details became lengthy, they have not been included in this study. However, the following is a summary and accounting of my relationship with symbol and text and how I was claimed by the symbol and text.

Being claimed by the peacock. In summary, and arising from my Cycle 1 research symbol and text contemplation, the use of mandala artwork as a diary alongside a written diary has provided me with a map of my stream of consciousness. This map became a larger mandala art piece portraying the threads of the tapestry of my consciousness. In documenting the details of Cycle 1, the process elucidated the connections and continuity of the audio, visual, and visceral experiences arising out of a series of NOSC experiences. I could no longer deny being claimed by the peacock image as my guide.

The peacock image guided me into a wondrous journey into the depths of my consciousness with mandala artwork being the scribe and bridge into my everyday activities. Some of the exposed realms of my psyche revealed by this beautiful bird image had previously been untouched by me, such as the five-pointed star and the disconnect between survival and transcendent Self for the dissertation process. The peacock image was persistent in coaxing me into surrendering to its call. At times I knew its presence permeated every cell of my body affecting my daily life including my dissertation process. The peacock image helped me to move through fear of the unknown, embracing the beauty of who I am, and allowed all parts of my Self to creatively contribute to the research.

The mandala artwork memorialized fleeting yet profound experience not generally present in my consensual reality. My own healing process through accessing NOSC was revealed in the peacock image of its blue-green colored light and the thousands of eyes of its tail feathers, and integrated through the use of mandala artwork in sympathetic resonance with my topic. The eyes in the image of the peacock tail were a path to inner seeing. The mandala artwork brought the inner seeing into my daily life, enhancing and expanding my inner experience over time and into my life. Writing my proposal seemed effortless and the ideas flowed with a feeling of crisp clarity. Doubt and limited concepts vanished in this healing energy. The gift of the revelation of my heart and soul in the process came as a pleasant surprise. As a result, this research process became a lived experience and part of my path toward self-actualization.

Cycle 2: Identifying and Developing the Preliminary Lenses

Once the topic was clarified through the Cycle 1 process the researcher entered into Cycle 2. In Cycle 2 the researcher “re-engages the research topic through a set of theoretical, research, literary, or historical texts describing the topic” (Anderson, 2004, p. 318).

Development of lenses. In this study, Chapter 2 contains the literature review that was used for the researcher’s contemplation of the values and perspective that may influence the study. Maslow’s (1971/1993) work regarding the process toward self-actualization resonated with why Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork meant so much. Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork is one way that I have experienced and integrated peak experiences of the Self. The thousands of eyes in the image or picture of the peacock’s tail feathers have provided me with a path to a more authentic way of living that includes more freedom from biographical identifications and reactions. The research and literature about Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork engaged and elicited a feeling of optimism about being all that a person can be and supporting that in others.

Identified preliminary lenses. In Cycle 2 the researcher’s lenses regarding the topic were exposed and laid out for “full scrutiny and invites their transformation, revision, removal, amplification, and refinement as cycles of interpretation proceed” (Anderson, 2004, p. 318). The following is a list of the researcher’s initial, preliminary lenses:

1. The Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork work together to create a powerful technique to access and integrate NOSC.

By accessing NOSC we access parts of our Self that normally are not available to us. By accessing normally unavailable parts of our Self we move toward a more authentic, fulfilling, and self-actualized life.

2. Accessing NOSC through Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork is a healing process. This healing process seems to be integral to the realization of one's potential and journey toward self-actualization.
3. Mandala artwork appears to be a sacred instrument in and of itself holding illuminative and integrative qualities.
4. Mandala artwork seems to be most powerful when used in conjunction with a method or technique that allows an individual to access NOSC. The method may or may not be the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique.
5. Mandala artwork seems to be particularly useful in bringing NOSC experiences to life, especially in comparison to the use of language only.
6. Continued exposure to mandala artwork after the initial experience of NOSC may provide a distinct bridge to continuing and deepening the experience of NOSC.
7. The wounding of the soul may be seen as the split in living a life not aligned with the true Self.
8. Self-actualization may be seen as the direct contact with the ontological presence of the soul and living life from that place.
9. Self-actualization may be seen as an ongoing, dynamic process that does not have a fixed goal or agenda.

10. Human beings seem to have an innate desire and right to a self-actualized life.
Goodness and meaning come out of following that desire and a realization of that right.
11. The healing experience of NOSC seems to become optimized when sensed on all levels of the human soul, which include the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.
12. An archetypal symbol gains its potency because it contains sacred energy of the true Self versus the ego centric self.
13. Archetypal symbols may be revealed in the experience of NOSC.
14. The mandala itself is not only an archetypal symbol, but a symbol of such potency that it may organize and integrate other archetypal symbols.
15. Sharing the experience of NOSC with others who have experienced NOSC may be a noteworthy component in normalizing and integrating the experience.
16. Some form of surrender to the mystery and truly being with the unknown appear to be essential aspects needed for moving toward self-actualization.
17. The surprise factor seems to be a characteristic of the process toward self-actualization. Hence, humility, faith, resilience, curiosity, self-acceptance, and courage appear to be helpful qualities when venturing into the journey toward self-actualization.
18. The transpersonal transcends age and cultural and gender differences. Hence, similar experiences might be seen across transpersonal experiencers with these differences.

The above list provided an upfront basis for a comparison between the researcher's initial lenses and the participants' reported experiences. Once the data were collected and analyzed, the researcher then verified, refined, and changed any or all of the lenses.

Cycle 3: Collecting Original Data and Preparing Preliminary Summary Report

Cycle 3 of the Intuitive Inquiry method involved collecting and summarizing the original interview data. This cycle turned the researcher's attention to looking at how and when the study's data were collected, analyzed, and reported.

To strengthen internal validity, this study included triangulation whereby the research used data from several sources to corroborate the data (Creswell, 1998; Mertens, 1998). Data were collected from three different modalities: (a) interviews, (b) mandala artwork, and (c) a Resonance Panel. Triangulation in data collection "involves checking information that has been collected from different sources or methods for consistency of evidence across sources of data" (Mertens, 1998, p. 183).

Throughout the research process ethical standards were strictly adhered to. These standards included, but were not limited to, obtaining permission from GTT to do the study, respect for each participant's process, adherence to all GTT ethical standards and requirements, confidentiality, disclosure and debriefing, informed consent (Mertens, 1998; Taylor, 2007b), and the consistent adherence to the participant selection criteria.

Participants. Fifteen volunteers were selected as this study's participants. The participant selection criteria (Appendix B) were that they (a) had to be at least 18 years old (no upper limit), (b) had the ability to use and access a computer's e-mail system, (c) had already completed a generally available retreat prior to study participation that followed the standard format of a Grof Transpersonal Training (GTT) Holotropic

Breathwork™ 6-day retreat or an actual GTT retreat (both will hereinafter be referred to as a GTT-equivalent retreat), and (d) were willing to take part in a 1 hour interview within 12 months after the retreat. Leonard Gibson (personal communication, April 23, 2008) stated that integration of the experience of Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork happens over time and indicated that 12 months after a retreat was a suitable time period to interview or check in with retreat participants. Hence, the 12 month timeframe was chosen for the postretreat interview. Additionally, it opened up the possibility of the researcher capturing more study participants. All expenses related to the GTT six-day equivalent retreat were borne by each participant. The researcher was not responsible for any of the costs related to the retreat.

Study participants were volunteers who had already completed a GTT-equivalent retreat (Taylor, 2007a, 2007b). As predicted, GTT-equivalent retreat participants tended to consist of more experienced breathwork practitioners and were screened according to the GTT foundation's list of contraindicators and exclusion criteria (Appendix D) prior to the retreat. Hence, participants of the retreats were normal functioning individuals. In addition, participants of the GTT-equivalent retreats were viewed to be varied in background (ages ranged from 25 to 70), and the demographics supported this assumption. Also, foreseen was an almost even split between men and women participants. It was assumed that they would come from all over the world including the United States, Europe, and South America. However, volunteers for this study consisted of 2 participants living in Europe, 2 from Canada, and the remainder were residing in the United States. Concurring with the prediction of a wide variety of professions and high level of education, the participants' demographics indicated a wide range in occupational

backgrounds, and all but 2 were college educated. The researcher did not poll for income level so that cannot be assessed. The GTT organization makes it known that the cost of a retreat should not prohibit anyone from attending, and work-study programs are available. One common trait anticipated that proved as true was that the participants tended to be interested in spirituality and personal growth.

Recruitment. This section includes a description of the interaction between the researcher and GTT to gain permission to recruit GTT participants for this study, how and where recruitment was advertised, and how the goal of 12 participants was met with 15 participants actually joining the study. The following is a list of the recruitment activities.

1. The researcher contacted and informed the Codirector of the GTT foundation about the topic of this study. Additionally, the researcher asked the Codirector for permission to recruit GTT-equivalent retreat participants as volunteers for the researcher's study. A description of the research project and the need for volunteers from GTT-equivalent retreats for the study was provided. The Codirector conditionally granted permission requiring that retreat participants be recruited outside of the actual retreat. It was suggested that the researcher post an ad in the AHBI newsletter, on the internet HoloInterest list, or in other related media. In addition, the Codirector requested that the notice state that the study did "not have anything to do with GTT" (C. Sparks, 2008, personal communication).
2. Requests for volunteers were advertised (Appendix E) in the Newsletter of the Association for Holotropic Breathwork™ International (AHBI), on the

internet Holo-Interest list, and in other related media. The ad included information about the study, an endorsement by Grof, and the researcher's contact information (phone number and e-mail address). Additionally, word of mouth was employed through facilitators when available. Once a participant responded, the researcher asked for the participant's e-mail address and/or telephone number.

3. Attrition and finding participants was anticipated as a possible issue in maintaining 12 participants for this study, but 15 rather than 12 volunteers were recruited with no attrition. All recruitment participant selection criteria (Appendix B) were the same for each participant regardless of which retreat was attended.

Interview procedures. The interview procedural steps included the researcher (a) getting the Participant Informed Consent Form (Appendix F) signed and returned to the researcher, (b) having the Demographics Questionnaire (Appendix G) completed and returned, and (c) setting up the interview. Involvement in the study by the volunteer was not allowed until the researcher received the signed consent form. The following details the step-by-step interview procedure:

1. Once a volunteer responded to the researcher's advertisement by telephone or e-mail, the researcher determined her or his eligibility for the study based on the study's participant selection criteria (Appendix B).
2. Within a few days of being contacted by the respondent, through e-mail or telephone, the researcher scheduled a time for a telephone respondent screening

interview (Appendix H). The screening interview determined the respondent's eligibility for the study.

3. Once accepted into the study, using either e-mail or postal service (as chosen by the volunteer), the researcher sent the volunteer a Participant Informed Consent Form (Appendix F) and Demographics Questionnaire (Appendix G). All of the forms were sent to the volunteers by e-mail.
4. Each volunteer was asked to sign and return the Informed Consent Form within a few days after receipt, using either an electronic or hardcopy signature. By signing the Participant Informed Consent Form, the volunteer gave the researcher permission to tape record the interview and publish the study's resulting data analysis.
5. Once the researcher received the signed Informed Consent Form, the volunteer was formally considered a participant of the study.
6. Within a few days of receipt of the documents, the researcher contacted the volunteer to schedule the telephone or in-person interview. The time and date of the interview was within 12 months after the participant had already completed a generally available GTT-equivalent retreat and the integral mandala artwork.
7. A few days prior to the interview, a reminder e-mail or letter (Appendix I) was sent to the participant reminding her or him of the interview date and time.

Mandala artwork and interview. Often GTT retreat participants complete two mandalas, but only one of the two was ultimately used for this study. After the retreat and prior to the scheduled interview date, each of the study's participants sent a copy of the chosen retreat mandala artwork to the researcher. Some participants provided the

researcher with more than one mandala artwork because they were interdependent, but only one artwork per participant was used in the study. Both the researcher and the participant had copies of the participant's mandala artwork visually available as directed in the researcher's e-mail reminder throughout the 1-hour, digitally-recorded interview.

At the scheduled time, the researcher contacted and interviewed the participant by telephone. Due to the distant geographical proximity, no in-person interviews were conducted. The participant postretreat interview (Appendix J) included a warm-up and silent contemplation prior to beginning the interview questions. After the contemplation, the researcher reminded the participant of the agreement to record the interview and begin the interview. The researcher's attitude and orientation were intended to be supportive and inviting in order to encourage the participant to be open and forthcoming (Hart, 2000).

Tobin Hart (2000), an Associate Professor in the Humanistic/Transpersonal Psychology Department at the State University of West Georgia, stated that it is well known that an empathic connection between the psychotherapist and the client is central to a successful therapeutic relationship. He argued that it is the presence and attention of the therapist that support an empathic connection. Hart believed that this connection and presence allow the client to be open and delve into difficult parts of the psyche that make the therapy successful. The researcher conducted the interviews for this study with a similar orientation toward presence and an empathic connection with the participants of this study but as a researcher and not as a therapist. The participant postretreat interview (Appendix J) questions were constructed to be open-ended to allow for the free expression of the participant. The researcher asked the participant the interview questions

in order of the sequence listed. The researcher asked the first question of the interview protocol. If more information was needed, the next questions were asked until all the questions had been responded to by the participant. The last question regarding whether the participant wished to add anything else was intended to prompt the participant for more information. After the last interview question was responded to, the interview included a closure. If the participant stated that there was nothing else that needed to be added and wished to remain in the study, the researcher expressed her appreciation and let the participant know that a final version of the results would be sent to the participant upon the study's completion. Moreover, the researcher gave each interviewee the opportunity to review his or her transcribed interview and make additions or changes.

Once the interviews were completed, each interview was transcribed by a person under a signed Transcriber's Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix F). The researcher had each interview transcribed verbatim. To verify and comprehensively capture the participants' experiences, all participants were sent a copy of their own transcribed interview. They were asked to review and comment on their own transcribed interview. Once any changes or additions to the transcribed interview had been completed and sent to the researcher by the participant, the researcher thematically analyzed the final version of the transcribed and updated interviews as part of Cycle 4.

Cycle 4: Data Interpretation

In Cycle 4 the researcher engaged in data interpretation and the transformation of her preliminary lenses. The qualitative data derived from this study's interviews about the experience of the Holotropic Breathwork™ and integral mandala artwork process was based on the participants' subjective responses. Although not all Intuitive Inquiry studies

use a Qualitative Thematic Analysis (QTA), it was employed in this study as a way to further understand the data and the interrelationships within the data. An example of some of the themes the researcher was looking for were statements about divine love, courage, intimacy, connection, the loss of normal boundaries, physical changes, and shifts or a heightened state of awareness. The findings of the QTA contributed and influenced the researcher's preliminary lenses which are more fully explicated in Chapter 6.

Qualitative thematic analysis. QTA is a technique that extracts and presents recurring themes or patterns of experience from a set of data (Anderson, 2007; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006). QTA for this study was conducted using each participant's final posttreat interview. Participants' materials were examined for recurring themes across the 15 participants as well as for their unique experiences.

The data were analyzed using Anderson's (2007) recommended procedure for QTA. The procedural steps added to the consistency and verifiability of the study and are as follows:

1. Initially "make multiple copies" (p. 2) of the transcribed interviews.
2. Highlight descriptions of all the relevant data for this study using the procedure documented in items 3 through 15 below.
3. Mark each "distinct unit of meaning" (p. 2) from the highlighted relevant data.
4. Cut out each meaningful unit sorting and coding "similar units" (p. 2) in the uniquely assigned category.

5. Use “key words or phrases” (p. 3) from the highlighted data to establish and label the categories using your “own categories sparingly” (p. 5). The categories may be revised as needed.
6. Establish a “no affect” (p. 3) category for information obviously “missing from the text” (p. 3).
7. Thoroughly review and rereview each interview to identify themes. Group and regroup similar themes, recategorizing as needed.
8. Once all meaningful units are established, “read through all meaning units per categories and redistribute units as appropriate. Re-label . . . collapse or subdivide categories as appropriate” (p. 3).
9. Take a break for a few days and then “reread the original interview transcript or text without looking at your units or categories” (p. 3).
10. Upon returning, go over the meaningful units and “reconsider each unit and category” (p. 2). Redistribute, relabel, collapse or subdivide categories units as needed considering whether or not the “categories are too small or large” (p. 3).
11. Next, contemplate the categories in totality and “consider whether you have too many categories (or less likely, too few) to render meaning to your highlighted texts given your topic. If so, return to #10” (p. 3).
12. The process enumerated in items 1 through 11 above should be applied to each interview.
13. Once each interview has been thematically analyzed, reread each one separately. Then “while retaining meaning units, combine categories and

themes for all interview transcripts and notes. Collapse or subdivide categories as appropriate” (p. 3). Categories can be relabeled if needed. It is better to have too many categories than too few where the category labels were lifted from or similar to the interviews.

14. Again allow a few days break from the analysis. Return to contemplating your categories in totality. Consider whether the categories make sense overall and whether there are too few or too many.

15. Revisit all the prior steps “until you are satisfied that the categories reflect the interview transcripts as a whole. Once you are satisfied, your categories are themes” (p. 3) and your QTA for this study is complete.

A top level theme was established as the focus for the analysis and can be referred to as “the unit of analysis” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. xi). Examples of this study’s units of analysis included the individual participants, mandala artwork, and the group of 15 participants taken as a whole. To capture the unit of meaning of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and mandala artwork experience, the “unit of coding” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. xi) was extracted from each interview. The units of coding are the particular elements of each interview that brought meaning to the analysis. The units of coding are the themes extracted from the interviews and fed into the unit of analysis categories and that respond to the phenomena of the research questions (Boyatzis, 1998).

For a qualitative study, Boyatzis (1998) saw efficacy in research as ensuring that the variation “of types of units of analysis . . . allow for analysis of between unit variation of differences, and therefore generalization . . . and units of coding . . . for a comprehensive understanding and analysis” (p. xi). This study established efficacy by

fulfilling both requirements through employing consistency of the qualitative thematic analysis process specified in this study.

Boyatzis (1998) stated that

A good code should have five elements:

1. A label
2. A definition of what the theme concerns (i.e. the characteristic or issue constituting the theme)
3. A description of how to know when the theme occurs (i.e., how to “flag” the theme)
4. A description of any qualification or exclusion to the identification of the theme
5. Examples, both positive and negative, to eliminate possible confusion when looking at the theme. (p. x)

In this study, the guidelines provided above were followed (Anderson, 2004; Boyatzis, 1998). Consistent code in support of a qualitative form of reliability was employed.

The relevant themes were experiences arising out of the participants’ GTT retreat and some anticipated categories were as follows: (a) a shift in normal consciousness that has personal meaning, (b) a new experience or insight, (c) a reference to the experience as powerful in some way, (d) a meaningful tie between the experience arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork, and (e) statements about the effects of the mandala artwork itself. Some unexpected themes were seen as reports of nothing happening, no new insights, and strictly biographical material without any transpersonal experiences. In support of internal validity, verification of the researcher’s analysis was done by through a panel of people with Holotropic Breathwork™ experience, referred to as Resonance Panel members.

Resonance Panel members. The reliability for quantitative studies is measured by a study’s repeatability (Goodwin, 2005). However, the distinct nature of a qualitative study makes it difficult to replicate. Therefore, for a qualitative study a verification of the

findings can be used to challenge the study's consistency and steadfastness. The qualitative method, Intuitive Inquiry, proposes the inclusion of a Resonance Panel for verification as well as for efficacy validity (Anderson, 2004).

For this study, a panel of three people referred to as a Resonance Panel were enlisted to ensure resonance with the researcher's list of themes and patterns that emerged from the participant interviews. A Resonance Panel is intended to test the verifiability and consistency of a study. Therefore, all panel members were required to have experience with the topic that enabled them to discriminately state whether they resonated with the resulting themes and document their responses. The Resonance Panel selection criteria (Appendix K) included (a) being a certified GTT Facilitator, which provided for their having experience with the topic of the study; (b) being at least 25 years of age; (c) being physically and mentally able and willing to be instructed by the researcher and participate in a 3-4 hour review and documentation for the study as a panel member; and (d) having the ability to use and access to a computer e-mail system.

Resonance Panel member recruitment. This section includes a description of how and where recruitment for three Resonance Panel members took place. The following is list of the recruitment activities.

1. The researcher contacted the Codirector of the GTT foundation about the topic of this study and described the need for 3 Resonance Panel members. The researcher was guided to a list of GTT certified facilitators on the Association for Holotropic Breathwork™ International (AHBI) website.
2. Once permission was granted, a personal request for Resonance Panel members (Appendix L) was sent through e-mails to individual GTT certified

facilitators. The request included some background about the study and the researcher's contact information (phone number and e-mail address).

Additionally, word of mouth was employed when available. Once a participant responded, the researcher asked the participant to specify what e-mail and/or telephone number would be best to use for communication.

Resonance Panel procedures. The interview procedural steps included the researcher (a) screening the Resonance Panel member for eligibility (Appendix M), (b) obtaining a signed Resonance Panel Member Informed Consent Form (Appendix N), and (c) receiving the completed Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix O). Involvement in the study by the volunteer was not allowed until the researcher received the signed consent form. The following details the step-by-step interview procedure of the overview explicated above.

1. Once a volunteer responded to the researcher's advertisement by telephone or e-mail, the researcher determined his or her eligibility for the study based on the study's Resonance Panel member selection criteria (Appendix K).
2. Within a few days of being contacted by the respondent, through e-mail or telephone, the researcher screened and determined the respondent's eligibility for the study.
3. Once eligible, using e-mail, the researcher sent the volunteer a Resonance Panel Member Informed Consent Form (Appendix N) and a Resonance Panel Member Demographics Questionnaire (Appendix O).
4. The volunteers were asked to sign and return the Informed Consent Form within a few days using an electronic signature or hardcopy and to complete

the Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix O) and return it. By signing the Informed Consent Form (Appendix M), the volunteer acknowledged that he or she would review the texts provided by the researcher at face value without analyzing, interpreting, or judging the contents and gave the researcher permission to publish the input on the researcher's recurring themes and patterns.

5. Once the researcher received the signed Informed Consent Form, the volunteer was formally considered a member of the Resonance Panel of the study.

The Resonance Panel duties included documentation of the resonance with the researcher's list of themes and patterns that emerge from the data review as well as whether the activity increased or changed the panel member's understanding of experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork (Anderson, 2007). Using a Resonance Panel is viewed as a way to establish reliability within a qualitative study through verification.

According to Anderson (2004), after reading the completed study, it is hoped that the reader will walk away feeling inspired or moved and experience a shift in their perspective about experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork and sense the authenticity in the study. The study should have a quality of depth and reflects a sense of empathy and compassion (Anderson, 2004). The researcher used the following procedural steps to obtain each Resonance Panel member's input:

1. The researcher, by e-mail, sent each panel member a request for a review and comment (Appendix P). Using only the participant's pseudonyms, the researcher's e-mail to the panel members included a cover letter (Appendix Q) and a copy of the researcher's list of emerging themes and patterns from the participant interviews (Appendix R).
2. In the researcher's e-mail, panel members were directed to read the recurring themes and patterns (only pseudonyms were used, thus maintaining confidentiality). Additionally, they were asked to reflect and document their resonance during their review based on their past experiences at prior Holotropic Breathwork™ retreats where they were participants of those retreats.
3. The panel members were asked to respond to the e-mail request within 4 weeks of receipt of the request with a one or two-page, double spaced document of their experience of their review.
4. Initially, the mandala artwork was going to be included for the panel's review, but as the study progressed the researcher decided to not include the artwork in the qualitative thematic analysis. Therefore, only the synthesized themes from the breathwork sessions were sent to the panel for verification (Appendix R).

Resonance Panel demographics. For this study, the Resonance Panel consisted of three members. Each member was chosen for their expertise, training, and experience in and with the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and retreats. All three members are certified Holotropic Breathwork™ facilitators. Certification requires completion of the

following Grof Holotropic Breathwork™ approved events: 7 Grof Transpersonal Training 1-week retreats, a 2-week certification retreat, 10 workshops, 10 consultations with a certified facilitator, and 4 apprenticeship retreats or workshops. Additionally, a facilitator in-training must complete 10 hours of consultation from a certified practitioner and 150 hours of participation in Holotropic Breathwork™ workshops led by Grof or a certified facilitator. The Resonance Panel members for this study were all college educated (1-BA, 1-MA, and 1 Ph.D.).

Resonance Panel member verification of findings. The researcher provided each panel member with the complete list of themes resulting from the participants' interview (Appendix R). Without collaborating with each other and based on their experience with facilitating and participating in Holotropic Breathwork™ retreats, each member read through the themes and provided the researcher with a write up of whether the themes resonate with what they had seen in retreat participants or have personally experienced. In all three cases their identities were kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms (Julian, WOL, and Amused) and each member was provided the same set of instructions specified in Appendices Q and R.

All three Resonance Panel members reported that they resonated with each and every theme. However, there were some annotations. One panel member shared that she personally had not experienced the theme of emptiness, but had heard reports from other retreat participants. Another reported he felt the term *awe* would better describe the study's participant experiences rather than use of the word *surprise* as a theme. Having not seen the study as a whole, this same member reported he was surprised that the study's participants had not mentioned *experiences of the group interaction and sharing*,

or mandala drawing, and the workshop as a whole. All crucial elements of Holotropic Breathwork™ (Julian). He also commented that he was surprised that there were not themes of *suffering, pain, and terror*. Another member shared that while reading the themes and the participant experiences *I was often moved, as I am in a workshop setting, with the depth and clarity of many individuals' experiences, this motion of the soul being proof positive of the authenticity of their responses* (WOL). The third panel member provided examples of experiences of her own of each of the themes. This member reported that she especially resonated with the selection criteria for the theme of self-actualization like *discovery of self-knowledge, a promotion of self-worth in that I have experienced divine consoling and the revelation of a warrior-self* (Amused).

Overall the reports of the three Resonance Panels substantiated the research's qualitative thematic analysis (Appendix R). The report of resonance by the panel members provides verification of the themes and the selection criteria thereby strengthening this study.

Through the review, verification of the researcher's list of recurring themes and patterns were qualified by whether each panel member subjectively reported resonance. Once the complete synthesized set of data from the QTA was secured, Cycle 2 lenses were revisited (Anderson, 2004). As a result of the revisiting process, the Cycle 2 lenses were reworked based on the findings that emerged from the Cycle 4 interpretation process. Hence, through the act of revisiting prior cycles, a spiral or circular effect took place. The revisiting was pivotal in that the researcher anticipated the revelation of a new set of lenses or refinement of the current lenses through the process. In Chapter 6 the review and lens revision is more fully discussed.

Cycle 5: Integration of Findings

In Cycle 5, the researcher integrated the final data analysis of Cycle 4 with the relevant data of the literature review. The returning arc required a reevaluation of the supporting literature including the theories and research studies. There was a dynamic interplay between the returning arc and the forward arc of integrating the new information from the QTA and supporting literature in this study. What has value and what does not have value was determined and is presented in Chapter 6. Moreover, determining value resulted from reviewing “the elements of the forward and return arc in order to evaluate both the efficacy of the hermeneutical process used and the topic of inquiry in light of that determined efficacy” (Anderson, 2004, p. 323). Cycles 1 through 4 provided the foundation for the discussion in Cycle 5 where the entire study is taken into consideration and evaluated.

Conclusion

Anderson’s (2004) Intuitive Inquiry method is central to this study’s exploration of the experience of Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and its integral mandala artwork that might support self-actualization. Its five cycles included illuminating the role of the researcher’s perspective and challenged that view. Rigorous procedures were enumerated and adhered to in the interest of qualitative oriented reliability and validity or verifiability. The reality of a qualitative study acknowledges diverse and changing constructs as integral to the experience of human consciousness. Therefore, the method and processes for analysis took a dynamic reality into consideration and supported an exploration into the multiple constructs of the psyche, congruent with the topic of this study.

Chapter 4: Findings

To see the wonder of your descent. My weeping would at last cease! Lofty clouds,
rain, rain down upon us for the Earth's thirst to find release.

—St. John of the Cross (trans. 1980, p. 93)

This chapter presents the findings of the study and concentrates on the experiences arising out of the breathwork sessions, one of six components of a week-long Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat. Another component, the mandala artwork, is the focus of Chapter 5. A discussion about the findings, tying them in with pertinent literature and research, the researcher's preliminary lenses, the Resonance Panel input and recommendations for future research, is covered in Chapter 6.

Initially in this chapter, the purpose of the study is restated and a review of the context of the study and where the data were derived is described. Next, a summary of the participants' demographics is presented and the interview structure and the procedure used for the Qualitative Thematic Analysis (QTA) are explicated. Then, the distilled list of themes and exemplary quotes from the 15 interviews is explained and displayed, and the chapter is summarized.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to deepen the understanding of experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and to bring focus and attention to the integral mandala artwork. In support of this goal, it is my hope that readers of the study will gain (a) an increased insight into the nuances of these experiences, and (b) a heightened awareness of the role of the integral mandala artwork component. I wished to shed light on the fine distinctions and effects of the mandala creation highlighting what may make it an essential, yet often overlooked component of the Holotropic

Breathwork™ technique. I wondered how the experiences revealed in the technique showed up in the integral mandala artwork creation and what meaning it held for the individual. Additionally, I was curious about how the mandala artwork contributed to a person's experience arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions. I knew that the mandala artwork creation was a significant part of the experience, a way for people to continue working with their experience after the retreat was over, and yet there are no other studies where this component is emphasized. I wished to shine light on this important aspect of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique.

Demographics

The recruitment efforts for this study took 12 months of advertising through Holotropic Breathwork™ community group emails that reached about 200 members. An advertisement (Appendix E) in the quarterly Association for Holotropic Breathwork™ International (AHBI) newsletter went out twice within the year. These flyers and the emails contained an endorsement of this study by Grof. Additionally, about 150 hardcopy flyers were provided at the GTT Holotropic Breathwork™ retreats held throughout the year. This advertisement (Appendix E) effort yielded 24 responses. Out of the 24 responses 15 met this study's participation criteria (Appendix B) and all 15 who qualified agreed to join the research. The original goal was 12 participants. The additional 3 qualifying volunteers were seen as adding strength to the study and the goal was adjusted accordingly. All 15 participants who began this study also completed the study. Of the 9 who did not qualify, 7 had attended a weekend retreat rather than a week-long retreat, and 2 had taken the retreat more than 12 months prior to contacting the researcher about the study.

Within 12 months of this study's interview, each of the 15 participants of this study had previously attended a week long GTT equivalent Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat. The participants were not required to come out of the same retreat. Additionally, during the course of the retreat, each attendee had created at least one mandala artwork directly after the retreat's breathwork sessions. Out of 15 participants, 7 were female and 8 were male (5 single, 6 married, and 4 partnered). Their ages ranged from 25 to 62 with a mean age of 50, and a mode of 52. All of the participants except 2 (1-unspecific and 1-high school graduate) reported at least 4 years of college (6-B.A., 3-M.A., 2 with 4 years of undergraduate-level work, 1-B.S., and 1-M.D.). One participant had a stated occupation as retired and the others specified Artist and Architectural Designer, Trainee Social Worker, IT/Technical, Management Consultant, Designer, Community Organizer, Healer, Bricklayer, Life Coach and Goldsmith, Performer, Metalworker, and Consultant and project work. With an average of 23 breathwork sessions prior to this study's interview reported by the participants, the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique was not completely new to any of them. Prior to this study 2 participants had partaken in 2 breathwork sessions; 1 participant, 5 sessions; 1 participant, 9 sessions; 1 participant, 10 sessions; 1 participant, 12 sessions; 1 participant, 15 sessions; 1 participant, 16 sessions; 3 participants, 20 sessions; 1 participant, 30 sessions; 1 participant, 50 sessions; 1 participant, 53 sessions; and 1 participant, 80 sessions. To characterize their spiritual or religious affiliation, 2 participants stated Buddhism, 1 specified Christian, 1 shared he was a Druid, 11 reported some variation of meditation, and 1 did not specify. In addition to a central practice, all of the participants indicated other forms of spiritual practice or religious belief, except the one who did not specify (1-ThetaHealing and Soul Collage,

1-Constellation Work, 1-sitting by the fire, 1-walking in the forest, 1-Holosync, 1-Shamanic Practices, 1-Floatation, 1-relaxing to music, 1-Ngondro, 3-Yoga, 2-Tai Chi, 1-diet, and 1-women's spiritual group). Some form of meditation was practiced on a regular basis by 11 of the participants (73% of the group) indicating a strong relationship between the interest in spiritual practice and attending of week-long GTT-like Holotropic Breathwork™ retreats.

The Interview

For this study each participant took part in a postretreat interview with the researcher and shared his or her personal experiences arising out of at least one of the retreat breathwork sessions that included providing the research with the integral artwork. Initially, only one breathwork session and one mandala artwork from a retreat participant was to be used for this study's interview process. However, I found that in a number of instances the two sessions and the integral mandalas in the retreat bled into each other and it was not possible to keep them separate. Thus, in some instances, more than one breathwork session or mandala became part of the interview and the central, meaningful themes used. Normally a week long GGT Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat includes 2 breathwork sessions per participant. If I were to do this study again, upfront I would include both of the breathwork sessions and a mandala from each of those sessions completed at the retreat.

With each participant, semistructured interview questions were used (Appendix J). All interviews were conducted within 12 months of the participants' respective retreat and tape recorded with their full consent and knowledge. In support of the main purpose of this study, I structured the interview questions to be open-ended with

the intent to illicit natural, free-flowing, subjective responses from the participants. Most of the participants confirmed the success of the structure and none had anything negative to say. Overall, their comments about the interview acknowledged that both the open-endedness of the questions and the semistructured way of asking the questions fostered trust allowing them to illuminate and expound upon their experiences that arose out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork. For example, when asked how the interview was for him, Adam stated “You didn’t lead me at all—great energy. . . [the researcher] sat and listened, left it open for me—that was good.” My goal from start to finish was to put aside my own preconceptions, minimize my influence, and gather information on the participants’ subjective, meaningful experiences. As part of an effort to eliminate my influence, I did not take part in any of the retreats attended by the participants of this study and knew little or nothing about their demographics prior to their participation.

The recorded interview was transcribed by hired transcriptionists under a signed confidentiality agreement (Appendix F). Once the transcribed interviews were returned to me, I sent the transcription to the participant associated with that particular interview. I informed the participants that they could make any changes or additions they felt were needed to most accurately reflect their experience. After receiving the interviews back from the participants, I read and reread each interview. The process became a dance between the use of sound methodology, intuition, and clarity of intention. I allowed themes to emerge that accentuated particular experiences emphasized by the participant as particularly important or meaningful. As I went through each interview certain recurring themes began to arise that highlighted the essence of the experience. It was

important to me that the participants' expressed meaning remain intact. In alignment with my goal to clearly reflect the original meaning in the context of sound research, Qualitative Thematic Analysis procedures for theme selection and good coding were utilized (Anderson, 2007; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clark, 2006).

Procedures Used for the Qualitative Thematic Analysis

For the initial sorting, selection, and synthesis of themes, Anderson's (2007) QTA procedural steps were followed. Copies of the transcripts were made, relevant data were highlighted, and the meaningful units of data were selected and sorted into categories. Sorting and resorting of the themes took place over a 2- to 4-month period until the final themes emerged. These themes were determined to be those that would best support the purpose of this study—a deepening of the understanding of experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique.

Additionally, to add strength to the structure of the QTA process, I used Boyatzis' (1998) method for good coding, and Braun and Clark's (2006) six phases for qualitative thematic analysis formulation. The results of this practice allowed themes to be revealed that naturally addressed the central goal of this study in the context of a methodically sound structure.

Boyatzis' (1998) qualifications for good coding that increase the interrater reliability and validity are (a) the use of a label, (b) definition of the theme, (c) a description of how to identify when the theme happens, (d) exclusion or qualifications that enhance the identification criteria for a theme through contrast, and (e) examples of both positive and negative aspects for clarification of why a theme was chosen or excluded.

These qualifying factors are presented and incorporated in this study in the following manner:

1. The name of the theme is the label. The themes have been broken out into anticipated themes that coincide with the researcher's preliminary lenses and unanticipated themes.
2. The subtheme is the definition of the theme.
3. To be categorized under a particular theme, a participant's shared experience had to contain a word or words that can be characterized by and correlate with both the theme and the definition of the theme. The category is referred to as the "Selection Criteria Aspect."
4. Theme exclusion criteria included (a) experiences mentioned in the course of the interview that occurred outside the Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat designated for this study's interview and data analysis and (b) multiple experiences of a particular theme by a participant. For example, if a participant reported 10 experiences that could be classified under the theme self-actualization only 1 was counted and included in the total for that theme.
5. The selection criteria aspects of the participant's account that qualified it to be included are provided as examples. Additionally, participant quotes are used as illustration and verification (referred to as "participant illustrations"). At least two or three quotes that best represent a particular theme are used in this chapter.

Additionally, the six phases of qualitative thematic analysis explicated by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clark (2006) of the University of Auckland and University

of the West of England respectively, were utilized. These authors suggest managing the analysis process as follows:

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data: Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generalizing initial codes: Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes: Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes: Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes: Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report: The final opportunity for analysis, selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of (*sic*) the analysis to (*sic*) the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis. (p. 87)

In accordance with these current industry standards for qualitative thematic analysis, I became intimately familiar with every interview associated with this study through my reading and rereading each one at least four times. Through this process an initial 49 themes were created. These initial themes were developed in a systematic manner using Anderson's (2007) QTA procedure and Boratzis' (1998) coding qualification process which coincides with Phase 4 (Braun & Clarke, 2006). They were then synthesized further to glean the essence of the meaning from the participants' experiences arising out of their Holotropic Breathwork™ session and the integral mandala artwork.

The QTA Summary

The central purpose and exploration for this study is to deepen an understanding of the experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and integral

mandala artwork. In support of this exploration, processes and analysis were used to provide a valid, verifiable study that helped to uncover the subtle nuances of the experience and highlight the role of the mandala artwork component. Not only was quantity of responses considered, but the quality of the themes fed into the decision-making process. For example, 12 participants out of the 15 total participants referred to mental, emotional, and physical sensations as part of their experience. Due to the quantity of recurring responses, the fact that 12 out of 15 shared such experiences qualified the experiences as a theme. However, only 2 participants directly expressed they had experienced emptiness. Emptiness was chosen as a theme because of the reported effect it had on the participant's overall experience. Hence, it was chosen for the quality of the effect it added to that person's experience. In Chapter 6 further explanation and substantiation for choice of themes and subset themes will be explicated. Two main concepts were consistently reflected in the interview that pointed to the heart of this inquiry: the self-actualization process and self-healing.

The term self-actualization originates from Maslow (1971/1993, 1968/1999). This study's participants used descriptions of their experiences that reflect what Maslow referred to as peak experiences. Maslow saw peak experiences as part of the self-actualization process. In Chapter 6, the association between peak experiences and self-actualization is further clarified. Also, examples of the tie between Maslow's definitions and the experiences shared by this study's participants will be elucidated. Self-healing was chosen as a theme due to the participants' direct reference to healing, reclaiming of a lost part of the self, or a revitalization of their self.

Additionally, 12 subset themes were set apart from the two central themes. This subset was selected because the participants' description referred either implicitly or explicitly to being a support for the process of either self-actualization or self-healing. This interrelationship is elucidated further in Chapter 6. The subset of themes is broken down further into two categories of anticipated versus unanticipated themes as determined by the researcher's list of preliminary lenses in Chapter 3. For the purpose of this study, all subset themes are weighted equally with regard to their contribution to the main themes. Braun and Clarke's (2006) Phases 5 and 6 were utilized in conjunction with Boyatzis' (1998) coding qualification process in the synthesis of the initial themes. In Appendix R, the complete initial, synthesized themes are listed including all of the participants' quotes illustrating why they were categorized under the particular theme. The tables below are condensed versions. In these versions only two to three participant quotes that most readily exemplified the choice were used to give context to and illustration of the selection criteria for the theme. The two main themes of self-actualization and self-healing precede the subset of themes that contributed to the main themes. The table titles are the same as the names of each theme and subset theme.

Table 1 explicates the theme of self-actualization. The subtheme of Table 1 provides the definition of self-actualization. Self-actualization is defined as a process that fosters individuality. Provided are three examples of the selection criteria that most clearly represent why the researcher chose to count a participant's reported experience under that theme. The participant illustration is the direct quote from the participant that describes his or her experience as derived from the interview with the researcher.

Table 1

Frequencies and Participation Illustrations of Emergent Interview Theme: Self-Actualization (N = 15)

Theme (label)	Subtheme: definition of theme	Selection criteria aspect	Participant illustration
Self-actualization (11 Participants; 73%)	Individuality, fostered	Creative self-expression, encouraged	“Actually, they [flower petals] were different ways to express myself, like writing and speaking. A lot of them had to do with communicating . . . coming towards creative self-expression.” (Maya)
		Self-knowledge, discovered	“That was the whole gist of this breathwork . . . to feel myself, that I am somebody who can give something to the world” (Ishad)
		Self-knowledge, discovered	“To me it’s the simple concept of having a safe container . . . so that I can become permeable. . . . The essence of that experience, it was as if I came into myself. Not intellectually. Physically—physically I came into myself.” (Adam)

For the purposes of this study, the second theme of self-healing is defined by the researcher as the recovery of some aspect of a person’s psyche. The selection criteria describe the aspect that was recognized, fostered, discovered, revealed, connected with, lifted, or felt healed. Again, the illustrations are direct quotes from the participants’ interviews that provided the context for their selection under the theme of self-healing. Reclaiming split off, repressed parts of the psyche is seen as a way to heal those parts of the self (Assagioli, 1965, 1985; Firman & Gila, 1997, Freud, 1923/1960; Jung,

1961/1983). Without being prompted about self-healing many of the participants reported such experiences either directly or indirectly. For this study only those who explicitly shared such experiences were selected and counted. Thus Table 2 reflects those participants who clearly reported self-healing experiences during their Holotropic Breathwork™ session through this study's interview process.

Table 2

Frequencies and Participation Illustrations of Emergent Interview Theme: Self-healing (N = 15)

Theme (label)	Subtheme: definition of theme	Selection criteria aspect	Participant illustration
Self-healing (8 Participants; 53%)	Aspect of self, recovered	Acceptance and insight, recognized	"I definitely could recognize that a lot of healing and growth did take place, like acceptance and . . . insight into a lot of things, psychology." (John Utah)
		Revitalization through the female body, revealed	"For some reason, it suddenly became amazingly clear to me that this was taking place inside the woman's body and that the entire cycle of the Sun God's journey represented the masculine energy revitalizing itself through the female body." (Frank)
		Pain, healed	"Reliving it in a safe place is hard—it's hard to do this work . . . we need to go through the pain to heal, and I definitely, definitely went through the pain . . . I feel . . . really healed." (Leones)

A subset of the two central themes revealed itself during the QTA. The separate categorization helped to contrast the central processes of self-actualization and

self-healing from experiences and characteristics that appeared as contributing factors leading up to and supporting those processes. The revelation of this distinction was unforeseen until completion of the QTA.

Additionally, in Chapter 3, as part of the Intuitive Inquiry process, the researcher had listed her preconceptions and expectations or the lenses she brought with her as she began this study. The themes that emerged outside of these lenses are a part of this subset and will be highlighted as unanticipated themes. All of the 12 subset themes are presented in Tables 3 through 14 and more fully explicated in Chapter 6.

Table 3 defines the theme of sensation as the physical, mental acumen, or emotional aspect of a participant's experience. The physical aspect is seen as a bodily experience. The emotional aspect is related to a quality of expressed passion or feelings. Mental acumen is seen as an expression of an idea or ideas that included an insight. All three of these aspects were categorized under the theme of sensation. A total of 12 participants directly expressed they had experienced one or all three forms of sensation. The number of participants for each of the three categories has also been specified. Again the criteria and several examples to illustrate why it was counted are provided.

Table 3

*Frequencies and Participation Illustrations of Emergent Interview Theme: Sensation
(N = 15)*

Theme (label)	Subtheme: definition of theme	Selection criteria aspect	Participant illustration
Sensation (12 Participants; 80%)	Physical aspect, experienced (12)	A feeling of suffocation, realized	"I had that feeling of suffocating, and I realized that I wanted to . . . tighten that feeling of suffocation and go deeper into it." (Ann)
		Body enlargement, sensed	"increasing sense of the body being larger. . . . It was like getting blown up kind of like a Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade float" (Mooranth)
	Mental acumen aspect (10)	Breath connects us, realized	"I had this realization . . . you're totally conscious before the breath, but . . . breath . . . connects you to the outside world or some other world." (Pseudoswami)
		Need to face our illusion, realized	"The mirror . . . [with the] image of reflections of her own face . . . represented the idea of facing everything and facing our . . . self and the illusion that we have some kind of real control over our lives . . . the only way out is to . . . really see our own reflection." (Michael)
	Emotional aspect (9)	Sad and depressed, encountered	"I started feeling a little sad and depressed. . . . I've had that experience before and it [coming out of black hole] usually brings feelings of isolation and loneliness." (Morfran)
		Many emotions, encountered	"a lot of emotion, it was kind of a roller coaster between general anxiety in the experience, sadness, a strong sense of loss at periods. Happiness. I cried for happiness a few times." (John Utah)

The data for the theme of a nonordinary state of consciousness is presented in Table 4. This state of consciousness is defined by the subtheme as an encounter with an uncommon way of perception. The selection criteria refine the definition pointing to the experience that is seen as uncommon.

Table 4

Frequencies and Participation Illustrations of Emergent Interview Theme: Nonordinary State of Consciousness (N = 15)

Theme (label)	Subtheme: definition of theme	Selection criteria aspect	Participant illustration
Nonordinary state of consciousness (12 Participants; 80%)	Uncommon way of perception, encountered	Oneness, experienced	“I’ve had moments of that experience of oneness with certain things, but never for that length of time. It was an altered experience.” (Adam)
		No mind, beyond the personal, experienced	“It was just . . . Nirvana. . . . There was not a mind—the mind wasn’t going . . . it was like beyond the personal.” (Jane)

The theme of potential is defined as the realization of aptitude and described in Table 5. The selection criteria indicate that some ability of the participant has been revealed, increased, or discovered. Further explication of the contribution and of this subset theme is revealed in Chapter 6.

Table 5

Frequencies and Participation Illustrations of Emergent Interview Theme: Potential (N = 15)

Theme (label)	Subtheme: definition of theme	Selection criteria aspect	Participant illustration
Potential (9 Participants; 60%)	Aptitude, realized	Inner authority, revealed	“What feels important about it is there is an inner authority in me which I have never felt before.” (Adam)
		Creative potential, experienced	“the whole session was about the incredible creative potential of diversity” (Mooranth)

Table 6 depicts the theme of fulfillment. The definition for this theme is an enhancement of gratification. During the interview, when a participant shared some kind of expression of fulfillment that experience was counted under that theme. The participant illustration in the table provides the context for the decision and is refined through the inference in the selection criteria column.

Table 6

Frequencies and Participation Illustrations of Emergent Interview Theme: Fulfillment (N = 15)

Theme (label)	Subtheme: definition of theme	Selection criteria aspect	Participant illustration
Fulfillment (8 Participants; 53%)	Gratification, enhanced	Confidence, increased	“I’m going to go on my own, like give up my business. And that breathwork was sort of a confidence builder for me . . . to visualize myself as like . . . fulfilling kind of person who is standing on his own in the world.” (Ishad)
		Fulfillment, recognized	“I felt like I was welcoming, and it was sort of exciting and it wasn’t big excitement, but it was a little bit of excitement there, but more fulfilling.” (Michael)

The theme choice of archetypal symbol is laid out in Table 7. In Chapter 2 archetype was defined for the purposes of this study. In this table the definition is truncated to a universal, historically recognizable pattern or symbol. To be selected and counted under this theme a participant had to have described something visual that could be distinguished as such a pattern or symbol.

Table 7

Frequencies and Participation Illustrations of Emergent Interview Theme: Archetypal Symbol (N = 15)

Theme (label)	Subtheme: definition of theme	Selection criteria aspect	Participant illustration
Archetypal symbol (8 Participants; 53%)	A universal, historically recognizable pattern or symbol, revealed	Universal female figure, recognized	“My vision was me crawling through the desert . . . energy coming from the egg-like figure towards me, but I had just been through this gate . . . I remembered this is from . . . that universal female figure.” (Pseudoswami)
		Unavailable parts of self, recognized	“That was the forbidden territory like standing in the doorway of the church and looking in, but not going in. I mean, this glow—I can still see that glow now. I mean, it was just an unbelievable orange glow, and the entire building was full of that glow.” (Jane)

The information that applies to the theme of *unavailable parts of the self that have been retrieved* is contained in Table 8. It is defined by a discovery of those aspects of the self that are normally inaccessible. Criteria that lent it to be counted under this theme include aspects of oneself that are *revealed* and described as *normally unfamiliar* or a

shift in perspective. Participant descriptions are provided to illustrate and substantiate the selection criteria.

Table 8

Frequencies and Participation Illustrations of Emergent Interview Theme: Unavailable Parts of Self (N = 15)

Theme (label)	Subtheme: definition of theme	Selection criteria aspect	Participant illustration
Unavailable parts of self (7 Participants; 47%)	Aspects of a person normally inaccessible, Discovered	Bliss, revealed	“Constant bliss, which makes it odd. . . . There wasn’t emotions, there wasn’t memories, maybe that’s part of what throws me. . . . Because I’m usually left-brained, that it’s an unfamiliar area and usually left brain is verbal.” (Chauncey)
		Relationship with the feminine, revealed	“It’s one part that is so important to me, is the flower and the bee and their intimacy was my relationship with her [the feminine], which took a new turn for me. . . . This is definitely coming into relationship with her, with that part and not being totally engulfed by her.” (Adam)

Table 9 represents the parameters for the theme of *surrender*, which is defined as the relinquishing of control. The selection criteria from the interview had to include the word *surrender* or the words *letting go* to be chosen. Regarding the choice of this theme and as with each of the other theme and subset themes, more will be discussed and illuminated in Chapter 6.

Table 9

Frequencies and Participation Illustrations of Emergent Interview Theme: Surrender (N = 15)

Theme (label)	Subtheme: definition of theme	Selection criteria aspect	Participant illustration
Surrender (6 Participants; 40%)	Control, relinquished	Need to surrender to feeling stuck, realized	“I realized, okay, that’s what I need to do here: Surrender to this feeling of being stuck. I actually got to this place where I was very relaxed in my body. I didn’t feel like the birth process was complete, but I felt very relaxed and then I moved on to feeling like a tight bud on my right side. When I was in that place of being a tight bud, I felt a lot of embarrassment, like I shouldn’t take up space, along with a feeling of being insignificant.” (Maya)
		Letting go to enter the birth canal, recognized	“Abandonment and letting go were certainly common to both sessions . . . I knew that I had to leave the ashram and I had to pass my power over to my disciples. I did that and I came down the mountain, very slowly filed down to the bottom, and the weather became less inclement as I got to the bottom. And then there was mud, mud at the bottom of the mountain and I knew that I needed to get lower. I was sinking in my knees into the mud and I knew that I needed to get lower, and lower still. It wasn’t down enough. I went down into the mud. There were underground tunnels. It was very, very narrow and suddenly I realized that I was in the birth canal.” (Frank)

The aspect of the theme of *surprise* is illustrated in Table 10. The defining experience of this theme is an expression of astonishment that includes a sense of awe. As will be further described in Chapter 6, surprise indicates that something new has been revealed making it an indicator of an unexpected change.

Table 10

Frequencies and Participation Illustrations of Emergent Interview Theme: Surprise Factor (N = 15)

Theme (label)	Subtheme: definition of theme	Selection criteria aspect	Participant illustration
Surprise factor (5 Participants; 33%)	Astonishment, engaged	By the clearness and lightness, awed	“It was just awesome to feel the kind of clearness and lightness.” (Leoneess)
		At laughing at self after pain, surprised	“I was surprised when each pain reached its crescendo to find myself laughing when it was released. I felt as though I had cleared energy blockages on each level separately with the physical being the last.” (Frank)

Table 11 depicts the components of the *observer* theme. The central feature of this theme is that the person has a degree of disidentification with the experience. Thus it is defined as an onlooker having been engaged. An experience of these themes was chosen when the term *observer* or *observation* was directly used by the participants. Again, this subset theme, as well as the others, is characterized more fully in Chapter 6.

Table 11

Frequencies and Participation Illustrations of Emergent Interview Theme: Observer (N = 15)

Theme (label)	Subtheme: definition of theme	Selection criteria aspect	Participant illustration
Observer (5 Participants; 33%)	Onlooker, engaged	Observer part of self, experienced	“The observer stayed fixed in a place beneath the heart chakra, with a different attitude, it was not a seeking thing but a fixed thing that would allow whatever wanted to be seen to bubble up.” (Adam)
		Pure observer self, experienced	“I still wasn’t aware of myself in this. I was just pure through this whole second thing I was pure observer.” (Mooranth)

In Table 12 the characteristics of the theme of *struggle* are explicated. The definition of struggle includes the factor of effort exercised to a great degree. The word *struggle* was explicitly used by 2 participants, and 1 directly indicated having difficulty. The qualitative aspects for the choice are more fully discussed in Chapter 6.

Table 12

Frequencies and Participation Illustrations of Emergent Interview Theme: Struggle (N = 15)

Theme (label)	Subtheme: definition of theme	Selection criteria aspect	Participant illustration
Struggle (3 Participants; 20%)	Great effort, exercised	Opening up, after struggle and pushing, experienced	“It’s after the struggling and pushing that I get to the center image—to the opening up aspect.” (Lena)
		Struggle with letting go of control, recognized	“I like the physical sensation of it . . . something about the tetany, the fact that I don’t feel like I am fully in control of the physical aspect, and it’s almost like the struggle of it.” (Michael)

Table 13 corresponds to the attribute of emptiness chosen as one of the subset themes. Here emptiness is defined as the encounter with no content. Few of this study's participants mentioned emptiness as part of their experience arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat. However, the quality of the experience for those who did share this as part of their experience brought it into play as a choice for being a theme. As previously mentioned, this subset theme as well as others is more fully explored in Chapter 6.

Table 13

Frequencies and Participation Illustrations of Emergent Interview Theme: Emptiness (N = 15)

Theme (label)	Subtheme: definition of theme	Selection criteria aspect	Participant illustration
Emptiness (2 Participants; 13%)	No content, encountered	Emptiness that was full, experienced	“So that’s what it feels like as if I opened up a bottle full of energy I didn’t know existed. . . . It became—it was a long, long period of just emptiness that was full.” (Adam)
		Emptiness, realized	“It just felt like there was a lot of emptiness . . . inside me that cleared so much of this darkness out.” (Leoness)

Table 14 features the theme *knowledge*, which is defined as the encouragement of comprehension. As illustrated by the participant quotes, in both cases included under this theme the participants acknowledged a deepening of knowledge. In Chapter 6 this aspect is presented more fully.

Table 14

Frequencies and Participation Illustrations of Emergent Interview Theme: Knowledge (N = 15)

Theme (label)	Subtheme: definition of theme	Selection criteria aspect	Participant illustration
Knowledge (2 Participants; 13%)	Comprehension, encouraged	A different way of knowing, revealed	“He’s [warrior] very—he has no manners—he could care less about propriety. . . And it’s not in resistance to propriety; he just has no understanding of that. And it comes from an inner wholeness or self-assurance of the way things are. And the fact that he knows how to name things—that he knows the name of everything—means that it’s not an assimilated knowing. . . . The depth of the experience . . . and the quality of the feelings . . . a different way of knowing that’s entered my daily life. . . . There’s something inside of me that’s wonderful and complete.” (Adam)
		Wisdom knowledge, recognized	“I contemplated a lot of my non-commitments to spirituality, but at the same time I was able to recognize . . . the progress and it seems I feel like I’ve gained . . . spiritually and [in] wisdom knowledge.” (John Utah)

The participants' motivation for or opinions about the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique were not taken into consideration during the QTA process. Therefore, the themes do not necessarily reflect motivation, but the participant's reported experiences arising out of the breathwork session or sessions. Additionally, various components of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique, such as the bodywork, were not included as themes regardless of how often participants mentioned they received bodywork from the facilitators. The intent of this study is to increase understanding about experiences arising out of Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork. With the exception of the mandala artwork, an exploration of the various components was not the goal of this study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter laid out the findings of the study. The researcher interviewed 15 attendees of GTT-equivalent week-long retreats using a semistructured interview process. In the interest of strengthening the validity and verifiability of this study, meaningful themes were distilled and extracted from the interviews based on current qualitative data analysis methods (Anderson, 2007; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The two themes, self-actualization and self-healing, were determined by the researcher to be central to understanding the heart of experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique. A subset of themes was extricated that pointed to experiences that led to or supported the two central themes. This subset includes sensation (physical, mental acumen, and emotional aspects), nonordinary states of consciousness, potential, fulfillment, archetypal symbol, access to unavailable parts of the self, surrender, surprise factor, observer, struggle, emptiness, and knowledge. The results of pulling the

meaningful themes from the interviews were handled in this chapter. However, the integral Holotropic Breathwork™ mandala artwork is displayed in their unadulterated form in the next chapter. In addition to providing focus on the artwork, Chapter 5 is intended as an honoring of each participant's personal breathwork journey through a gallery-like display of their integral mandala artwork. Except for a brief introduction, even the participants' words are used providing the reader with a sense of what these people are like and what their breathwork experiences were like for them. Additionally, using the originator's own verbiage leaves any interpretation of his or her mandala creation undistorted by another's perspective.

Chapter 5: Mandala Creations

No longer anything but a freedom which perfectly reveals itself.
—Sartre (n.d., p. 59)

In this chapter, the focus is on the 15 participants' mandala artwork submitted for this study and created directly after their respective breathwork sessions. To qualify for and participate in this research, prior to taking part in the study, volunteers had to have completed a week long GTT-equivalent Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat and drawn a mandala subsequent to one or both of their breathwork sessions. Once selected as a participant of this study, the procedure for each volunteer involved (a) signing an Informed Consent Form (Appendix F), (b) completing a Demographics Questionnaire (Appendix G), (c) providing the researcher with a Xeroxed or emailed digital copy of their mandala artwork from the retreat, (d) completing the semistructured, recorded telephone interview, and (e) reviewing and commenting on the transcription of their interview. All expenses related to the 6-day GTT-equivalent retreat were borne by the participant. The researcher was not responsible for any of the costs related to the retreat. For the participants, signing the consent form and completing the Demographic Questionnaire took about 20 minutes, the postretreat interview approximately 1 to 2 hours, and the review and commenting on their transcribed interview approximately 30-60 minutes. In total, participating in this study required approximately 2.5 hours including mandala artwork copying time. Each volunteer was individually contacted by e-mail to schedule the date and time for the interview and later by telephone to complete the interview. Due to the geographical distance between the researcher and the participants, all of the interviews were done over the telephone.

The chosen mandala artwork was visible to both the researcher and the participant throughout the interview. The cost of the telephone call for the interview was covered by the researcher. Once the interview had been transcribed and checked by the researcher, the participant had an opportunity to review the results and provide input to correct or change each response prior to publication or use. The researcher received changes to 10 of the transcribed interviews out of a total of 15.

The unique expression of each participant is left to answer this study's auxiliary questions of (a) how the experiences revealed in Holotropic Breathwork™ showed up in the integral mandala artwork and what meaning they hold, (b) how the mandala artwork contributed to their Holotropic Breathwork™ experience, and (c) how the participants felt as they created the mandala artwork. Again, to maintain confidentiality, the participants' previously selected pseudonyms continued to be used in place of their true names. To leave each participant's artwork in its unadulterated form, the mandala artwork is presented in a gallery-like format allotting two pages per participant. This way of displaying the image accompanied by the creator's words is in alignment with my goal to not judge or critique the participant or their mandala artwork in anyway. Selected passages from the originator's transcribed interview are directly cited in italics as part of the creator's introduction and used to describe his or her mandala design. The quotations were selected to provide not only a first-hand description of the mandala artwork by the creator, but to give a sense of the person is. Therefore, the participant quotes used were not only discussions about their mandala artwork but were sometimes about a person's life, the retreat setting, insights, or experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ session.

Maya

Maya, a 48 year old, Caucasian-Native American woman, reported that she has had 12 previous Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions, as well as 14 Integrative Breathwork sessions (a discipline having similarities to Holotropic Breathwork™). She added that for an hour, once or twice a week, she does yoga. She meditates daily using either Vipassana or Holosync practice and takes part in a women's spiritual group every 2 weeks. When discussing where she is at in her life, Maya shared *I am definitely in a place of wanting to find my own truth, and I can easily get lost in my head, 'This is right for me; no, this is right for me, and being lost and not really sure how to proceed. Like with my job that I have now during the day. I have the newsletter, which I absolutely love, and I have my job during the day. It's kind of over, and I go back and forth with do I want to stay, do I want to leave, whatever. The more I can live in the present moment, the more I can see the truth—because the truth is in the present moment. . . . To ask about it yesterday is one thing, but to say what's right in this moment, that is the truth for me.*

Referring to the time she was creating her mandala, Maya explained that *as I was drawing, I was feeling in a place of awe about the breathwork as a process. I'm just loving breathwork. I just think it's amazing . . . When I was embodying the flower, I felt gorgeous and whole . . . I had so many ways to express myself . . . each petal represented a different way to express myself. It just seemed like there were so many possibilities. . . . In fact, I'm going to put my mandala somewhere where I will see it every day to remind me. This whole concept of blooming. . . . Actually, I used to go to this yoga class in Boulder, and the instructor one day said, 'Let's all pick stage names!' The word that popped into my head was "Bloom". . . . So, I have this concept of blooming in my life.*



Figure 1. Maya's Mandala—A Time to Bloom.

Reflecting on her mandala, Maya added, *the way I like to think of it is that the flower I drew was white with pink accents on the petals because that's how it came to me. The flower is a symbol of my spiritual path. My spiritual path, when I get right down to it, is about living in this present moment, centered in awareness. I look at this image, and I see this flower on that green stem. The stem seems solid to me, and it holds the bloom up really well. I've said for years that I'm on a path of awareness, but part of that path is about awareness of feelings. In order to be aware, I need to feel and process stuff from my past, stuff that keeps me from being in awareness and present in the moment. . . . As I'm sitting here looking at the mandala, I see that it reminds me of an eye. You have the eyeball itself, the center of the eye, which is the iris, and the optic nerve with the green stem. [It] suggests to me that it's all about seeing the truth.*

Ishad

Ishad, is a 57 year old married male, born and raised in Germany; now living in Canada. Prior to the current retreat, he had experienced 16 previous Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions and practices Tai Chi. Ishad currently owns and operates a business in Canada, but is in the process of transitioning into the counseling field and would like to use a form of Holotropic Breathwork™. Ishad wondered what would happen if participants had not heard of Grof's Basic Perinatal Matrices. He stated *I'd like to get a totally . . . uncharted group together that hasn't heard anything about the three perinatal matrices and stuff like that . . . just let them breathe and see what comes up . . . it's a dangerous thing to create a culture . . . to sort of say, this is a panacea . . . for all kinds of ills . . . you can inadvertently create a culture of . . . holotropic experts . . . who tell the world what it means. So you've got to be very careful. I think it's important for me to . . . [be] clearly who I am and what breathwork is in relation to me. I'm not just gonna be a breathworker or something. It's very important to me. . . . I'm gonna be whoever I am, I'm myself and I'm going to present myself the way I am. . . . I've done some of this work now. . . . I've looked at myself clearly. I didn't shy away from any crevices. I looked at my shadow, I know who I am all the way. . . . I present that part that is a mystery and that we develop or discover together. . . . Any time you meet some person who's willing to engage with you . . . in a therapeutic sense or in a friendship sense or in just a social setting . . . at that point you create something. . . . When you engage . . . you create a relationship. . . . When I do my work I'm going to . . . really focus on this particular aspect of being human . . . how you engage with people and how relationships are the basis of everything.*



Figure 2. Ishad's Mandala—Wholeness.

Looking at his mandala, Ishad exclaimed—*Oh, it felt awesome! I mean look at this picture. . . . I felt so good about myself it's not funny . . . it can burn you . . . and I'm pretty close to the real heat there . . . that's my life in a way. . . . I mean to me this is the picture of wholeness in a sense. . . . I'm rooted like a tree . . . in the ground. . . . The earth, the brown earth. . . . I myself, my suit is sort of green. . . . I'm a nature guy in a sense. . . . I'm an urban naturist . . . my branches are reaching up into the sky as high as we can go. . . the whole movement is from the bottom up into the sky The flow of the energy can go both ways. . . . The inflow into the fingers of the segments of the branch fingers . . . sky energy flows back into the tree. . . . The flaming . . . red and yellow and orange . . . the trials and tribulations. . . . That's me at my best. . . . The sun is smiling on me, I've got my head . . . and I'm welcoming it . . . I felt like a tree . . . like a big oak. . . . Swaying in the wind. I've got the . . . smile. . . . I look at it . . . it makes me really happy.*

Tko

Tko, a 62-year old Caucasian woman, shares her life with a partner. She reported that she is a Christian, has had two previous Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions, and meditates on a regular basis. Tko has completed a 4-year college program and is a designer by profession. In describing her profession she stated *I'm not a painter. I am a designer and what this is, my brain works design. I design houses, and so this image to me was a design. . . . The purpose is to take the image that I have in my mind and put it in reality, which is the same way I feel about houses that I design. I have a design in my head and I draw it to scale and I draw the outside and I'm not content until I have created this structure . . . and I see it in reality.* She added, *I feel it really, really hurts, like two days I seem to be hurting . . . like my heart's broken. And I said I wish I were a painter. I visualized . . . clutching my heart until there was blood coming out and milk coming out of the breasts and some crayons falling off of my head . . . I want to paint this and that's when I painted it . . . a woman sitting there holding her crayon in her hand, studying it*

Referring to her life, Tko noted that *right now is to transform and evolve and heal. . . . It's not just breathwork, but when I'm at breathwork, this is what I do 24/7. . . . It's been a gradual interest of mine for a long time and breathwork has legitimized it more. I've always . . . been interested in this. . . . I taught yoga, and do Pilates, was very into the metaphysical. . . . I've had this intention way back into the '70s. . . . However, at this point my children are raised and I have time . . . to focus on my spiritual energy.*



Figure 3. Tko's Mandala—Vibrating Hands.

Reflecting on her mandala, Tko explained that she *experiences possibility. I see the great energy and enthusiasm for . . . physical life and healing or well being. . . . It says that you can be grounded and connected.* On the mandala she drew *a string of lights . . . one after another but they're in plastic tubes. . . . There's a whole string . . . individual lights because the tree was a string of lights. . . . They were lit. And then the ball in the center of my hands was yellow with other colors . . . passing through it. . . . I was trying to show the lights in my hand. Do you see that it's two hands?* About her breathwork, Tko stated *the energy moving, cutting through my fingertips and it excites me because I know that I can do it, I can use my breath and I can feel all the energy . . . then it's just sensational. . . . And my fingers and my hands were vibrating, like I'd feel . . . like rrrrr . . . like a motor. And I realized that I can see energy. . . . So I didn't know what to do with it, I was just excited that I could have it. And it felt wonderful that I could have it and then I said what do I do with it [and put] my hands over my body.*

Frank

Frank, a married 38 year old Caucasian male living in England, has had 10 other Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions. In addition to his involvement with Holotropic Breathwork™, he engages flotation and relaxation to music as part of his spiritual practices. He has a Certificate of Higher Education (predegree), currently undergraduate, and works as a Social Worker trainee.

The first breathwork of the retreat was referred to by Frank as *very, very powerful. I became the Sun god*. Reflecting on his integral mandala, Frank shared that *there was an image . . . out in the desert. There was this bush growing out in this desert that just somehow was representative of family. Its many branches were the many ancestors and it's somehow a miracle that it's growing out here in the desert. There was an important part for me where I was a child back in my bedroom. I'd probably be about five. I'm looking out of the window at the Sun and I'm sad that it seems so far away, because early on in the session I was so much in touch with the elements and with the Sun as a mythic archetype. I'm sort of feeling the energy from the Sun and I'm feeling the love, but it's so far away and it's on the other side of the glass. I've got my teddy bears and my little furry animals and they are for me representations of the animal powers that I've been in touch with. I'm talking to them and I'm disappointed that they aren't talking back to me in the way that they did when I was in touch with that other reality. I then go through sequences as a child where I am completely overwhelmed with tears because I feel so isolated from this alive, spiritual, mythic world that I have been in contact with. My parents just don't understand. And at the same time, I can also see their anguish and that they are trying their best to support me in this strange alien world.*

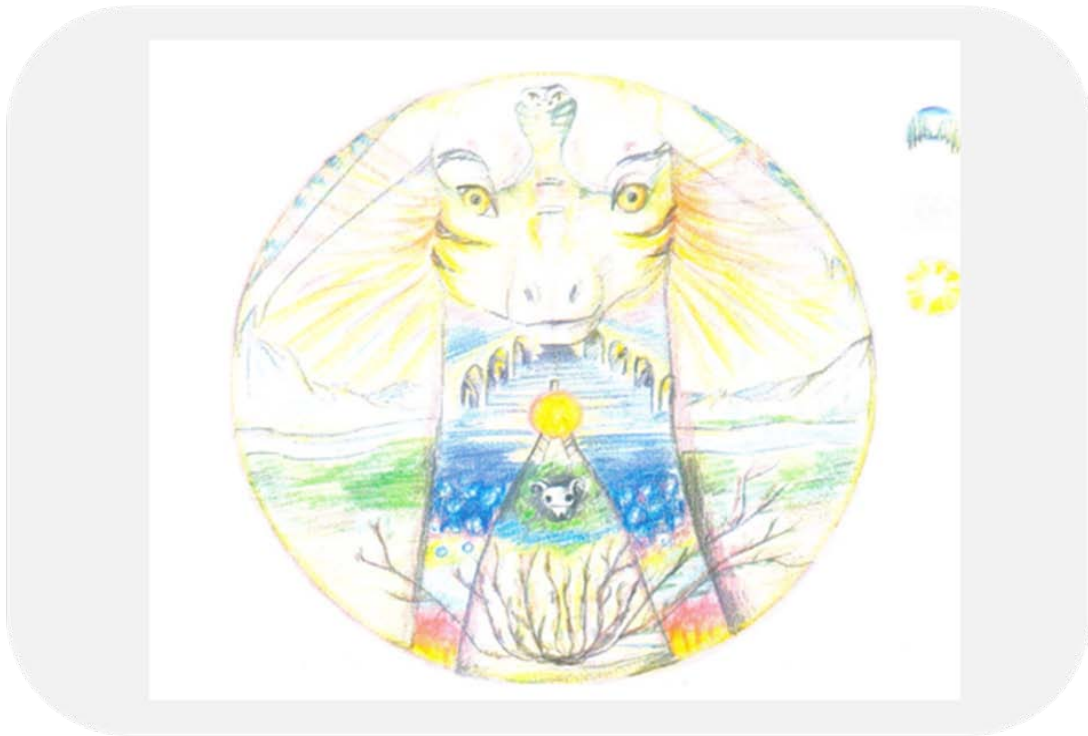


Figure 4. Frank's Mandala—Mythical, Spiritual World.

In describing the mandala above, Frank stated that *superimposed over it there is a female body . . . the flowing mane of the lion, which becomes the rays of the Sun, the Sun god. In the center of the image is the water that the funeral barge is sailing down. The prow of the boat is merged with the legs of the woman and there is the solar disk. . . . Then, inside the archway as you look down, are the figures of the Egyptian deities. At the bottom of the picture is the desert with the bush that represents family. Above the bush, below the solar disk is the skull of Pan. And emanating from that is the green of nature. And then there are the mountains and the vista. . . . I became, on the peak of the mountain, this Guru figure living in an ashram. I was receiving visitors and radiating love to them all. . . . I had to pass my power over to my disciples. I did that and I came down the mountain, very slowly filed down to the bottom. . . . I went down into the mud. There were underground tunnels . . . and I realized that I had actually been born.*

Jane

With over 50 previous Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions, Jane also regularly practices ThetaHealing and Soul Collage. She is a 49 year old, married, Caucasian female who has completed a Master of Arts degree and her current occupation is healer.

At the time of the interview, Jane and her husband were in the process of having a home built. Regarding this part of her life she explained *we've gotten so laid-back about it, because it just has been such a long birth, and now we're like, 'Oh, good', something is happening! We actually bought the place next door . . . just getting to add this piece of property next door is like a dream. . . I had anticipated building a small retreat center, and so now this property that we bought next door will . . . be that retreat. It just all fell in our laps—we're tickled.*

Jane relayed that her retreat experience began before her first breathwork session and yet influenced it. She shared that *the first night that I got there . . . in the middle of the night. . . I pulled up the blind to open the window, and it was unbelievable—the moon was right outside my window. . . there was a beam of light that went straight into the ground as wide as the moon, and then straight up and I couldn't see the end of the light—I'd never seen anything like it. And then the same to the left, facing it, which would be the right of the moon. And then to the left of the moon . . . it had these two beams. . . . That was what I went into the breathwork with . . . And it was really powerful. I was very drawn to it . . . but there was a fence there, and those neighbors don't like people wandering on their property, so we had already been told that, and so in my breathwork session, what came up is about forbidden territory.*



Figure 5. Jane's Mandala—Forbidden Territory.

Jane stated that her mandala was a *good reminder and enhancer*. Describing it she said, *the eye in the mandala is being psychic . . . forbidden territory for me . . . [but] that's part of who I am. . . . An antelope came and a giraffe in that breathwork, too, and since I got home I looked those up in the "Animal-Speak" book, and they both have to do with . . . the psychic senses. . . . And then the black tear-shaped things are actually tears. This powerful . . . the pain and the joy dichotomy. . . . There was a lot of that forbidden territory that came up in the breathwork. . . . I felt really inconsolable in that breathwork, which has been very significant for me. . . . I had never discovered in any other way, or just thinking that way about myself . . . spirit is consoling. . . That was the forbidden territory . . . like standing in the doorway of the church and looking in, but not going in. . . . I can still see that glow now . . . it was just an unbelievable orange glow . . . a big void in the spiritual. . . . The moonbeams, it was just showing me . . . this is not forbidden territory. . . . That awareness really came through being on the mat.*

Morfran

Morfran is a 42 year old Caucasian male, artist, and a college graduate. As of our interview, he had engaged in about 15 or more previous Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions, and has regular spiritual practices such as Vipassana insight meditation and shamanic drumming as well as an occasional yoga session. He aligns his self with the druids and yet states he is open and fluid in his practices.

Currently Morfran is employed as an architectural designer. However, for some time he has wanted to move into a psychotherapy career. He shared *I know . . . in my life I've kind of felt stuck. . . . I'm working in a profession that I really don't want to be a part of anymore, I'm just hanging in there, and I'll come home at the end of the day and I'll just feel really tired.*

Referring back to his breathwork experience, Morfran shared that *on the plane trip over, like a day or two before. . . . I took a nonstop flight from Boston to Heathrow. . . . I had that same sensation where I couldn't sit still. . . . It was almost like a precursor of what was coming up. I was sitting and I just couldn't keep my legs still. I had to get up and stretch and walk around. It was one of those breathworks that I thought about it a lot because it was so difficult to be around. I've had a lot of the real visual breathwork where there's a story line. . . . I can definitely tie it to something happening in my life. But this one, it's more subtle . . . even more energetic. . . . The experience itself wasn't, didn't have a biological or historical connection to my history, which I can try to think about the events in my life that have been similar to that but it's not really that direct. There's no story line to it.*

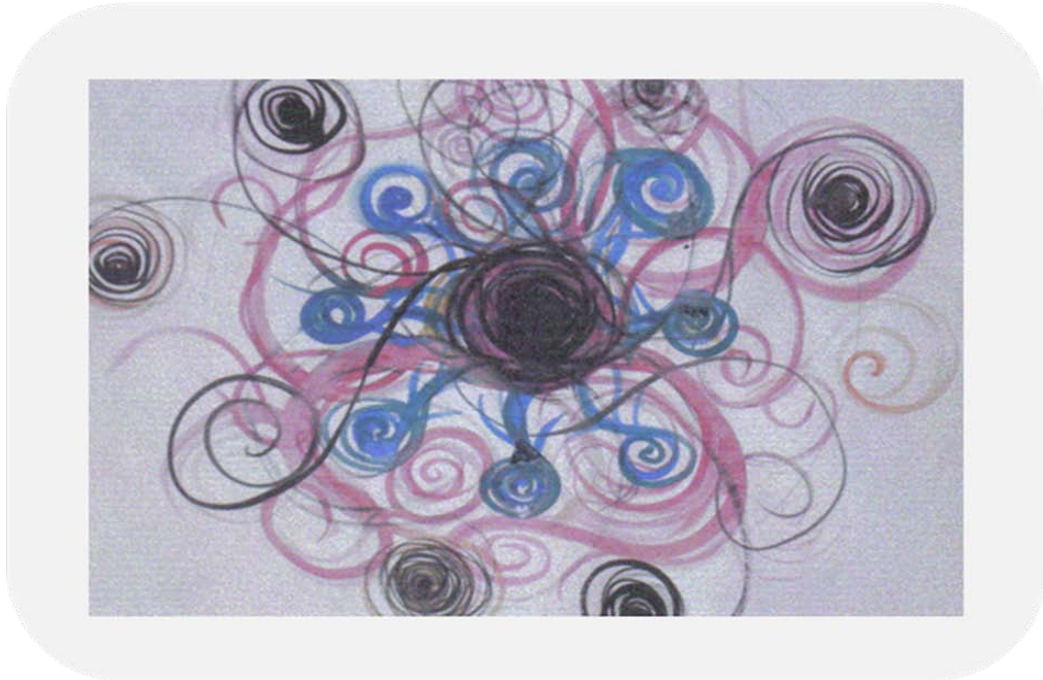


Figure 6. Morfran's Mandala—Floating.

As to the act of creating his mandala, Morfran reflected that *it was very quick. . . . I just grabbed the colors I needed . . . and I didn't really think about it too much . . . it just came out very naturally. It's very spatial to me. Like a map of my experience . . . like you're floating in the room. . . . I was explaining how I was having that kind of light, floaty feeling. And you could almost see me moving through the space and everywhere there was like a wiggly colored thing, it was like wherever I had moved into that space I became really flopping around like a fish feeling. And then I moved to these dark swirly areas and that's where . . . dropped out of the universe for a while. . . . this kind of childlike excitement, the energy part and then with coming out of the black hole. . . . That's when I started feeling a little sad and depressed I've had that experience before and it usually brings up a lot of kind of feeling of isolation and loneliness. That's [the little red squiggly things in between] sort of like the childhood excitement. I was . . . oscillating back and forth. . . at the very end of it I just felt very calm.*

Chauncey

Chauncey is a 52-year-old Caucasian female living with a life Partner. Prior to her retirement, her occupation as a physician put into use her medical degree. On a regular basis she practices meditation and ngondro and enjoys traveling.

The Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat Chauncey attended was held at the Hans Ruedi Giger museum in Gruyeres Switzerland. Giger is a surrealist painter, sculptor and set designer used in the movie Alien. In the context of Holotropic Breathwork™ retreats, Grof uses Giger's art as examples of possible birth matrix experiences. In discussing the retreat setting, Chauncey said, *It was surprisingly . . . a mellow breathwork, I don't know, in a sense for me . . . which is so weird because you can't put an expectation on it. Everyone was like, 'Oh, you're going to Giger [an artist], ooh, it'll be terrifying' . . . all of this art stuff, and I'm like, 'oh, well . . . it was really pretty cool'. . . I love wandering around the [Giger] museum.*

Regarding her experience arising out of the breathwork session, Chauncey shared *I will say there is one little unique thing about it that seemed interesting. It seems like I moved forward in time. . . . These purple eyes in the . . . mandala. . . when we watched the Vicarious video by Alex Gray, the artist, it was . . . 'oh, those were the eyes.' I had drawn the eyes previously and saw the video three hours later. . . . I've never done that before. It seemed like a—I don't know—a time shift of some [kind]. Well, the idea that you could see into the future almost and draw it in advance. . . . I don't draw something and then see it later . . . 'oh, so weird, I drew that, I just drew that.' I mean it seems like I had a lot of synchronicity with breathwork. . . . I used to have some synchronicity experiences, but I remember after one breathwork, the synchronicities really piled up.*



Figure 7. Chauncey's Mandala—Energy Pattern.

In reference to her mandala, Chauncey stated *that blob at the top feels energetic to me. That's why it's such a weird thing. It sort of feels like an energy pattern to me. And I guess it's on the top because it feels like body-wise it's at the top of my body more. It seemed like it started at Taos. I don't know. It's not strong enough to be a Kundalini awakening according to everything I've ever heard, but I feel like energetic things are going on a lot with breathwork now for me. So it feels like, I don't know. And I'm not sure about the chakra colors but I looked at it and I went—'oh, that's kind of weird', because I know it's sort of throat and purple and it sort of is the color of the chakras. With a little solar plexus yellow blazed in around the sides. . . . It wasn't so physically located anymore, it was sort of upper body-ish, head, upper body; all over sort of upper body-ish, just sort of energeticky, I mean I guess with the breathing, I didn't seem like I had very definite . . . end of my body boundaries.*

Adam

Adam is a single 60-year-old Caucasian male living in Arizona with his dog. He works as a bricklayer and holds a Bachelor of Arts. He has experienced 30 breathwork sessions. Meditation is his main spiritual practice. However, Adam added that *since I got in breathwork . . . it was just the most rewarding thing I had ever found. . . . That's my main work . . . it's difficult to communicate to people when people ask me, 'What are you doing?' Living (laughs).* Reflecting on his breathwork session and referring to his left shoulder, he shared, *I asked somebody to put pressure on . . . what I call my 'Ow Mommy' . . . I have memories of that 'cause as a little child, my mother, you know, pinching me or doing something. . . . I just went into this 'I don't know, Mommy, I don't know'—this little child place 'I don't know why, I don't know, I don't know, I don't know, I don't know' . . . the pain released itself and . . . I suddenly became . . . the warrior . . . a full and complete other personality. And I could see why my mother wouldn't put up with that, because he [the warrior] knew what he wanted . . . It was a wonderful feeling and it still is. My dog loves him [the warrior]. I'll sit here and let him talk to my dog and my dog just rolls over and thoroughly loves this guy. My dog definitely senses that part. It feels very intimate for me, and I recognize my dog's recognition of that. Of course she's much more sensitive to all of that than I am, my ego-self . . . his [the warrior's] name is . . . Akchui—sounds like Ak-chwi. I had just one image of this Mongolian type . . . the sword . . . the leather outfit and he's riding a horse, and he's out in the middle of nowhere. . . . And if you look at the mandala, it's a three dimensional. . . . He's a three-dimensional person. Full and whole and complete. It's a mirror that is multi-dimensional. . . . I'm struck . . . by the separation and the unity of it.*



Figure 8. Adam's Mandala—AkChui.

Adam continued to describe his mandala saying, *The colors are separate . . . it's a sphere, where all the energies are blending in harmony . . . the centerpiece of my map of myself is Jung's Four Functions. The association of separation . . . the placement on the colors. . . . There was the artist . . . Akchui, doing his thing very surely. And there was this separate space of the observation . . . the structure of the mandala . . . it's added another dimension to myself. . . . Something in the center of me jumped off the page and became consolidated . . . the red is the fire and energy of life, and the . . . yellow and green: the green is creative in a growing way, yellow is creative in a brightness way. And blue is her . . . water and flowing and life. And they feel as if they're flowing rather than any kind of opposition. . . . It has a part of me that recognizes all those things, and it's a harmony, and understands the harmony of the colors, of their relationship to each other, of the different energies that they represent . . . It really feels solid. It's as if I'd jumped off the page. Something in the center of me jumped off the page and became consolidated.*

Lena

Lena, a Caucasian North American single female, is 52 years old and shared that she has completed over 80 Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions. Her profession is Community Organizer, and she has a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Regular meditation is important to Lena, and she recently moved from an urban environment to a more rural setting. She shared, *I've been wanting to move for while, and I didn't really know where I wanted to move to out here. I couldn't figure it out from the internet. And so I had visited . . . and I liked it. And I thought it would give me an opportunity to see how far out away from a town I wanted to live. . . . I thought it would be kind of quiet. . . . It's very interesting, because the community here is very active in a lot of things. . . . I thought I would spend a whole lot more time outside, and I'm spending a lot of time going to meetings and doing stuff on the internet. . . . It's an interesting community. . . . But I guess it's like any small town . . . folks have very strong personalities, and so I still have this learning curve. I'm still meeting people and seeing how they like to work on things and how they like to get things done. . . . And so I'm still digesting it . . . and sometimes when I'm digesting things, I'm not in the most upbeat of moods until I kind of get, 'Oh, oh, okay, all right—I get that.' It's just like unbelievably pretty. So, that's really wonderful . . . it's really possible to just completely slow down if you want to . . . the house that I rented is in . . . a little pinyon pine forest, and not too far down the hill from me it gets flat and there's rabbit brush . . . it's a high alpine valley . . . it's surrounded on all sides by mountains. Right down at the bottom it kind of flows down—the Rio Grande kind of flows down that way. I think one reason why a lot of people come here . . . there's many spiritual communities.*



Figure 9. Lena's Mandala—Three Worlds in Balance.

In pointing out aspects of her mandala Lena explained, *that's really more how I felt at the end of the breathwork. . . . I had this . . . physically reducing down. . . . I felt like a baby wrapped up, but it flashed to . . . Native American or . . . Mesoamerican . . . some kind of other . . . being that would be bound. . . . The main image in the center is this feeling afterwards of just everything being in balance and moving and flow . . . it's like the three worlds in balance . . . the purple . . . may have some difficult aspects to it, but it has a fruitful aspect to it as well. And the green is definitely being alive . . . there's an openness and a wildness to it . . . the blue is like really opening all the way out into the universe . . . it opens up my head . . . the rest of my body. . . . The green . . . it's really sort of the center trunk part of my body, but it's also in my legs and my feet, too, and my shoulders. . . . The red's definitely coming up the base of my spine. . . . It's after the struggling and pushing that I get to the center image—to the opening up aspect.*

John Utah

Although he completed his BA in Philosophy, John Utah works in the Information Technology industry in a technical role. He is a single 26-year-old Caucasian male of Irish/English mix. He reported he has had nine previous Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions and meditates on a regular basis.

About his life John Utah commented, *I've been reading . . . that's been going on in my life for the past year and a half. . . No real major life event changes in that time period but . . . there were decisions made . . . like buying . . . a house . . . I contemplated a lot of my non-commitments to spirituality. . . . At the same time I was able to recognize . . . I've gained over that period of time. . . . I'm very into environmentalism. I was . . . raised with it, so it's kind of something that's always been in my head. I'm active in a river cleanup group in the area. They're people I kind of grew up with so I've just helped to pitch in a lot of hours to work with them on cleaning up the river . . . it's a very successful group. They get grants and they had to pull a large amount of tires out of the river, in this river that actually runs pretty close to my house. . . . So it's nice, it's really nice because it's one watershed and everybody works on it. . . . I try to really eat in kind of a conscious way, I try not to really eat horrible stuff all the time. . . . I personally think breathwork has a large role to play in feeding the human species on earth. . . I think . . . some kind of a conflict between being a modern person and actually being, wanting to be a little bit more archaic or green . . . a conflict I live with on a daily basis.*



Figure 10. John Utah's Mandala—Scorpio Rising.

Describing aspects of his mandala, John Utah revealed *the green . . . pictures some of my environmentalism . . . the green building, the pine tree is there. I'm not sure about the black edge . . . generally speaking means like green building. I like forests . . . The stream would probably just complement that, a stream . . . part of water . . . the sun was there. . . . I put sunglasses on the sun. . . a funny thing. . . the flagpole now . . . the Scorpio sign of the Zodiac, I'm a Scorpio. . . . The flag's red because that's kind of the color for Scorpio. Same thing with the triangle on top. . . . I felt like it was. . . . here I am kind of thing. So like here's my flag, here I am, here's my mandala, like this mandala is part of me. . . . I feel like I repress any kind of pride . . . any kind of happiness . . . keeping everything I do secret. . . . [It's an] astrological reference. . . . And the black oval—my breathwork sessions consistently seem to deal with slipping into the void. . . . going away and then coming back.*

Leoness

Born and raised in Canada, Leoness is a married, 25-year-old, Austrian, Swedish, and British Caucasian. She stated that she has completed two previous Breathwork sessions. With regard to her occupation, she noted she is a performer and currently is *in the movies, so I got a job as a stand-in . . . the stand-in is the person who stands in the shot while they set up lighting, camera, angles, rehearse things and things before the actor comes in. So, full time job for the next 3 months, so 12 hour days. . . . I've been doing movie work for 5 years. I definitely prefer it to any other job.*

Referring to what she was dealing with going into and during the retreat, Leoness expressed *that losing a parent and being young . . . you can only deal with it in bits and pieces. . . . you can only deal with as much as you can deal with, but also when there's an environment like this [the retreat], where it's safe. . . . You can do it . . . you're not going to fly apart, you're safe. . . . So that, to me, is just invaluable . . . if I had been by myself, that right there would have convinced me it is too big, I can't do it, and shut down . . . being a visual and an artist, I had all pictures in my head of how it must have been and it's so horrifying and having nightmares all the time. So . . . really took the darkness out of it, and I cleared a whole bunch of the darkness and was able to actually put him in the light, see him as this light, see him as healed now and free. . . . And then lots of conventional therapy to just understand more that it, because kind of like the little girl in me that was just, like, you know, this doesn't happen to me—my dad—like this kind of thing isn't possible, and I think I was just screaming, 'no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no', for, like, half an hour. . . . I'm not going to accept it—it's not happening. . . . That's my—this is clearly my journey. I know that there's . . . ways of freeing yourself from it.*



Figure 11. Leoness' Mandala—Letting Out the Pain and Rage.

Revealing the elements of her mandala, Leoness explained that *the figure in the middle is definitely me. I really wanted to express kind of the power that I was experiencing in my body, but just letting out the rage, the pain, everything. And I felt really, really powerful, but I had these two grounded . . . that's like this purple and the blue—just really cool, calm, centered male and female energies . . . the purple tree is the feminine, so it's the flowers and the blue tree was the male, so the more kind of gnarled and strong . . . And this warm fuzzy baby up in the middle . . . the symbol of the trees, 'cause they're really grounded into the earth, and moving . . . but also flexible enough to be what I need them to be. That would be the symbolism of why I used the trees. . . . And then the fetus was being very happy and protected up there . . . the red is the very grounded . . . love/hate/power energy. . . . I wanted to really capture for me the essence was the roots holding my arms down and that kind of just image of that protection. I think mandalas are super important . . . remembering why you did it.*

Mooranth

Being born in the United States was not a guarantee that Mooranth would ever feel at home in the United States. He tried making it his home through most of his adult years but came to feel Germany was more suitable to him and now lives there. He said *there was the kind of searching in America. . . is there a place here for me? And the simple answer was no. But I'm very happy I'm in Germany.* Mooranth identifies himself as a West European. He is a married, 62 year old male, who has completed 4 years of university level course work and works as a management consultant. His spiritual practices include Vipassana meditation, constellation work, walking in the forest, and sitting by the fire.

About his current life events, Mooranth conveyed *I'm in the middle of a writing retreat. Every year I take a couple or 3 weeks to work on my novel. I'm trying to finish it up now. . . . I've been doing this for some years. So that's an exciting time and I've always before . . . gone away some place to Italy or the Spanish coast or someplace, but we have a . . . guest apartment in our house and so I've moved into that for a few weeks and it seems to be working fine. It's actually inspired from breathwork, about . . . a series of experiences in breathworks that were very strong and seemed to have to do with historical events . . . like a puzzle as to what was going on in these experiences because I didn't usually understand them. But I kept a lot of notes and pictures and such and then gradually I pieced together a specific kind of story involving two people . . . it was a neat story. And so I've been working now for 10 years to write it . . . what the characters experience in terms of systemic patterns . . . [the brother] carries the guilt for having destroyed the whole tribe.*



Figure 12. Mooranth's Mandala—Birth of the Spirit.

Turning to his mandala, Mooranth shared that *even though in the mandala . . . the little figure in the middle is fetus-like, it was like a new kind of creature . . . supporting the birth of something else but at the same time, since I was a member of that thing or somehow connected with it. . . . What I actually felt like was being born was the first American. And his name is Obama . . . it was kind of a birth of the spirit. . . . I believe the angelic world is silver . . . the blue is . . . male principle and the green is the female principle . . . the outer blue is . . . this created universe . . . the green is actually in the center and protected by it . . . the more intense green in the center is . . . the earth womb . . . the different outer circles, those would be different for people . . . the orange, for example, are all the sort of Mongolian, Tibetan, high desert people . . . the brown, the Australian . . . the blue are the European. The green would be the South Americans . . . the numbers are very important . . . sacred geometry.*

Ann

At the time of our interview, Ann had experienced 20 Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions. She is a 50-year-old, Caucasian woman living with her partner in the eastern United States. For 25 years she worked as a fundraiser but is now doing some consulting and project work. Educationally, in 1982, she graduated with a BS in Journalism. She clarified that although raised a Catholic, now her daily spiritual practice is to be consciously aware of her actions, thoughts, and words. In support of this practice she stated that *for me, it's been a process of letting go and surrendering, like, letting go of past experiences and past, if you will, frameworks that don't work for me anymore. And I think that there's definitely more of a willingness on my part to do that really because of a lot of the work that I've done. And I'm doing a lot more meditation. Every year for the past 4 years I've been going away for a 10-day silent vipassana meditation. . . . I actually have a really solid practice; we meditate for an hour every morning, and . . . a little bit before we go to bed. . . . Sitting through [the] lectures . . . I've, in the past, had trouble learning in the traditional sense . . . I found myself just getting really excited about that concept . . . I can learn, I just am learning because of being taught in a different way and this is a subject matter that's really interesting to me. . . . I felt that enthusiasm about this rediscovery about myself. . . . I was really thirsty for that knowledge . . . also the experience of helping with the body work and realizing that I could be good at that as well and contribute in a really meaningful way. . . . I've actually been doing some hospice volunteer work, and it did feel similar in that . . . I have felt that I want to work . . . in the healing profession in some way . . . helping people. . . . It really resonated with me that that's what doing this work is.*



Figure 13. Ann's Mandala—The Feeling of My Experience.

Reflecting on her mandala, Ann stated *it accurately describes or shows really more the feeling that I had in that experience, and less the look of it . . . there were a lot of browns that I sensed and that I saw . . . a lot of feeling in them . . . me [in the box] . . . that's how I felt after I had worked through my own birth . . . that picture is of me inside of the framework that was holding me up . . . this wasn't necessary for it to be there anymore, and it wasn't appropriate, because it's a framework that . . . hasn't really served me well. Maybe it used to, but it no longer does. . . . I drew what I envisioned I was experiencing moving through the [birth] canal. . . . It was kind of mucky . . . there was sort of a brown color . . . but then there were all these streams of other colors. . . . I really didn't have a particular color in mind; I just really found myself grabbing . . . for different pastels and other crayons to use. I was really glad to have spent more conscious time with it . . . it felt more meaningful for me . . . it's also prompted me to want to . . . hang up all of my mandalas up to see if there are parallels through them.*

Michael

Michael is a 54-year-old Caucasian male living with his partner in the United States. He graduated with a Master of Arts degree and his current profession is life coach and goldsmith. Reflecting on his interest in research he commented, *I had been considering doing some serious . . . real strong—I don't know how to describe it—research with nonordinary state of consciousness experiences, but there's so much involved, as you know . . . the research parameters, not tainting it . . . a control group as well.* He seemed to reveal an underlying motivation when he shared that *the bigger question . . . when I do anything [is] what's the larger . . . real purpose of this? What's the benefit of this in the long term—beyond having an experience?* Aside from his daily meditation and yoga practice, Michael has engaged in at least 20 Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions. He states that he has *found over time, I'm really drawn to the music [in the session] . . . fairly quickly. And it can really be rewarding to do so. But I also find that I fairly quickly exhaust myself physically in that process, and then really don't have the energy or the desire or the will to keep the breathing going. . . it becomes almost like a choice at that point. . . . Often in breathwork experiences is really feeling as though there's something musical trapped inside of me that I haven't found a way to fully bring out. As a kid I always wanted to play a musical instrument, but never—I tried drums, guitar, bass guitar . . . took lessons, but nothing ever amounted from that, but it's still, there's something there . . . xylophone might be the thing to try. Yeah, I thought about harmonicas. I like harmonica 'cause it can fit in my pocket. A little hard to [put a xylophone] in your pocket. . . . I'm getting way ahead of myself here, I haven't even tried a xylophone.*



Figure 14. Michael's Mandala—Sharing Myself with Life.

Referring to his mandala, Michael relayed *that in a momentary flash [was] . . . this image . . . a young woman [that triggered memories of a movie where the woman] was confronting . . . the leader of the dark side . . . suddenly he revealed himself . . . she had to realize she was in way over her head . . . [she got] dressed up to meet with this guy and hopefully . . . have some control over the situation . . . suddenly he reveals himself. He becomes this horned devil . . . represented the idea of facing everything and facing our . . . self and the illusion that we have some kind of real control over our lives. . . . Reflections of her own face [is] . . . the only way out is to . . . see our own reflection. . . . I was holding the door open, and inviting this long line of people or beings in. . . . I had this sense of every aspect of myself and every other self that's ever existed. . . . [Another image was of] inviting everyone and everything into my bed. . . even deeper into life . . . to kind of share myself with all of life.*

Pseudoswami

Pseudoswami is a single, 58-year-old Caucasian male living on the west coast of the United States in what can be referred to as the rural, gold country. He explained that *my relationship to nature is basically what I've been working on. . . that's kind of a Taoist tradition, which I would probably consider myself to be associated with than anything else. . . the central core of that teaching is to know your place in nature and to observe nature and then from your observations figure out the best course of action as a human being by observing nature.* Once a restaurateur and purveyor of Tofu, he is now trying his hand at metal craft. He elaborated stating he is *apprenticing with an ornamental iron worker—fences, gates and sculptures—that kind of thing. And I'm just learning. . . . People say I should be a counselor. . . . When I was in the tofu business, people would come down with their marital problems and problems, and while I cooked. It was so routine after 20 something years that I could do that and talk intimately with people at the same time, and they go—you should be a counselor.*

Looking at his mandala Pseudoswami explained, *the inner circle, within the circle, is the vision that I had in the breathwork. . . . The vision was that tall egg-like figure on the left and then over on the right there was what you see there. But all this takes place in a desert. And the figure in the middle was . . . in my vision . . . me crawling through the desert. And then . . . energy coming from the egg-like figure towards me, but I had just been through this gate that was standing all by itself in the desert, and I was crawling through it and I was crawling toward that egg-figure. And during the vision . . . I remember this is . . . that universal female figure, and it made me just really joyous.*



Figure 15. Pseudoswami's Mandala—Help from the Divine Female.

Continuing with the reflection on his mandala, Pseudoswami said *I felt some sort of connection, because . . . it was associated with . . . shamanism . . . depicted on the cave walls. . . . That scorpion-like figure—that's me trying to draw myself crawling through the desert, and then that's what ended up coming up . . . reaching out of the female figure to me in the desert . . . gives me hope. . . . I've been through the gate. . . . I'm on my way somewhere, and that the divine female is . . . helping me along. . . . The laughing man . . . depicts how I was feeling at the time . . . without breath, we aren't anything. . . . You're totally conscious before the breath, but the breath . . . connects you to outside world or some other world . . . breath is a demarcation between . . . pre-pure consciousness . . . when you're in the womb and then this outside world. The diamond is . . . the ultimate, the premium, the shiny, you know, most valued. So there it is in the breathwork. The breathwork is like the diamond for me—of all the things that I'm doing, it's kind of like the diamond.*

Summary

To conduct this study, these 15 individuals were interviewed by the researcher. The purpose was to inquire into and provide a microscopic view of what each person came across during their breathwork sessions and integral mandala artwork creation during a week-long GTT Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat. Thus, prior to taking part in this study, each participant had already attended a retreat.

Following the interview process for all 15 participants, a structured qualitative thematic analysis of the interview provides us with a deeper understanding of those experiences. In Chapter 4, the researcher's findings resulting from the analysis revealed recurring meaningful themes between the various interviews. Thus, in Chapter 4 the unifying factors of the participant's experience were the focus. However, in this chapter the uniqueness of the individual, the experience, and the expression of the experience through the mandala artwork is preserved. The unique qualities of the individual and the process is not only kept intact, but honored and acknowledged as sacred. In the next chapter, both the findings from Chapter 4 and the singular qualities of the individual's mandala artwork creation presented in this Chapter 5 are discussed in light of the current literature and research, the reflections of the Resonance Panel, and the researcher's preliminary lenses.

Chapter 6: The Returning and Integrative Arcs of Cycles 4 and 5

O lamps of fiery lure, in whose shining transparency the deep cavern of the
senses, blind and obscure, warmth and light, with strange flares, gives with
the lover's caresses!

—St. John of the Cross (trans. 1980, p. 93)

All that has gone before this chapter has laid a foundation for and pathway to the main purpose of this study—to better understand the experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork. In Chapter 6, features of the participant are noted and the findings discussed. The final two phases of the Intuitive Inquiry Method, Cycles 4 and 5, are applied in support of the purpose of this study. In Cycle 4, the researcher's preliminary lenses from Chapter 3 are revisited and revised based on the findings revealed in Chapter 4 and the mandala artwork displayed in Chapter 5. Next, in Cycle 5, the current literature and relevant research is integrated with the findings. Moreover, an update of current, relevant research is presented. The limitations and delimitations of this study are explicated, along with its verification and reliability factors. Finally, recommendations for future research and applications for Holotropic Breathwork™ and mandala artwork are suggested. With regard to the findings, it is important to note that the intent of this study is to explore and understand the topic and not to prove the technique's efficacy.

Participant Characteristics

Some generalizations about the participants of this study can be inferred from the interviews and demographics data collection. The participants are well-educated, intelligent, and high-functioning individuals. Their ages, residency, and occupations vary. However, there is an underlying common interest in spirituality and self-development that appears to influence their life choices. This dedication and commitment is seen

through their decisions on where to live, how to live, and career changes, such as the choice to leave lucrative careers in government or business for counseling or becoming Holotropic Breathwork™ facilitators. The following excerpts from three participant interviews provide substantiation for my inferences.

I'm a kind of a personal representative but there has been a kind of a deep searching in America that is—are there Americans actually or are there really only these transplanted people that are totally overcome by consumer culture and simple pawns of the large corporations, advertising and so forth? . . . I worked in Washington after the military. And worked in the Pentagon and did some interesting things there. I feel like I kind of knew. . . I moved into the house where I live now, in 1997, it was my 33rd move in my life. . . . So there was the kind of searching in America, you know, is there a place here for me. And the simple answer was no. But I'm very happy I'm in Germany. So you could say that the peak of the experience was kind of a spirit birth of something that I wasn't sure what was, that had to do with the earth and it had to do with the ancestors of the different first peoples you might say. (Mooranth)

I learned a lot about business. . . Which is actually coming in handy when I think of doing my own sort of. . . career and counseling and the business end of things I understand completely. (Ishad)

I had anticipated building a small retreat center, and so now this property that we bought next door will just be that retreat. (Jane)

Additionally, 14 of the 15 participants shared they are involved in a religion or spiritual work and meditate regularly. One person chose to not reveal her preferences or practices when responding to the demographics questionnaire (Appendix G). The commitment to spiritual work can also be seen in the fact that once they committed to taking part in this study, there was no attrition. Even with their busy schedules in this modern world, everyone who volunteered and qualified joined and completed this study. Also, it is interesting that 53% of the participants of this study are male. Currently the Holotropic™ Breathwork community website has 595 members listed. Out of the total 287 (48%) are listed as male, 299 (50%) as female, and 9 (2%) did not specify. The percentage of this

study's participants are similar to the gender participation in the Holotropic Breathwork™ community website. In general, the gender split of this study agrees with the statistical outcome of other studies that show “results of studies in which there was no reliable difference in volunteering rate between males and females” (Rosenthal and Rosnow, 1975, p. 18). This study's gender demographics contradicts the norm as does the attendance of men at Holotropic Breathwork™ retreats.

Overview of the Findings

The findings that emerged out of the qualitative thematic analysis explicated in Chapter 4 were classified under two categories: central themes and subset themes. The two main themes are seen as umbrella processes arising out of participation in the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork—self-actualization and self-healing. For the purposes of this study, when the terms for these two themes are used it indicates a process toward self-actualization or self-healing rather than a full realization of the state. The percentage of participants' experiences that qualified under the two central themes is self-actualization, 73% and self-healing, 53%.

Emerging out of the qualitative thematic analysis (QTA) procedure, the subset themes appeared to be facets that supported, affected or contributed to the two central themes—the process of self-actualization and self-healing. The subset theme and the percentage of responses for each is (a) sensation, 80% (physical aspect, 80%; mental acumen, 67%; emotional aspect, 60%); (b) nonordinary state of consciousness, 80%; (c) potential, 60%; (d) fulfillment, 53%; (e) archetypal symbol, 53%; (f) unavailable parts of self, 47%; (g) surrender, 40%; (h) surprise, 33%; (i) observer, 33%; (j) struggle, 20%; (k) emptiness, 13%; and (l) knowledge, 13%. The themes and subset themes were not chosen

just because of the quantity of responses. The selection was also based on the meaning and substantiation these characteristics appeared to contribute to the two central themes—the self-actualization and self-healing processes.

Cycle 4—Transforming and Refining the Lenses

Reflecting back on the main points of the five cycles of Anderson's (2007) Intuitive Inquiry method, the various phases consist of (a) Cycle 1, clarifying the topic; (b) Cycle 2, the researcher establishes her preliminary, interpretive lenses; (c) Cycle 3, literature review, data collection, and the qualitative thematic analysis of the data; (d) Cycle 4, refining Cycle 2 lenses based on the data analysis interpretation and the literature review; and (e) Cycle 5, integrating the findings. Cycles 4 and 5 are the returning arcs that pull together the data from Cycles 1 through 3 to complete the Intuitive Inquiry hermeneutic process. Through the completion of the cycles a deepening of the understanding of the experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ and its integral mandala artwork emerges.

The returning arc of Intuitive Inquiry's Cycle 4 has the researcher return to Cycle 1 where she had elucidated her reasons for choosing her topic. In Cycle 1, the researcher shared one of her experiences arising out of a Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat where the symbol of the peacock touched into and opened the researcher's heart. This experience revealed a primordial light of consciousness that radiated throughout her body and mind. Thus, the symbol of the peacock became a guiding star for the choice of topics and her dissertation process that has continued to fuel her passion. In Cycle 4, the researcher illuminates the how this guidance has taken form through her research and findings. In the light of this cycle, the researcher clarifies the transformation of her preliminary

lenses. Moreover, through this process she reveals how she has changed and reflects the meaningfulness and merit of the research. Hence, the “efficacy value refers to the capacity of a study and its report as a whole to give more value to one’s own life” (Anderson, 2004, p. 333).

The Intuitive Inquiry method has provided a context to explore experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and its integral mandala artwork to expand our understanding of it. For the researcher, the process resulted in not only a shift in understanding but a deepening appreciation for this technique, what it supports in an individual, and the sacredness of the participants’ personal journeys. Moreover, the research method facilitated the organization and accounting for recurring, meaningful themes. For purposes of reflection, the lenses set forth in Chapter 3 are now relisted.

1. The Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork work together to create a powerful technique to access and integrate NOSC. By accessing NOSC we access parts of our Self that normally are not available to us. By accessing normally unavailable parts of our Self we move toward a more authentic, fulfilling, and self-actualized life.
2. Accessing NOSC through Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork is a healing process. This healing process seems to be integral to the realization of one’s potential and journey toward self-actualization.
3. Mandala artwork appears to be a sacred instrument in and of itself holding illuminative and integrative qualities.

4. Mandala artwork seems to be most powerful when used in conjunction with method or technique that allows an individual to access NOSC. The method may or may not be the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique.
5. Mandala artwork seems to be particularly useful in bringing NOSC experiences to life, especially in comparison to the use of language only.
6. Continued exposure to mandala artwork after the initial experience of NOSC may provide a distinct bridge to continuing and deepening the experience of NOSC.
7. The wounding of the soul may be seen as the split in living a life not aligned with the true Self.
8. Self-actualization may be seen as the direct contact with the ontological presence of the soul and living life from that place.
9. Self-actualization may be seen as an ongoing, dynamic process that does not have a fixed goal or agenda.
10. Human beings seem to have an innate desire and right to a self-actualized life. Goodness and meaning come out of following that desire and a realization of that right.
11. The healing experience of NOSC seems to become optimized when sensed on all levels of the human soul, which include the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.
12. An archetypal symbol gains its potency because it contains sacred energy of the true Self versus the ego centric self.
13. Archetypal symbols may be revealed in the experience of NOSC.

14. The mandala itself is not only an archetypal symbol but a symbol of such potency that it may organize and integrate other archetypal symbols.
15. Sharing the experience of NOSC with others who have experienced NOSC may be a noteworthy component in normalizing and integrating the experience.
16. Some form of surrender to the mystery and truly being with the unknown appear to be essential aspects needed for moving toward self-actualization.
17. The surprise factor seems to be a characteristic of the process toward self-actualization. Hence, humility, faith, resilience, curiosity, self-acceptance, and courage appear to be helpful qualities when venturing into the journey toward self-actualization.
18. The transpersonal transcends age and cultural and gender differences. Hence, similar experiences might be seen across transpersonal experiencers with these differences.

A realization of the breadth of human individuality is the most striking shift in my perspective of experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique affecting the transformation of my list of preliminary lenses. In Tables 15 through 18 the synthesis, distillation and conversion of the preliminary lenses are designated as New, Change, or Seed Lenses. The New Lenses represent an evolution from the preliminary lenses. Change Lenses are created for preliminary lenses that were altered or changed. The Seed Lenses are distinct from the preliminary lense and would need further research for verification.

As the various themes were revealed, the uniqueness of each person's journey jumped out at me like the beauty of a desert sunset with no two exactly alike. Whereas the aspect of surrender was pivotal to one participant's experience, the theme of struggle was paramount to another. I wondered if I could revise the lenses to reflect the profundity that haunted my reflection of the preliminary lenses conveyed in mere words and overriding statements.

In the revisiting of my first lens I noted that the QTA revealed that the *Holotropic Breathwork™ technique can provide access to NOSC*. Like LSD, Holotropic Breathwork™ can act as “an unspecified amplifier of mental processes that brings to the surface various elements from the depth of the unconscious” (Grof, 1996, p. 6). Additionally, it appears that the experience may lead to reconnecting with normally *unavailable parts of the self*. It may also result in a *more authentic, fulfilling and self-actualized life*. I asked myself, what does this first lens mean in terms of the findings that emerged from the participant interviews? Each individual's expression of his or her experience of NOSC and what manifested as a result was uniquely his or her own. Each tapestry of experience contained a rich variation of an inner process that reflects a depth of being seemingly inexpressible by words or deeds alone. Yet the embodiment of the presence of the experience seemed to beg manifestation through the interviews and the mandala artwork. I also wondered about the subset themes and how these aspects appeared as important contributions to the participant entering into the experience of NOSC. The themes of surrender, emptiness, struggle, and observer all point to qualities that encouraged the experience of accessing NOSC and the rich world of the person's being. Thus, in Table 15, the preliminary lense, number 1, is revised while taking lense

numbers 8, 9, 10, and 16 into consideration. The effect of the facets of individuality on the experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ is a prominent feature in the New and Change Lenses.

Table 15

Cycle 4: New and Change Lenses to Preliminary Lense Numbers 1, 8, 9, 10, and 16

Lens type	Description
New	<p>The attributes people bring with them into a Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat affect whether NOSC is accessed and the quality of their experiences.</p> <p>The path into the self-actualization process may include physical, emotional, and mental aspects but can also lead to the access of the depth of a person's being in its many forms.</p> <p>A person's experience of him- or herself and the configuration of that experience are completely unique and impossible to replicate.</p> <p>The attributes of surrender, emptiness, struggle and observing are conducive to entering into NOSC and integrating the resulting experiences.</p>
Change	<p>Depending upon a person's orientation, the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork can work together to access and integrate NOSC.</p> <p>The characteristics and orientation of the person profoundly affect whether and how access to NOSC affects their access to normally unavailable parts of the self and the outcome of that connection.</p> <p>Development of the qualities of surrender, observer, emptiness, and the capacity for dealing with struggle may affect whether the experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork lead to a more authentic, fulfilling, and self-actualized life.</p>

The second central theme that emerged out of the QTA was that of *self-healing*.

This process is reflected in the second and eleventh lenses thus providing substantiation

for my viewpoint regarding *healing*. However, it seemed to me that to provide a more complete picture of the self-healing process, a person's orientation and readiness needs to be taken into consideration. Again, my original lenses did not take into consideration the unique tapestry of the person they brought with them into the retreat. I also wondered what made the experience feel as though some part of them was healed. About half of the participants or 53% referred directly to *self-healing* whereas 80% of the participants reported access to *NOSC*. This finding could indicate access to *NOSC* does enhance the prospect for self-healing. However, more studies would be needed to substantiate these findings.

Table 16 enumerates the New and Change Lenses to preliminary lens numbers 2, 7, 11, 12, and 13. The transformation of these lenses reflect some interesting outcomes in the qualitative thematic analysis of *sensation*, 80%; *potential*, 60%; *fulfillment*, 53%; *archetypal symbol*, 53%; and *knowledge*, 13%. These particular themes and the percentage of responses made me wonder about the correlation and interrelationship between these aspects. This study is not designed to look at such relationships, but it does allow for my lens to be adjusted. In looking at these results, I would be inclined to state that experiencing sensation or sensations might trigger self-healing depending upon the unique configuration of individual attributes and the timing of the experience. Again, the emerging themes seemed to reveal an effect of an individual's uniqueness and orientation on his or her experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and integral mandala artwork.

Table 16

Cycle 4: New and Change Lenses to Preliminary Lens Numbers 2, 7, 11, 12, and 13

Lens type	Description
New	<p>An important aspect of the self-healing process is how sensation (physical, emotional, and mental acumen) is integrated and processed.</p> <p>When the outcome of entering into NOSC and sensation is processed, in a way that integrates the experience, it can lead to an increase in one's potential, fulfillment and knowledge.</p> <p>To realize its potential, an archetypal symbol must be directly experienced and integrated as the Self on all levels—physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.</p> <p>An archetypal symbol seems to have little realized potency if it remains an unintegrated concept. Yet even if not fully integrated, it may have underlying affects that are not readily apparent.</p> <p>The realization of an archetypal symbol is self-healing and integral to the self-actualization process and can, but may not always, result in a sense of fulfillment.</p>
Change	<p>Depending upon the individual's orientation, accessing NOSC through the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork can lead to self-healing.</p> <p>The realization of one's potential and journey toward self-actualization is the healing process.</p> <p>The archetypal symbol is the potency of the sacred energy of the true Self and not the ego centric self.</p>

The mandala artwork is the focal point of preliminary lens numbers 3, 4, 5, 6, and 14. These preliminary lenses essentially stated that mandala artwork is associated with *Holotropic Breathwork™ technique or other methods is a sacred, integrative, and an archetypal symbol*. Additionally, my viewpoint extended the potency of mandala artwork to any technique that stimulates NOSC and organized and integrated other archetypal

symbols. As displayed in Chapter 5, the richness of each of this study's participants' mandala artwork copies in the revelation of their experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique is apparent as is the effect on the lenses discussed in Table 17.

Remembering certain definitions related to the mandala will be helpful for this part of the discussion. The mandala is a circle. Mandala artwork is defined as a circle with art created in and around the circle. The revisions to and construction of new lenses in Table 17 reflect a deepened and expanded understanding of mandala artwork's potency even when decoupled from the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique.

Table 17

Cycle 4: New and Change Lenses to Preliminary Lens Numbers 3, 4, 5, 6, and 14

Lens type	Description
New	<p>A mandala provided for the use of artistic self-expression has an underlying impact on the creator of the art. The creator may or may not be aware of the impact or its extent, but notice signs of its affect; such as a shift in personal relationships or internal sense of the self.</p> <p>Mandala artwork affects a person on multiple levels—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.</p>
Change	<p>Mandala artwork earns its reputation for being the archetype of wholeness. It is the spiritual, sacred, numinous symbol that illuminates and integrates with an organizing impact even on all other archetypal symbols.</p> <p>The effectiveness and potential of mandala artwork may increase when it is used in continuation with a technique that accesses NOSC and where one is oriented toward spiritual development and self-actualization. However, used in standalone capacity, mandala artwork may also have an impact on the psyche.</p> <p>Mandala artwork can be used as an effective expression of NOSC and a way to remember, reexperience and integrate the self-healing and self-actualizing experiences over time.</p>

Three of my preliminary lenses are yet to be revisited. These are lens numbers 15 (sharing NOSC), 17 (the surprise factor), and 18 (transpersonal transcends demographics). In all three cases I stand by my preliminary lenses. The group sharing component of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique was explicitly omitted in this study. Yet within the context of the interviews, some of the participants mentioned the importance of this component. The surprise factor became one of the subset themes and is discussed more fully in this chapter. The wide range of age and split in gender of the

participants indicated a transcendence of the personal; such as re-experiencing their birth or connecting with archetypes. Although the participants were not necessarily culturally diverse, I retain this lens until further research and evidence supports otherwise.

Table 18 specifies the Seed Lenses that were unanticipated during the establishment of the preliminary lenses. As a result of the findings these Seed Lenses have been newly added and additional research would be needed for their verification. However, the development of my new perspective was directly influenced by the (a) qualitative thematic analysis of the interviews, (b) mandala artwork, (c) relevant literature, and (d) personal experience. Specifically, participants' relayed experiences of the facets of emptiness, the observer, and the revelation and embodiment of knowledge expanded my understanding of the experiences arising out of Holotropic Breathwork™ technique; such as when one participant shared

it was a long, long period of just emptiness that was full, and—a very summer-time feeling of brown and yellow and molasses . . . and just this huge satisfaction with what is. Without thought or thinking about it. Just . . . being (Adam)

Adam's experience created a desire to move into emptiness rather than avoid it. For me, his statement demanded an amazing shift in consciousness and one that goes against consensual reality. In light of this, the compulsion to achieve and be constantly active lost much of its appeal.

Table 18

Cycle 4: Unanticipated Seed Lenses

Seed lenses

The self-actualization process is a practice for the development of human potential in service of the realization of the Self—our divine beingness.

Subtle shifts of awareness as well as incremental jumps in the process may be contributing factors in the process of self-actualization.

Certain techniques, such as the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork, can support the self-actualization process, but the person's orientation and intent paramount in supporting the self-actualization process.

Answers lie in the mystery of the divine and it is the divine within each person that allow us to glimpse at the fleeting answers. The process becomes stagnant when the dynamism is halted by not allowing for new ways of knowing.

Key contributing factors supporting the self-actualization process are the qualities of the observer, emptiness, and new knowledge.

Considering the sometimes challenging aspects of the self-actualization process, the quality of humor, the trickster factor of the journey, may be a fundamental to the opening to loving kindness or the compassion that may be helpful on a path of awakening consciousness.

The qualitative thematic analysis (QTA) revealed recurring themes that supported my preliminary lenses, influenced changes to my original viewpoint, and added to my knowledge base. Working with the themes in light of the lenses revealed the transformation that had transpired through this research process.

Cycle 5—Integrating the Findings and the Literature

In Cycle 5, the themes and subset themes are employed in service of integrating the literature with the New, Change, and Seed Lenses. As enumerated through Tables 15 through 18, the QTA process was pivotal to the transformation of the lenses.

The findings of this study provide substantiation for the premise of Grof's (1988) Holotropic Breathwork™ technique as a method to access NOSC, unavailable parts of the self, and self-healing. A majority of the participants of this study, or 73%, reported experiences related to the *self-actualization*, and 53% relayed experiences of *self-healing*. Access to *NOSC* and *unavailable parts of self*, was reported by 80% and 47% respectively. Moreover, 80% of the participants reported multiple levels of a mixture of aspects of physical, emotional, and mental acumen referred to as the theme *sensation*. *Archetypal symbolism* was reported by 53% of the participants, which corroborates some of Grof's (1988) anecdotal reports and observations (Appendix C). Archetypes are considered to be part of

the *transcendent function*, by which I mean nothing mysterious, but merely a combined function of conscious and unconscious elements . . . we also have creative fantasy, an irrational, instinctive function which alone has the power to supply the will with a content of such a nature that it can unite the opposites. (Jung, 1921/1977, p. 115)

The significance of the *transcendent function* lies in its integrative capacity. The confrontation of seemingly opposite parts of the psyche “generates a tension charged with energy and creates a living third thing . . . a movement out of the suspension between opposites” (Jung, 1960/1981, p. 90). A similar capacity, if not the same, is described by Assagioli (1965) in what he referred to as the “unifying center” (p. 24). He saw this as an aspect of our Self that can “unite the lower with the higher Self. . . in reality a tremendous undertaking. It constitutes a magnificent endeavor, but certainly a long and arduous one, and not everybody is ready for it” (p. 24). The significance of symbol and the collective unconscious are also recognized by both Assagioli and Jung (1959/1990). Jeffrey Miller (2004), a Licensed Psychologist in Palo Alto, California, saw the transcendent function as

“a phenomena ubiquitous to human experience that implicates opposition/duality, liminality, descent, initiation, and transformation” (p. 99). Furthermore, he expanded on this concept by clarifying that

the tendency to separate reality into pairs of opposites is pervasive in the human experience. Dualities such as life/death, light/dark, spirit/matter, inner/outer, good/bad, and love/hate have deep significance to the human endeavor. It reflects and flows from the archetypal tendency of psyche to seek connection and dialogue in order to effect its innate and continual urge to move deeper into itself, to experience itself psychologically. (p. 99)

The unification of opposites was seen by Miller (2004) as central to the transcendent function as is “the image-making agency of the soul, archetypal psychology [that] urges us to abandon subjectivity and recognize that all we see is a manifestation of an archetypal unity” (p. 103) including the separate, subjective identity of me from another.

In light of the findings of this study, the transcendent function reveals itself through *archetypal symbols* experienced by 53% of the participants. Not only are the symbols revealed, but the action of the symbols on a person’s process can be observed. The illustration of one of this study’s participants reported experience. During the interview, Adam stated that he experienced the archetype of the warrior. Not only was archetype revealed to him, but was experienced as a new form of physicality, a sense of an inner authority and the revelation of feminine aspects of his self. The following are excerpts from his interview:

Physically I came into myself . . . that was a different way of knowing myself experiencing. I suddenly became another—I was a full-blown other personality. I had the image of a primitive Mongol—a warrior kind of thing. And it was a full and complete other personality [named Akchui]. What feels important about it is there is an inner authority in me which I have never felt before. . . . And it comes from an inner wholeness or self-assurance of the way things are. And the fact that he knows (sub-theme) how to name things—that he knows the name of everything—means that it’s not an assimilated knowing. . . . The depth of the experience . . . and

the quality of the feelings . . . a different way of knowing that's entered my daily life. . . . There's something inside of me that's wonderful and complete. Rather than try and incorporate him, it's this wonderful feeling of support, that this is part of the supporting cast that's already there—whole. [Another] part that is so important to me, is the flower and the bee and their intimacy was my relationship with her [the feminine], which took a new turn for me. . . . This is definitely coming into relationship with her, with that part and not being totally engulfed by her. The observer stayed fixed in a place beneath the heart chakra, with a different attitude, it was not a seeking thing but a fixed thing that would allow whatever wanted to be seen to bubble up. So that's what it feels like as if I opened up a bottle full of energy I didn't know existed . . . it became—it was a long, long period of just emptiness that was full. (Adam)

The integration action of the archetype demonstrated by Adam's experience created a third aspect of the psyche. Note how in his experience he reported *I suddenly became another—I was a full-blown other personality*. This is indicative of the “experience of the archetype's autonomy . . . a jolt to our accustomed ways of thinking and feeling; it is therefore a turning point” (Whitmont, 1969/1991, p. 199).

In this example from Adam's interview, the experiences were not necessarily in the order explicated here but were extricated from the interview of his experiences arising out of his Holotropic Breathwork™ session in a way that mirrors the general order of his report without changing the meaning of his communication. Not all of the participants' experiences of archetypes explicitly reflected the effects of the *transcendent function*. Thus Adam's interview was chosen for the purpose of its illustration. Throughout various interviews, reports about recognizing *normally unavailable parts of the self* (47%), *archetypal symbols* (53%), *self-healing* (53%), and *self-actualization* (73%) strongly implicate an effect of the *transcendent function* on the experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork.

Returning to the literature review, Maslow (1971/1993) saw self-actualization as difficult to define and as an ongoing process. In his attempts to clarify the concept, he

characterized peak experiences that may be contributors toward that process. Peak experiences that could be described as “the happiest moments of life, experiences of ecstasy, rapture, bliss, of the greatest joy” (Maslow, p. 101) included words such as

Beauty . . . completeness . . . tendency to oneness; interconnectedness . . . transcendence of dichotomies . . . transformation of oppositions into unities . . . *Perfection . . . Completion . . . fulfillment of destiny . . . death before rebirth . . . Richness . . . Effortlessness . . . Playfulness.*
(pp. 128-129)

Citations pulled from participant illustrations in Appendix R are examples of experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat that parallel Maslow’s descriptors—*Constant bliss . . . There wasn’t emotions, there wasn’t memories* (Chauncey), *I felt really alive . . . the majority of things in my daily consciousness were beautiful* (John Utah), *I had this feeling . . . that I could die happy* (Tko), *It’s like there’s no burdens—just pure joy and pure bliss* (Pseudoswami), *I experienced myself simultaneously as a fetus . . . in the womb, but at the same time being connected to all* (Mooranth), *I was altogether whole* (Ishad), and *I’ve had moments of that experience of oneness with certain things, but never for that length of time* (Adam). Some kind of increased sense of *fulfillment* was reported by 53% of this study’s participants, and 33% expressed a state of *surprise* or awe regarding their experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork with descriptions that parallel Maslow’s peak experience descriptors. Maslow (1999) saw peak experiences as fundamental in the process towards self-actualization.

A large percentage (80%) of the research participants reported various *sensations* that included physical or emotional aspects or mental acumen. The Holotropic Breathwork™ technique by its very design is oriented to elicit multiple levels of

sensation through the fast breathing, evocative music, and bodywork (Gibson, 2006; Grof, 1988; Taylor, 2007b). Substantiation for this foundational aim can be seen in Assagioli's (1985) outline of the interrelation between the mental, emotional, and physical aspects of the psyche. His classification of the "various psychological functions and their relationship to one another" (p. 48) included "Sensation. . . . Emotion-Feeling. . . . Impulse-Desire. . . . Imagination. . . . Thought. . . . Intuition. . . . Will" (p. 49). A number of influential, somatically oriented psychoanalysts are congruent with Assagioli's view regarding this interrelation of body, mind, and emotion (Lowen, 1971; Reich, 1942/1973; Schore, 2002). The importance of the physical aspect of an individual in psychiatry was emphasized by Wilhelm Reich (1994), an Austrian-American psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. He stressed that the "psychiatrist who has not studied the bio-energetic functions of the emotions is apt to overlook the organism as such and to remain stuck in the psychology of words and associations" (p. xii). A student of Reich, Alexander Lowen (1971), a practicing psychoanalyst and director of the Institute for Bioenergetic Analysis in New York, pointed out that "Throughout its development psychoanalysis has never been able to dissociate itself from the physical manifestations of emotional conflict. . . . One can proceed in the reverse direction with greater effectiveness, that is, from the physical problem to its psychic representation" (p. 94). More recently neurobiology has provided interesting support for an integral approach to psychotherapy. The work of Allan Schore (2002), Psychologist with the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at University of California at Los Angeles School of Medicine, intrinsically links early neurological patterning with the developmental process of individuation. There are other proponents of the

interrelationship between body, mind, and emotions, but for the purposes of this study the pioneers in the field of somatic-based psychology will suffice. Examples of this study's subset theme of *sensation* and its inclusion of the aspects of physical, emotional, and mental acumen are reflected in the following interview excerpts:

An increasing sense of the body being larger. . . . it was like getting blown up kind of like a Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade float (Mooranth)

I had this realization . . . you're totally conscious before the breath, but . . . breath connects you to the outside world or some other world. (Pseudoswami)

I started feeling a little sad and depressed. . . . I've had that experience before and it [coming out of black hole] usually brings feelings of isolation and loneliness. (Morfran)

Other research studies also provided verification of a variety of sensation experienced by participants in the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique (Brouillette, 1997; Hanratty, 2002; Holmes et al., 1996; Jefferys, 1999; Metcalf, 1995; Pressman, 1993). Illustrating this, Brouillette summarized the results of his study. He stated,

At a physical level, participants reported healing or improvements of physical health problems as well as physically integrative experiences. . . . At the intellectual level, participants reported an increased ability to recognize and to disidentify from one's experience. At an emotional level, participants experienced a variety of emotions ranging from pain to joy. (pp. iii-iv)

Referring to the design of the technique, Grof (1988) shared that the "emphasis in holotropic therapy is on deep emotional and psychosomatic experience" (p. 208).

Spiritual facets of experiences resulting from the Holotropic Breathwork™ vary. Grof (1988) distinguished these when he stated,

In the holotropic mode of consciousness, it is possible to reach, in addition, all the remaining aspects of existence. These include not only access to one's biological, psychological, social, racial, and phenomenal world, but access to many other levels and domains of reality described by the great mystical traditions of the world. . . . Many systems of perennial

philosophy have identified and explored, in addition, several transphenomenal levels or realms of existence, usually referred to as subtle, causal, and ultimate or absolute. . . . The *lower subtle*, or *astral-psychic*, level contains traditionally out-of-body experiences, astral travel, occult and psychic phenomena (precognition, clairvoyance, psychokinesis), auras, and similar experiences. The *higher subtle level* comprises archetypal forms of deities, supreme presences, and spiritual guides, experiences of divine inspiration, visions of light, and audible illuminations. The *lower causal level* is . . . the final God, creator of all the realms, the audible light . . . the source of all individual deities. The *higher causal realm* is characterized by ultimate transcendence and release into boundless radiance. . . . On this level, there is no subject or object, no self or god, only formless consciousness as such. On the level of the *Absolute*, consciousness awakens to its original condition and suchness, which is also suchness of all existence—gross, subtle, and causal. (pp. 39-40)

As the research indicates, the combination of the various Holotropic Breathwork™ components tends to elicit multiple levels of sensation reflecting one of Grof's stated goals. Moreover, tapping into sensation appears to produce certain effects with one of these being self-healing.

Various versions of *self-healing* were reported by 53% of this study's participants to have been part of their experiences arising out of the breathwork sessions. Grof (2007) stated

Holotropic states tend to activate the spontaneous healing potential of the psyche and of the body and initiate a transformative process guided by deep inner intelligence. In this process, unconscious material with strong emotional charge and relevance will automatically emerge into consciousness and become available for full experience and integration. (pp. 4-5)

Assagioli (1965), Jung (1961/1983), and Whitmont (1969/1991) all agreed that accessing and integrating unconscious aspects of the self are integral to moving toward self-healing and a sense of wholeness. All of these psychoanalysts were a proponent of accessing parts of the unconscious aspects of the self as a part of a self-healing process. The realization of *normally unavailable parts of the self* were reported by 47% of the

breathwork participants interviewed. Additionally, *nonordinary states of consciousness* were encountered by 80% of the participants as part of their experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique. One of the supporting factors revealed in the analysis, access to NOSC, is seen as one of the hallmarks of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique (Grof, 1988, 1993; Jefferys, 1999). Through his observations of clients' experiences in psychedelic therapy, Grof (1973, 1985, 1988, 1993, 2000) developed what he referred to as the “*Basic Perinatal Matrix or BPM*” (2000, p. 32) cartography. Grof (1973) stated that like all unconscious psychic material, the experiences of the birth process often have a profound effect on a person's ego structure and life choices. These perinatal experiences can be both negative and positive and are usually a mixture of both. Grof (1973) elucidated the advantage of accessing these unconscious memories stating that “transpersonal experiences frequently form an integral part of the perinatal matrices, such as evolutionary and ancestral memories, elements of the collective unconscious and certain Jungian archetypes” (p. 27). Grof's Holotropic Breathwork™ technique is seen as a support for an entry into the realm of NOSC and the experience of these parts of the self that may normally be unavailable (Grof, 1988).

Moreover, Jung (1959/1974) distinguished the unconscious from the “collective unconscious” (p. 42). The collective unconscious is seen to include archetypal symbolism and potency. Jacobi (1959/1974) concurred with Jung's view, describing it as follows:

the collective unconscious as suprapersonal matrix, as the unlimited sum of fundamental psychic conditions accumulated over millions of years, is a realm of immeasurable breadth and depth. . . . The widely accepted idea of the collective unconscious as a “stratum” situated *below* the conscious mind is therefore unfounded and misleading. (p. 59)

In light of this perspective, not only did 80% of this study's participants report access to NOSC, but 53% reported the revelation of *archetypal symbolism* during their breathwork

session. Based on this outlook, the report of the experiences of archetypes expands the reports of experiences of NOSC exponentially.

The importance of the participants' experiences of accessing the unconscious is notable throughout psychoanalytic literature (Freud, 1923/1960; Jung, 1959/1997). Sigmund Freud pointed out that the unconscious "produces powerful effects without itself being conscious and . . . requires special work before it can be made conscious" (p. 7).

Assagioli (1965) broke from Freudian psychology developing a psychotherapeutic model referred to as Psychosynthesis. A key concept of his work is that the ego has a synthesizing aspect that not only supports revealing the unconscious but has an integrating effect on the unconscious as it becomes conscious. Assagioli purported that

we have first to penetrate courageously into the pit of our lower conscious in order to discover the dark forces that ensnare and menace us—the "phantasms," the ancestral or childish images that obsess or silently dominate us, the fears that paralyze us, the conflicts that waste our energies. (p. 21)

In light of the theoretical models of leaders in the field of psychoanalysis, bringing the unconscious mind into consciousness may avoid "the dangers inherent in [humans] losing control of the tremendous natural forces at his [her] disposal and becoming the victim of his [her] own achievements" (Assagioli, 1985, p. 6). Furthermore, as Jung (1959/1997) stated,

it is a peculiarity of psychic functioning that when the unconscious counteraction is suppressed it loses its regulating influence. It then begins to have an accelerating and intensifying effect on the conscious process. It is as though the counteraction had lost its regulating influence, and hence its energy, altogether, for a condition then arises in which not only no inhibiting counteraction takes place, but in which its energy seems to add itself to that of the conscious direction. . . . The ease with which the

counteraction can be eliminated is proportional to the degree of dissociability of the psyche and leads to loss of instinct. (p. 51)

It is important to note that a number of prominent psychoanalysts (Assagioli, 1965; Jacobi, 1959/1974; Jung, 1959/1990) have distinguished the integrating aspect from the ego as a part of the psyche connected to a higher consciousness. To refer to this aspect, Assagioli and Jacobi both used the term Self with a capital “S”. Additionally, Jung saw the Self in archetypal symbols of the collective unconscious. Overall, the integration of unconscious and conscious parts of the self is seen as a movement toward healing, growth, and wholeness (Assagioli, 1965; Firman & Gila, 1997). In congruence with the reports of these experts in the field of psychology, *self-healing*, one of the central themes of this study, may possibly be the result of normally unconscious material of the psyche being made conscious through the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique.

Since self-healing is partially attributed to the access to one’s potential through connecting to unconscious parts of the self, it may also be seen as kindred to the process of self-actualization. As previously stated, “self-actualization is not only an end state but also the process of actualizing one’s potentialities at any time, in any amount” (Maslow, 1971/1993, p. 46). These small, yet compelling steps in the process are revealed in the words of this study’s participants when they shared:

Each petal represented a different way to express myself . . . many possibilities. (Maya)

The whole session was about the incredible creative potential of diversity (Mooranth)

I went to meetings frequently for years, but I still didn’t feel the spirit. I was learning about it, but I wasn’t feeling it . . . it’s like the moonbeams, it was just showing me ‘this is here.’ It’s really here. That this is not forbidden territory. Yeah, that, you know, it’s yours, it’s everybody’s. (Jane)

Each of these individuals experienced the realization of and insight into some meaningful aspect of their potential. The experiences were not necessarily a conclusion but a door that opened to them to an increase of capacity or connection.

Some of the participants (40%) reported *surrender* to be part of their experiences arising out the breathwork session. Susan Kavalier-Adler (2007), founder and executive director of the Object Relations Institute for Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis, extensively articulated a process she described as “developmental mourning” (p. 763) that includes “a letting go or surrendering process” (p. 763). Underlying its significance, Kavalier-Adler stated “it is the pivotal moments of surrender to the love and longing within grief affect that allows a sustained process of self-integration and self-awareness to evolve and continue” (p. 773). Participant experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique reflecting this kind of surrender are,

I feel sadness. . . . It's a surrender (Tko)

I can't remember if they were in pain, or what exactly was happening. And they worked with my arms—some body work—and then I just went into that Nirvana. It was almost like . . . being locked up and then letting go. (Jane)

Indian-American medical doctor, author, and international speaker on health and wellness, Deepak Chopra, highlighted the importance of surrender through the “law of detachment” (p. 83). He stated that surrender is “a very powerful thing to do. The moment you relinquish your attachment to the result, combining one-pointed intention with detachment at the same time, you will have what you desire” (p. 84). In this study, the process of surrender is not described much further, but it points to the importance of this aspect of letting go and why it was chosen as a theme.

Related to the theme of *surrender* is the subset theme, *observer*. Experiences of the observer or act of observation are described by the research participants as,

I still wasn't aware of myself in this. I was just pure—through this whole second thing I was pure observer. (Mooranth)

Some of this happened in my mind too . . . a lot of these things happen in one's mind anyway. The observer is always in the mind somehow. (Ishad)

Self-observation is implied if not explicated in virtually all psychotherapeutic settings and modalities (Assagioli, 1965; Freud, 1923/1960; Jung, 1968, 1961/1983, 1959/1990, 1997; Reich, 1994; Lowen, 1971). However, there does appear to be a difference between simply observing something and becoming “pure observer” as relayed by Mooranth. Furthermore, some believe that “the observer, also influence what we are observing. In this way, attention to what we experience as a participant/observer in emptiness brings us that much closer to understanding the process of transformation” (Gunn, 1996, p. 9). In his quest to discover what makes psychotherapy more effective, Eugene Gendlin (1981), Psychologist, developed a technique he called “Focusing” (p. 4). A central feature of this technique is an emphasis on the “felt sense” (p. 10). He introduces a series of steps to work with this felt sense. Observation is implicit throughout. However, in Step 1 he explicitly directs a person to “Let there be a little space between you and that” (p. 44). In this statement, indirectly Gendlin is stressing the significance of the observing function in providing some distance from the psychological issue. Thus the observation function allows what is being experienced without complete identification with it so a shift in identity may occur.

The experience of *emptiness* is seen by several schools of thought as a transformative experience. Robert Gunn (1996), Psychotherapist and Doctor of

Philosophy in Psychiatry and Religion from Union Seminary, in his comparative study about the experience of emptiness, looked at three of the prominent schools that address emptiness. The title of his study “The Experience of Emptiness in the Process of Self-Transformation by Zen Buddhism, Christianity, and Depth Psychology as represented by Dōgen Kigen, Thomas Merton and Carl Jung, with Donald Winnicott and Heinz Kohut” provides an accurate description of his investigation. Gunn stated that the

early death of the mother finds parallels in Dōgen’s and Merton’s lives, and becomes, from the depth psychological point of view, a foundational experience of emptiness, a deep psychic wound that provides an underlying motivation for a profound, relentless and determined spiritual search. (pp. 26-27)

Furthermore, he noted that

all three traditions agree that by confronting and working with experiences of emptiness, a person undergoes a fundamental change in the direction of becoming more real, more truly oneself, including a heightened sense of what one has uniquely to offer to the human community. (p. 1)

In this Holotropic Breathwork™ research study, two of the participants illuminated their experiences of emptiness as part of the interview process. They shared,

It just felt like there was a lot of emptiness . . . inside me that cleared so much of this darkness out (Leoneess).

So that’s what it feels like as if I opened up a bottle full of energy I didn’t know existed. . . . it was a long, long period of just emptiness that was full. (Adam)

The terror of the experience of *emptiness* was not mentioned by either Leoneess or Adam; however, it can be seen that “facing emptiness and letting go of the familiar and secure is terrifying” (Gunn, p. 12). However, allowing and working with the emptiness can lead to a shift where “one is no longer a separate, isolated person, but part of the entire phenomenal universe” (Gunn, p. 60). It is important to emphasize that

the experience of emptiness is not some “thing” or “object” that can be put out on the table for all to view, but can be known only by being entered into, absorbed, reflected upon and gleaned for whatever it may bring of meaning. (Gunn, p. 9)

Thus, the access to and acceptance of emptiness may be part of the contributions that the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique supports.

For 3 participants, *struggle* was reported to be a pivotal aspect of the breathwork session. These participants referred directly to struggle as a positive and meaningful part of their process. For example, Michael shared, *I like the physical sensation of it . . . something about the tetany, the fact that I don't feel like I am fully in control of the physical aspect, and it's almost like the struggle of it*. Through this statement he acknowledges and aligns with the founder of the Diamond Approach, A. H. Almaas' (1987) view of struggle as his “own deepest inner struggle, and the substance, the juices that come out of the struggle that only you can experience, are of utmost value to you. . . There is no salt of life if there is no struggle” (p. 135). However, although the other participants did not mention struggle directly, the struggle of the individual's process was generally inferred. Also, Maslow (1971/1993) expressed the opinion that “Conflict itself is, of course a sign of relative health” (p. 33) as compared with apathy. His assumption was that the conflict would be the impetus for reaching “out for the human heritage and for the basic gratifications to which every human being has a right simply by virtue of being human” (p. 33).

The element of *surprise* indicates something new has entered into a person's consciousness and is why it was selected as a subset theme. In the case of this study's participants the expressed surprise was associated with something positive and in three out of five instances expressed at “awe”. An example of this is the quote from Jane:

I can still see that glow now . . . it was just an unbelievable orange glow, and the entire building was full of that glow . . . it was like standing there in awe of this . . . demonstration of the cartography of a person is much vaster than the body and the personality . . . the spiritual, for lack of a better word . . . knowing that . . . really is the nucleus of self or the center of self and everything—that the energy of all that is—we're all energy.

A fresh insight or new knowledge about ourselves may be part of the impetus to shift and change the way we think about ourselves or the environment. In reference to seeing Aldous Huxley, Maslow (1971/1993) shared that he was a person who “could look out at the world . . . with unabashed innocence, awe, and fascination, which is a kind of admission of smallness, a form of humility, and then proceed calmly and unafraid to the great tasks he set for himself” (p. 38).

If self-actualization and self-healing are processes that lead to understanding something about the self, then gaining *knowledge* would seem to be a natural outcome. In comparing the inquiry methods of scientific fields to spiritual inquiry, Tobin Hart, Peter Nelson, and Kaisa Puhakka (2000), Associate Professor at State University of West Georgia, Research Consultant in Australia, and Professor at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology respectively, stated,

Spiritual approaches seem in many ways relatively open and nondogmatic, rooted in rigorous observation, methodical, systematic, critical, and/or intersubjective. Yet these inquiries also seem to go considerably beyond the contemporary sciences, in that they have to do with ways of knowing, access to domains of reality, and transformative practices not currently understood as scientific. They suggest the possibility of a significantly expanded understanding of inquiry and knowledge. (p. 165)

As these authors suggested, spiritual inquiry may lead to a heightened form of knowing. As an exploratory technique, Holotropic Breathwork™ seeks to expand an individual's self-awareness and understanding.

In this study, two statements by participants led to knowledge being added as a subset theme. These were included as subset themes to highlight the possible outcomes resulting from experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique. In both instances the experiencers appeared to connect with a deeper level of knowledge as demonstrated by these citations:

The depth of the experience . . . and the quality of the feelings . . . a different way of knowing that's entered my daily life. . . . There's something inside of me that's wonderful and complete. (Adam)

I contemplated a lot of my non-commitments to spirituality, but at the same time I was able to recognize . . . the progress and it seems I feel like I've gained . . . spiritually and [in] wisdom knowledge. (John Utah)

These expressions distinctly acknowledge a deep insight and experience of the self that had been gained in a different way. Both statements also convey that the change had been positive and an expanded view of their self. For this study, self-actualization was defined as the fostering of individuation. Thus we can draw a parallel between the self-actualization process and an increase of self-knowledge.

In addition to the personal experiences reported by this study's participants, the literature provides substantiation of the chosen subset themes as relevant to the process of *self-actualization* and *self-healing*, the two central themes. The literature also alludes indirectly to the effectiveness of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique by reference to the importance of the reported experiences arising out of the participants' breathwork sessions.

In alignment with Cornell's (2005, 2006) perspective, the participants' mandala artwork provided for this study was treated as sacred and not judged or critiqued in any way. In that light, the artwork is discussed here without scrutiny. The gallery-like display of this artwork in Chapter 5 is an honoring of each individual's process and left in the

creator's pure form with their own words providing the only description. All of the participants shared that this artwork was an expression of their breathwork experience. Although reflected in the artwork, the participants' experiences arising out of the breathwork session were also distinctly expressed during the interviews and provided the researcher with the data analyzed for their recurring and meaningful themes. For 4 of the 15 (27%) participants, concrete rather than symbolic expression tended to be used to describe their experiences, such as referring to body sensation or emotions. This may be due to the differences in perception such as a visual perception versus somatic orientation. One participant's words that illustrate the somatic orientation are,

I've been having more of this energetic experience with my spine and all the rest of that, so it feels like a peace, to me, that's both kind of becoming aware of and learning how to work with it over time. (Lena)

Moreover, 11 out of the 15 (73%) participants expressed their experiences through symbolic terms. A visual perception example from one of this study's participants is,

The flower is a symbol of my spiritual path. My spiritual path, when I get right down to it, is about living in this present moment, centered in awareness. I look at this image, and I see this flower in that green stem. The stem seems solid to me, and it holds the bloom up really well. (Maya)

Jacobi (1959/1974) discussed the significance of symbolic representation in connecting a person's psyche with other dimensions of reality. He stated that "the archetype should be regarded first and foremost as the magnetic field and energy center underlying the transformation of the psychic processes into images" (p. 48). Again we can look to the advantages of why tapping into the unconscious layers of the psyche is desirable as a way to understand the value of the dynamism and depth of the archetypal symbols. Making the unconscious conscious may be seen as our connection to personal freedom in that "What we are searching for is a way to make conscious those contents which are about to

influence our actions, so that the secret interference of the unconscious and its unpleasant consequences can be avoided” (Jung, 1959/1997, p. 51).

The mandala itself is seen as an archetypal symbol of “the totality of the self” (Jung, 1959/1973, p. 20). Although none of the participants mentioned anything about the circular shape of the mandala itself, all but 1 acknowledged their artwork as personally meaningful, and 6 participants referred to it as a reflection of their self or their life. Expression of this can be illustrated through Ishad’s following statement about his mandala artwork:

that’s my life in a way. . . . I mean to me this is the picture of wholeness in a sense. . . . I’m rooted like a tree . . . in the ground. . . . The earth, the brown earth. . . . I myself, my suit is sort of green. . . . I’m a nature guy in a sense. . . . I’m an urban naturist . . . my branches are reaching up into the sky as high as we can go . . . the whole movement is from the bottom up into the sky . . . the flow of the energy can go both ways . . . the inflow into the fingers of the segments of the branch fingers . . . sky energy flows back into the tree . . . the flaming . . . red and yellow and orange . . . the trials and tribulations . . . that’s me at this best in terms of expression of who I am I think . . . the sun is smiling on me, I’ve got my head.

Ishad sees his artwork as a reflection not only of himself but of his life symbolically represented through his mandala artwork. Through the statement about his art, a person can see Jacobi’s (1959/1974) reference to the multiple dimensions of archetypal symbolic expression including the “unity of primordial opposites—such as light-dark, heaven-earth, etc., the groundwork of creation itself” (p. 56).

The literature reveals that the effects of mandala artwork may be more far reaching than what we are able to explore through this study. In the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique it is used after the breathwork sessions with the intent of integrating the resulting experiences (Haug, 2002; Taylor, 2007b). Grof (1988) also mentioned that the mandala artwork can act as a diary of the experiences, which is

something that is demonstrated through this study. Supporting this view, all the participants stated that their artwork directly reflects their experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat, and several shared that they make their mandala available to continue their process or understand it more fully.

Additional Related Research

To update the research literature for this study several additional doctoral-level studies are being added. Also, research projects currently in process are referenced to provide the latest information on studies associated with this study.

Susan Miller McGowan's (2007) phenomenological study explored the "influence that music has by looking specifically at the experience of music in altered states of consciousness" (p. iv). The study included 10 participants. Of the total participants, 5 experienced music associated with the Santo Daime Church in Brazil and 5 were participants of Holotropic Breathwork™ retreats held in the United States. Through the integration of the data from the interview process and the analysis of related literature the findings elucidated "ways that music can bring psychological and spiritual healing and transformation" (p. iv).

Currently in the data collection phase of research, Timothy Brewerton, James Eyerman, Pamela Cappetta and Michael Mithoefer (2008), psychiatrist, psychiatrist, educator, and psychiatrist respectively, are conducting a Holotropic Breathwork™ case study that investigates its effect on long-term substance dependence abstinence. The researchers call for individual case studies worldwide. At this time results are reported for four cases. The researchers report that with participation in Holotropic Breathwork™ technique participants have sustained long-term abstinence. These cases include (a) a 14

year old Caucasian male with polysubstance abuse achieving 3 years of sobriety with one brief relapse period; (b) a 31-year-old Caucasian female, polysubstance abuser, who after 2 Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions achieved 3 years abstinence until she no longer followed up in the study; (c) a 49-year-old white male with marijuana abuse and dependency who after 24 Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions over a 24-month period remained abstinent for more than 5 years; and (d) a 50-year-old Caucasian female with 29 years of alcohol and polysubstance abuse and dependency who after getting sober through a 12-step program began participating in a series of 25 Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions over a 5 year period has remained sober for 9 years. Although not complete, the researchers' results look promising. Consistent controls may be helpful in strengthening the results.

Michael McNally (2008) conducted a hermeneutical study where he confirmed that the anthropomorphic symbols of the transcendent, including mandalas, are ubiquitous in numerous religions. He stated that “Religious symbols can be more than a linguistic mechanism for expression transcendental experiences. They can also proactively facilitate a connection with transcendental realities” (pp. 1-2). The researcher integrated the views of Mirecea Eliade, Carl Jung, and Gershom Scholem to substantiate his findings.

Limitations and Delimitations

Certain limitations and delimitations of this research were inherited GTT requirements as well as the design of the retreat module. The GTT Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat technique requires the retreat facilitators to follow the participant's process, and the facilitators do not intervene with bodywork unless requested by the

participant. Some participants requested bodywork whereas others did not. The impetus and requirement of the individual participant is part of the method creating a built-in variation between participants as part of the intervention. As a result, the intervention cannot be consistently applied to all participants due to the nature of the Holotropic Breathwork™ intervention.

The volunteers for this study were participants of a GTT-equivalent retreat. Therefore, the participants were subject to the GTT screening requirements and exclusion criteria (Appendix B). Such criteria include, but are not limited to, pathologically diagnosed individuals, pregnant women, individuals prone to epileptic seizures, or any other reason GTT deems a disqualifier. Moreover, any known health issue that might have precluded them from fulfilling the commitments of the study was also a disqualifier. At the retreat, mandala artwork is an option. Therefore, the researcher screened for people who did not use mandala artwork in the retreat.

Due to time and resource constraints, this study was limited to 15 participants. For the same reasons, this research is not longitudinal. Also, due to the fact that one of the conditions for participating in this study was the completion of a Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat, the participants were not randomly selected. Due to the lack of random selection the results cannot be generalized. Additionally, due to the researcher's limitations, participants were required to speak and understand English. Thus the demographics are restricted to English-speaking participants. Additionally, the researcher did not poll for income level so that cannot be assessed. GTT makes it known that the cost of a retreat should not prohibit anyone from attending, and work-study programs are available.

Anderson (2004) stated that intrinsically, the use of the Intuitive Inquiry research method limits the results of the study to subjective data. She explained that it is both the gift and limitation of the method. Therefore, the Intuitive Inquiry method warrants “scrupulous documentation” (p. 324). She added that due to Intuitive Inquiry’s transpersonal nature, as the researcher and research change, the method changes also. Hence, it is not a static but a dynamic process. The hermeneutic base of Intuitive Inquiry and its procedures “are a world reality in flux and mutable and, therefore, challenge conventional notions of a static worldview that is separate and distinguishable from the knower” (Anderson, 2004, p. 324). Therefore, the findings of this study are not intended to be repeatable. However, the reliability of the study is determined by its verifiability through the use of the Resonance Panel.

Efficacy, Validity, and Verification

The changes in the researcher’s preliminary lenses indicate a high Efficacy Value. Indicators of this efficacy include the researcher’s transformation during the course of this research and an increase in understanding and compassion. Evidence of this study’s efficacy is the marked increase of clarity in the conveyance of this study.

Triangulation strengthens this study’s internal validity. The data and their findings were derived from three sources: (a) the qualitative thematic analysis of the participant interviews, (b) the mandala artwork, and (c) the Resonance Panel members. Therefore, verification of the findings was drawn from several “sources or methods for consistency of evidence across sources of data” (Mertens, 1998, p. 183).

As one leg of triangulation, for the qualitative thematic analysis of the participant interviews, the researcher used a combination of three prescribed QTA procedures

(Anderson, 2007; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clark, 2006). This combination supported what Anderson (2004) referred to as a rigorously subjective discrimination between “everyday problem solving and scientific inquiry” (p. 324). Combining these three procedures for the theme creation, the analysis of the data went through many iterations of refinement over a 3-month period before the final themes and subset themes were created.

In Chapter 5, the xeroxed copies of the mandala artwork created by each participant are displayed in a gallery-like format. Contributing to triangulation, each copy is accompanied by its creator’s description of the art. As can be seen in each instant the artwork reflects each participant’s experience arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat. Additionally, contributing to the strength of this study’s findings, the nonverbal nature of the mandala artwork is mirrored in the verbal interviews as well as the themes arising out of the interview QTA.

As another part of this study’s triangulation, three people, referred to as a Resonance Panel, were enlisted to ensure resonance with the researcher’s list of themes and patterns that emerged from the participant interviews. As described in Chapter 4, a Resonance Panel is intended to test the verifiability and consistency of a study.

Furthermore, the combining of the three sources for data and findings reinforces the accuracy and credibility of this study. In staying with the goal of Intuitive Inquiry of honesty and divulging the researcher’s obstacles, the main hurdle was in recruiting participants and Resonance Panel members. To minimize the researcher’s influence, the researcher did not attend the same retreats as the volunteers for this study. Although lack of simultaneous attendance and recruitment helped to increase the validity, it also made it

more difficult to access and recruit potential participants. However, the researcher continued to pull on having faith and eventually everything came together.

The Intuitive Inquiry method is purposefully designed to challenge the researcher in her (a) subjectivity, (b) honesty, (c), flexibility, (d) directness in data interpretation, (e) authenticity, (f) personalness, (g) potential, and (h) transformation (Anderson, 2004).

Subjectivity is seen as an inescapable quality for any study regardless of the method used. Therefore, as part of the Intuitive Inquiry method, the researcher's preliminary lenses are exposed prior to beginning the research. Once the findings were realized, in Cycle 4 the researcher's preliminary lenses are challenged and revised. This exposure promotes and supports honesty, flexibility, and directness in the data interpretation. As a result, this study evolved out of an authentic, personal expression of the researcher's transformational process.

In alignment with Romanyshyn's (2007) view of research as a surrendering of the soul, with each interview I found myself completely immersed and fascinated with my topic and the experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique. My curiosity was piqued. The Intuitive Inquiry method began to feel like a purveyor of the soul as it led me through deeper enclaves of consciousness and understanding. I came to more fully realize an alignment with my love for the transformation process in others and in myself. This study has been a pedagogy of "love knowledge" (Maslow, 1971/1993, p. 17) where my curiosity and love of the subject matter supported me not only to get out of the way but to deeply appreciate the unfolding and clear vision of the findings.

Challenges and Characteristics of Intuitive Inquiry

Anderson (2004) explained that there are nine challenges and characteristics associated with Intuitive Inquiry, which were addressed within this study. These are as follows:

1. Being rigorously subjective. Crucial to discriminating between “everyday problem solving and scientific inquiry” (p. 324). Keeping exact and detailed records on what is happening in what context integrates the right and left brain skills set of intuition and intellect. It also supports the efficacy of the study. For this study, the researcher set an intention to maintain a highly detailed diary during the active research stage and followed through with that intention.
2. Telling the truth. The first challenge is scrupulous honesty. During the course of research mistakes may be made, situations may change, a planned course of action may not work out, and some obstacles or difficulties may be irresolvable. Additionally, the researcher is required to disclose the innermost workings of her/his process including intuitive feelings, fears, and other perceptions. The success of Intuitive Inquiry is dependent upon the researcher’s ability to communicate the “style of intuitive processing and the matter in which intuitions manifested in the course of the interpretative cycles, including the twists, slow downs, and dead ends and flow of the unconscious journey” (p. 325).
3. Avoiding circularity. Around the initial lenses and perspective, the researcher must be willing to change. The point of using this method is to challenge

ideology and support a deepened understanding. Changes may be large or small, but there must be an openness to change.

4. Trickstering and auspicious bewilderment. These appear to be intrinsic to the nature of Intuitive Inquiry. They are seen as auspicious moments that hold the promise of a deepened or new understanding. Confusion, paradox, and bewilderment are all seen as signals of the presence of a trickster.
5. Maintain a process-oriented and inclusive perspective. Be direct in data interpretation. This challenge points to the subjective characteristic inherent in an Intuitive Inquiry approach. Anderson emphasized “acknowledging what is fully present in the moment, human subjectivity is a source of knowing not just solipsistic expression or opinion” (p. 328).
6. Writing in your own voice. This lends to the authenticity, relatability, and readability of the study. Authenticity provides validity of the study through eliciting sympathetic resonance from the readers. The researcher needs to clearly express intuitions, feeling, perceptions, and interpretation for resonance to be possible.
7. Favoring the particular and the personal. This is at the heart of the use of Intuitive Inquiry as a method. The method acknowledges the dynamic multidimensional constructs of the psyche. Only a qualitative method, which inevitably includes subjective knowledge, can explore such dimensions of consciousness for a deepened understanding. The Intuitive Inquiry method brings controls and structure to the exploration.

8. Imagining the possible. This opens doors that would not otherwise be opened.

Intuitive inquiry allows for a vision that might support the possibility of a better world. Moreover, it “is both practical and visionary, allowing that research findings can provide new options for the world that is changing and manifesting anew in every moment” (p. 330).

9. Risking personal change and transformation. This tends to be part of doing a hermeneutic study. This characteristic may be particularly true for the Intuitive Inquiry method since the various cycles are constructed for that very purpose.

In alignment with the first two of Anderson’s (2004) nine challenges of the Intuitive Inquiry research method, the researcher held to being scrupulously honest and the interactions with the participants well documented. Procedurally, the original approved design of this study was strictly adhered to except in two incidences. In two cases the original proposal for this study was changed. These exceptions included an increase in the number of participants from 12 to 15 and moving from interviewing participants within 4 weeks of a retreat to 12 months. The increase in the number of participants did not warrant review. However, in the second case, the researcher sought the expertise of her committee members on the change to interviewing participants within 12 months from the retreat date. As the change was not seen as something that would affect the study’s efficacy, all of the committee members agreed to the change. To prevent any outliers, one of the conditions to the change was that at least 2 participants had to have completed the retreat 11 months prior to the interview for this study. The change was proposed due to an inability to recruit participants too soon after a retreat.

The Intuitive Inquiry method is designed particularly for exploring and deepening understanding of psychological and spiritual experiences as well as for the researcher to challenge the lenses from which she/he views the topic. Hence the dynamics of the design of the method used the forward and returning arc support and invite change and transformation preventing circularity. As will be demonstrated in Chapters 4 through 6, the design of the Intuitive Inquiry method helped the researcher to meet the challenges and supported the exploration of complex experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique.

Confusion and chaos are part of the trickster's learning techniques. It wasn't until the data came together and the findings emerged that the researcher began to experience a sense of clarity. The feeling of the research being a never ending pit of befuddlement seemed to be my constant shadow guide. On a number of occasions it would appear that the findings had revealed it self to me only to find it all unravel. A new thread and new insights would become apparent which then called to be explored. Eventually I came to a place where the data appeared to expose the heart of the experience. The revelation transformed and deepened my understanding revealing certain substantial patterns and unique qualities.

Chapters 5 and 6 especially reflect the sixth challenge of Intuitive Inquiry—authenticity, relatability, and readability. A central benefit of this dissertation process is the creation of a platform for the authentic expression of an exploration into the psyche and its sacredness. This research reflects a claiming of my own voice and is a work of love for understanding and true knowledge.

At the heart of choosing to venture into this study is my deep respect and fascination with the depth and breadth of the psyche. The Intuitive Inquiry method has been a delightful, well-constructed support for this personal exploration. As the method suggests, its structure provides a methodically sound foundation for a subjective, hermeneutic research process.

As the QTA data revealed itself and enlightened the researcher's viewpoint, the depth of the participant's experience informed me of the profound goodness of human beings. With the expression of each participant's experience of their psyche my faith in the inner intelligence or inner healer deepened my resolve and support for non-directive psychotherapy techniques. These individuals were willing to penetrate difficult, sometimes murky territories of their consciousness rather than avoid the discomfort. In my mind, their orientation and willingness to better understand themselves is what will help to create a better world and society as Maslow (1971/1993) had envisioned.

Suggestions for Future Studies

In the interest of completing this study within a reasonable period of time, the researcher did not do a longitudinal study. However, a longitudinal study could be helpful in determining the effects of experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ and integral mandala artwork and how they are integrated over time. Additionally, the research brought attention to the depth of experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork but still barely skimmed the surface of the technique's potential. In both cases, the breathwork technique and mandala artwork itself, further in-depth research may be beneficial to further understand the implications of each with regard to the self-actualization and self-healing processes. The

Holotropic Breathwork™ technique consists of multiple components (Appendix A). Each component in itself appears to contribute substantially to the overall effect. Future studies could look at any one of these components at a microscopic level to mine the particular field to more fully understand its contribution to the experience. As with each Holotropic Breathwork™ component, each of the themes and subset themes from this research offers a rich field of selection for further investigation. Through this study, the mandala artwork was provided focus and yet it has still been just a glimpse into its potential. Further research could use the beginnings of this study to dive more fully into the effects of mandala artwork on the psyche. In the interest of concentrating on the impact of mandala artwork, a comparative study isolating the employment of mandala artwork versus the utilization of the artwork as part of a technique like Holotropic Breathwork™ is recommended. Furthermore, the sample size of this study was 15 participants, providing strength to the study. However, additional similar studies using different sample sizes would be useful in strengthening this study's findings and contributing to its implications. Moreover, GTT makes it known that the cost of a retreat should not prohibit anyone from attending, and work-study programs are available. However, in this study all but one participant were Caucasians. For the purpose of generalizing the findings, it would be useful for future studies to target different socio-economic and culturally diverse populations.

Implications

The main purpose of this study was to deepen the understanding of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork. In alignment with the goal of this study, Anderson's (2007) Intuitive Inquiry method has its roots in hermeneutics.

Therefore, the method supports exploration with the goal of more fully understanding the topic and is not oriented toward proving a particular outcome. With the employment of this research method, I believe this study has accomplished its sought goal. However, additional studies would add to, expand, and enrich its findings. Moreover, the findings of this study appear to provide substantiation for Grof's (1988) claims regarding the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique's facility for accessing nonordinary states of consciousness and their possible effects. Additionally, it underscores the advantage and impact of the use of the creative expression modality of the mandala artwork especially for non-verbal and pre-verbal experiences. The research indicates that access to NOSC may lead to self-healing and an increase in the realization of one's potential. An important contribution of this research may be its demonstration of a relationship between experiences arising out of participation in a Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat and the self-actualization process. Moreover, the findings provide insight into the workings of archetypal symbol including the archetype of wholeness, the mandala. Furthermore, this study's finding emphasizes the effect of a Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat's participant's orientation on the experiences arising out of the retreat.

Applications

Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork is a transpersonal technique and as such the findings of this study indicate a solid contribution to the field of Transpersonal Psychology. This study reveals that this technique impacts the process of self-actualization and self-healing. The findings indicate that the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique may be highly effective for some individuals for spiritual development, personal-growth workshops as an adjunct or compliment to conventional

individual, group psychotherapy or spiritual guidance and direction. Grof (1988, 2000, 2006) explicates a broad spectrum of options for the technique's use. Moreover, due to the promising results of other studies and the tie between spiritual development and treatment of alcoholism, there is momentum in the field to apply the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique as an adjunct to the traditional treatment of substance abuse (Brewerton et al., 2008; Jefferys, 1999; Metcalf, 1995). Common to both 12-step Programs and the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique is spiritual development. In a letter to William Wilson, founder of Alcoholic Anonymous and in support of the role of spirituality for addiction recovery, Jung (1961) wrote "Alcohol in Latin is 'spiritus' and you use the same word for the highest religious experience. . . . The helpful formula therefore is: spiritus contra spiritum" (p. 1). Further applications could include use within corporate settings to stimulate creativity and foster a healthy workplace. Additionally, this technique could be used in contributing to raising social consciousness in the interest of a better society as a whole.

Decoupled from the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique, this study indicates that mandala artwork creation is a transpersonal practice in and of itself. Leaders in the field like Kellog (1984) and Cornell (2005, 2006) have created methods using mandala artwork that can be employed with some individuals for spiritual development, most psychotherapeutic environments (individual and group) and with clients of all ages. Mandalas are seen as organizing, integrative symbols. As a result of this capacity, mandala artwork may be especially useful with children as well as with adults that have difficulty with focus, structure, and concentration. Mandala artwork can be useful in opening up communications and connection within a family therapy environment.

Cornell (2005, 2006) has used mandala artwork in a wide variety of settings that include working with cancer patients.

The value that the mandala artwork adds to the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique is reflected in the participants' interviews. For example, as two participants shared,

I think mandalas are super important to everybody to really capture [their experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat]. . . . I know people who aren't artistic, it's frustrating to do mandalas that don't express it, but I think even . . . doing a simple one, 'cause just looking back over it, remembering why you did it. Whereas when you have to read what you journaled it's . . . in little bits and pieces, not . . . one thing to look at right away. But that's my preference. (Leoness).

I probably sat there for longer than I've ever sat there doing a mandala. . . it seems significant to me—it seems like I was . . . honoring my experience, and that the mandala really was an extension of both of my breathwork experiences. (Anne)

Not only does creating mandala artwork provide a context for experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique, but it is a transpersonal, sacred process in itself.

Culmination of the Dissertation Process

In Figure 16, as closure to this dissertation process, the researcher shares one of her mandala artwork creations from a recent Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat. Many guides have supported me in my dissertation development. As of Cycle 1, the beginning of my research process, the transformative symbol of the peacock has flitted in and out of my consciousness. The dedication page of this dissertation contains a copy of my mandala artwork that represents the first and continuing steps of my journey in the dissertation process. Experiences of Egyptian symbols arising out of my most recent Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat evoked the creation of the mandala in Figure 16. The appearance of the scarab represents the culmination of this study as well as my

engagement with the process. The scarab symbolizes a rebirth through the image of the “self-renewing Sun” (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969/1996, p. 833). The completion of this research is also a beginning as I continue to move into the unfoldment of a life aligned with my own process of self-actualization.



Figure 16. Rubye’s Mandala—The Scarab and the Peacock.

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Appendix A: Holotropic Breathwork™ Technique

This study did not explore the details of all of the particular components of Holotropic Breathwork™ technique. However, an initial description of the technique and its various components is set forth below to establish the context of the technique.

Brouillette (1997) characterized Holotropic Breathwork™ as “(a) a process-oriented approach; (b) it is a work that is done in NOSC; (c) it integrates the three levels of the human mind (biographical, perinatal, and transpersonal); (d) it is a bio-psycho-spiritual approach, and; (e) it is practiced within a safe and sacred container” (p. 294). He stressed that the altered state of consciousness or NOSC that the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique induces has a healing effect, and Grof (1993) stated that it is a mystery as to why it has that effect.

Taylor (2007a, 2007b) specified that Holotropic Breathwork™ retreats (a) are scheduled worldwide; (b) provide for accommodations, locations, and costs; (c) are led by certified facilitators; and (d) provide for the maintenance of high ethical standards. Grof (1988) emphasized that, in support of the NOSC experience, the accommodations and environment where the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique takes place needs to be conducive to creating a setting where the participants will feel safe to be open and express parts of their self that are normally taboo. Hence, most of the 6-day Grof Holotropic Breathwork™ retreats or workshops are held at facilities settings such as the evergreen forested mountains of Taos, New Mexico or the desert location of Joshua Tree, California as well as other nature-oriented locations throughout the world. Grof (1988) noted that the workshops are usually attended by 20-35 participants and are organized and led by a GTT certified facilitator, who is supported by a 2-6 facilitator team. He

indicated that the support team may consist of GTT certified facilitators but may also include approved GTT facilitators in-training. High standards of ethical behavior are stressed for anyone attending a retreat. This includes no sexual activity between participants or facilitators, confidentiality, and complete respect of each person's process.

Grof (1988) stressed that Holotropic Breathwork™ is nondirective and more effective when run in a group setting rather than individually in a psychotherapeutic setting. Facilities usually include private and shared rooms where all the meals throughout the retreat are provided. Grof (1988) stated that the facilities need a large enclosed, spacious room that can be darkened during the breath and focused body work sessions. The room is supplied with foam mattresses, clean sheets, blankets, tissue, and plastic bags (used for any necessary spitting or vomiting) placed throughout a padded room. He stressed that the participants are each assigned a mattress on the floor and provided plenty of space to allow for a full range of expression throughout the retreat. Besides being used for the breath and focused body work sessions, the large room is also used for the preparatory talks and group sharing. The first couple of days of the retreat provide a framework that gives a broader intellectual context thereby normalizing experiences a participant may judge as pathological or impossible, such as perinatal or transcendent experiences. The next 2 days are for the breath and focused body work sessions. The last days of the retreat are for integration and closure through group work where the mandala artwork is central to the sharing.

Grof (1988) indicated that there are usually four breathwork sessions, approximately 3 hours each session, that take place over the third and fourth day of the retreat. Participants are paired up. One of the paired-participants is referred to as the

experiencer and the other as the sitter. The experiencer is the person who engages in the breathwork beginning on the first half of the third day of the retreat. The sitter provides nonintrusive support for the experiencer who is silently present for the experiencer and also attends to the experiencer's needs when requested. The experiencer and the sitter alternate in their roles over the third and fourth day of the retreat. The experiencer lies on one of the sheet covered mats for the breathwork session. The breathwork session is begun by a brief, facilitator-led relaxation meditation which is followed by instructions to the experiencers to begin the fast breathing technique. After the initial instruction for the fast breathing technique, evocative music begins and is played loudly throughout the 3-hour breathwork session. Once the music begins the experiencer moves through the process on his or her own unless help is requested. Most of the experiencers become engaged in the fast, intense breathing technique intended to induce a NOSC. Grof stated that if the experiencer is having difficulty with the breathing technique, at the request of the experiencer, one of the facilitators is made available for focused bodywork. He stressed that throughout the breathwork session there is virtually no verbal communication and the sitter and facilitators interact with the experiencer only as requested by the experiencer. The 3-hour breathwork session is completely centered on each experiencer's process and care. At the end of the session, the experiencer is given time, opportunity, and supplies that allow for contemplation and expression of the experience. The experiencer decides how that time is spent, but generally mandala artwork is chosen.

Appendix B: Participant Selection Criteria

Fifteen volunteers were selected as this study's participants. These participants must have already completed a generally available 6-day GTT-equivalent Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat with a GTT certified facilitator prior to participating in the study.

The main criteria was they must

- be 18 years old and up
- have already completed a generally available retreat
- be willing to take part in a 1 to 2 hour interview within 12 months after completing the generally available retreat
- have created a mandala as part of the retreat and be willing to share it
- have the ability to use and access a computer e-mail system

Appendix C: Grof's (1988) Outline of Anecdotal Reports and Observations

Below is a summary outline listing a number of Grof's observations of both his Psychedelic and Holotropic Therapy clients and anecdotally reported experiences of nonordinary states of consciousness over a decade. Specifics about his clients and where he got his data were not provided. However, his outline included a composite of anecdotal reports and the final data of the qualitative thematic analysis of this study can be compared to his themes. His list includes the following categories:

TRANSPERSONAL EXPERIENCES

EXPERIENTIAL EXTENSION WITHIN CONSENSUS REALITY AND SPACE-TIME

1. Transcendence of spatial boundaries
 - a. Experience of Dual Unity
 - b. Identification with Other Persons
 - c. Group Identification and Group Consciousness
 - d. Identification with Animals
 - e. Identification with Plants and Botanical Processes
 - f. Oneness with Life and All Creation
 - g. Experience of Inanimate Matter and Inorganic Processes
 - h. Planetary Consciousness
 - i. Extraterrestrial Experiences
 - j. Identification with the Entire Physical Universe
 - k. Psychic Phenomena Involving Transcendence of Space
2. Transcendence of the Boundaries of Linear Time
 - a. Embryonal and Fetal Experiences
 - b. Ancestral Experiences
 - c. Racial and Collective Experiences
 - d. Past Incarnation Experiences
 - e. Phylogenetic Experiences
 - f. Experiences of Planetary Evolution
 - g. Cosmogenetic Experiences
 - h. Psychic Phenomena Involving Transcendence of Time

1. Physical Introversion and Narrowing of Consciousness

EXPERIENTIAL EXTENSION

BEYOND CONSENSUS REALITY AND SPACE-TIME

- a. Spiritistic and Mediumistic Experiences
- b. Energetic Phenomena of the Subtle Body
- c. Experiences of Animal Spirits

- d. Encounters with Spirit Guides and Suprahuman Beings
- e. Visits to Other Universes and Meetings with Their Inhabitants
- f. Experiences of Mythological and Fairy-Tale Sequences
- g. Experiences of Specific Blissful and Wrathful Deities
- h. Experiences of Universal Archetypes
- i. Intuitive Understanding of Universal Symbols
- j. Creative Inspiration and the Promethean Impulse
- k. Experience of the Demiurg and Insights into Cosmic Creation
- l. Experience of Cosmic Consciousness
- m. The Supracosmic and Metacosmic Void

TRANSPERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF PSYCHOID NATURE

- 1. Synchronistic Links between Consciousness and Matter
- 2. Spontaneous Psychoid Events
 - a. Supernormal Physical Feats
 - b. Spiritistic Phenomena and Physical Mediumship
 - c. Recurrent Spontaneous Psychokinesis (Poltergeist)
 - d. Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO Phenomena)
- 3. Intentional Psychokinesis
 - a. Ceremonial Magic
 - b. Healing and Hexing
 - c. Siddhis
 - d. Laboratory Psychokinesis

(Grof, 1988, pp. 43-44)

Appendix D: GTT Contraindicators and Exclusion Criteria

The GTT organization screens potential retreat participants for contraindicated conditions. The physical exertion associated with the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique is viewed as potentially exacerbating or harmful to some conditions. The following is a list of the GTT exclusion criteria used when screening potential participants:

- Cardiovascular disease in self or family history
- Glaucoma
- Pregnancy
- Psychiatric hospitalization particularly for a history of bipolar or manic episodes or paranoia
- Epilepsy
- Recent surgery, fractures, or severe osteoporosis
- Infectious diseases

(Taylor, 2007b, pp. 73-74)

Appendix E: Advertisement for Participants

Call for Participants

Join a Holotropic Breathwork™ and Mandala Experience

If you are over 18 years old and have completed participation in a week long Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat within the last 12 months you may be eligible to participate in a qualitative Intuitive Inquiry study to explore your experiences. Through participation in this study you may deepen your understanding as well as support further integration of your process.

Please note that this is an independent study that is not affiliated with GTT in anyway.

If you would like to participate in this study, please contact me, Rubye, at rubye.cervelli@gmail.com or call me at xxx-xxx-xxxx got more information on how you can participate.

We have reached a stage when research on various aspects of holotropic breathwork will determine the role this work will play in psychiatry, psychology, and in the world. I strongly encourage participants in the training and in holotropic breathwork workshops in general to become part of this study.

With warm regards, Stanislav Grof, M.D.

Appendix F: Participant Informed Consent/Transcriber's Confidentiality Agreement

Informed Consent Form

To the Participant in This Research:

You are invited to participate in a research study that will explore the experiences arising out of a GTT-equivalent Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat and the integral mandala artwork. This is a qualitative study that employs semistructured interviews. The study is designed to gain a fuller understanding of the experience of Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork. It is not designed to prove or disprove anything. Current research suggests that sharing one's experience can have potential benefits. Participation in this research has a potential to increase your understanding and deepen your appreciation for Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork.

The procedure will involve (a) signing an Informed Consent Form, (b) completing a Demographics Questionnaire, (c) completing a generally available 6-day GTT-equivalent Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat prior to study participation, (d) providing the researcher with a copy of your mandala artwork from the retreat, (e) completing a semistructured, recorded in-person or telephone interview, and (f) reviewing and commenting on the transcription of your interview. All expenses related to the 6-day GTT-equivalent retreat will be borne by the participant. The researcher is not responsible for any of the costs related to the retreat. Signing the consent form and completing the Demographic Questionnaire should take less than 20 minutes, the post-retreat interview approximately 1 hour, and the review and commenting on your transcribed interview approximately 30-60 minutes. In total, participating in this study will take approximately 2.5 hours including mandala artwork copying time. You will be contacted by telephone by the researcher to schedule the interview.

A copy of your mandala artwork will be sent to the researcher. The post-retreat interview will be by telephone or in-person interview held at a neutral location such as at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology or someone's office. The chosen mandala artwork must be visible throughout the interview. The cost of the telephone call and cost of copying and sending the mandala artwork will be covered by the researcher. Once the interview has been transcribed and checked by the researcher, you will have an opportunity to review the results and provide input to correct or change each of your responses prior to publication or use.

For the protection of your privacy, all information received from you will be kept confidential as to the source, and your identity will be protected. You will be asked to choose a pseudonym, and that pseudonym will be used in all the documents instead of your name. Any document with your actual name on it will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office, and only the researcher will have access to these documents. The transcriber will only have access to documents where your pseudonym has been used. Additionally, the transcriber will be required to sign a transcriber confidentiality agreement. In the reporting of information as published material, any

information that might identify you will be altered to ensure your anonymity including only using the pseudonym assigned to you.

A panel of 3 GTT certified facilitators, referred to as a Resonance Panel, will take part in the study. Their main role will be to review the researcher's initial distillation of recurring themes and patterns of all 12 participant interviews in the study. To protect confidentiality, only a pseudonym will be used. No name or identifier will be disclosed in any way, and the original interviews will not be shared at all. Additionally, a copy of your mandala artwork will be shown to each panel member. Again only a pseudonym will be attached or associated with the artwork to ensure anonymity. The panel members will be asked to look at both the themes and artwork from the perspective of resonance with their past experiences of reports about the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique. It will be emphasized that neither is to be analyzed, interpreted, or judged in any way but taken at face value.

Please note that each panel member's participation in the study necessitates signing an informed consent form to ensure confidentiality. In the panel member's form, it is emphasized that the documents and mandala artwork provided to the Resonance Panel member under this study will only be used by them as prescribed by the researcher exclusively for the purposes of this study including being taken at face value and not analyzed, interpreted, or judged. The documents and mandala artwork may not be used or reproduced for any other purpose by the panel members. Once the prescribed use is completed, the documents and mandala artwork provided to the panel member by the researcher will be returned to the researcher in their entirety.

The resulting research and integral artwork are intended for publication. By agreeing to participate you will also be agreeing to the publication of the results, interviews in part or whole, and the associated mandala artwork. All such data will be published under the pseudonym you choose.

This study is designed to minimize potential risks to you. However, some difficult feelings, such as anxiety, may arise out of sharing personal information. Upon request, if further support is needed, therapist referrals will be made available to you. If at any time you have any concerns and questions, the researcher will make every effort to discuss them with you and inform you of options for resolving your concerns.

If you have any questions and concerns about the study, you may call the researcher collect at xxx-xxx-xxxx or e-mail the researcher at ruby.cervelli@gmail.com or call Genie Palmer, Ph.D., Dissertation Chairperson, at 650-493-4430, or Kartik Patel, Ph.D., the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, at 650-493-4430.

If you decide to participate in this research, you may withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time during the conduct of the study and for any reason without penalty or prejudice. Also, permission to publish your mandala artwork is independent of participating in the study. If you do not agree to the researcher publishing

your mandala artwork, you may withdraw consent for publishing your mandala artwork at any time without withdrawing from the study. You may request a written summary of the group findings of the research by providing your mailing address with your signature.

By signing on the line provided, I attest that I have read and understood this form and had any questions about this research answered to my satisfaction. My participation in this research is entirely voluntary and no pressure has been applied to encourage participation. My signature indicates my willingness to be a participant in this research, and checking the options below indicates my preference on the handling of these items.

I give the researcher permission to scan, photograph, photocopy, and/or use my mandala artwork and publish it as part of the dissertation. Yes _____ No _____

I will send a copy of my retreat mandala artwork by [select and check one]:

- ☐ Photo Digital format through e-mail or
☐ as a Colored Hardcopy through the postal service.

I give the researcher permission, under anonymity, to share my mandala artwork with the study's Resonance Panel members. Yes _____ No _____

The researcher intends to communicate with you via e-mail. Are you willing and able to use this mode of communication? Yes _____ No _____

 Participant's Name (please print)

 Participant's Signature

 Date

 Please write in your pseudonym here

 Date

Mailing Address (if you want a written summary of the group findings.):

E-mail address (please print clearly or type):

 Researcher's signature
 rubye.cervelli@gmail.com
 [UPS P.O. Box]

 Date

Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

As a transcriptionist, I agree to maintain confidentiality with regard to all participant information, specifically the tapes from the interview sessions, but also the assessments and any other related written material. I will also help to aid the researcher in protecting the identity of participants to ensure anonymity.

Transcriber's Signature

Date

Transcriber's Name (please print)

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix G: Participant Demographics Questionnaire

Each participant will be asked to complete the questionnaire below and return the completed document to the researcher in either a hard copy through the postal service or e-mail. Any documents mailed to the participant by the researcher will included a self-addressed, stamped envelope to accommodate the return of the completed documents. Please type or print clearly.

Name: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Today's Date: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Gender: _____

Religious or Spiritual Tradition Preference (if applicable): _____

I have had _____ (#) of previous Holotropic Breathwork™ sessions

Highest Level of Education Completed: _____

Occupation/ Profession: _____

Marital Status (please circle one):

Single Never Married Married Partner Widowed

What religious or spiritual practices, such as meditation, Tai Chi, yoga, etc., do you engage in on a regular basis?

Appendix H: Study Participant Screening Questions

By telephone, the researcher will contact each respondent and ask them the following questions to determine their eligibility:

1. Are you over 18 years old? Yes_____ No_____
2. Will you be participating in either a six day GTT Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat or an equivalent retreat? Yes_____ No_____
3. If yes, then please specify the
 - dates for the retreat _____
 - name of the main facilitator _____
 - if equivalent, the informational website for the retreat _____
4. Do you choose to do the mandala artwork after a Holotropic Breathwork™ session? Yes_____ No_____
5. Do you know of any medical reasons that might prevent you from fully participating in this study? Yes_____ No_____

The participant will be accepted into the study if they answer positively to all of the above questions. If the participant is determined to be eligible, the following will be stated and asked:

1. You are eligible for participating in the study.
2. How are you going to submit a copy of mandala artwork?
 - by postal mailed copy _____
 - as a digital e-mailed photograph _____
3. An Informed Consent Form and demographics questionnaire will be sent to you. Do you prefer to receive it by—
 - E-mail_____
 - Postal Service_____

If a participant is deemed ineligible due to negative responses to the above screening questions, they will be informed they are not eligible and why. Appreciation for their time and interest will be expressed as closure.

Appendix I: Participant Interview Reminder E-mail

Dear _____

This is a reminder that we are scheduled for a 1 to 2 hour interview on [day], [date] at [time].

As previously mentioned, it will be approximately a 1 hour semistructured interview to explore your experience of your recent Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat and integral mandala artwork. Please have the same mandala artwork you chose to send to me visually in front of you throughout the interview.

If you need to reschedule, please contact me either by responding to this e-mail or by calling me at my expense.

I look forward to our interview,
Rube Cervelli
xxx-xxx-xxxx

Appendix J: Participant Post Retreat Interview

For the purpose of interviewing, the researcher will call or meet with each participant individually within 4 weeks of completing a generally available GTT-equivalent retreat and at the appointed interview date and time. Each interview will begin with some casual conversation and a few moments of silence to help the participant feel welcome and create a trusting relationship. The warm-up and the semistructured interview with each participant will consist of the following:

Hello____, this is Rubye Cervelli. How are you doing? [allow for a response] Are you ready for this interview? [allow for a response] Do you have your selected mandala artwork in front of you? [allow for a response] Can I confirm that the mandala artwork is the same one that you sent me? [allow for a response] Also, I want to remind you that our interview will be recorded and although the resulting analysis is intended for publication it will be kept confidential through the use of your chosen pseudonym. Do you have any questions about the process at this point? [allow for a response]

Before beginning our interview let's take a few minutes of quiet time and contemplation recalling your recent breathwork retreat experience. [pause]

Now please bring your self back with the intent to enter into an exploration of your retreat experience.

1. Is there some part of your Holotropic Breathwork™ experience that stands out as central to your overall experience?
2. If they have not provided much or enough detail, then ask—can you say more?
3. What types of experiences led to this(these) central experience(s)?
4. Before moving into our exploration of the mandala artwork, let's take a few moments again in silence and to contemplate and recall that part of your retreat experience. [pause] Now gently bring your self back with the intent to enter into an exploration of your retreat mandala artwork.
5. As you look at your mandala artwork, how does it express the experiences arising out of your breathwork sessions?
6. How was your experience of creating the mandala artwork itself?
7. What personal meaning does your mandala artwork symbols, colors, and layout have for you? Please describe it in detail.
8. If they have not provided much or enough detail, then ask—can you say more?

9. Is there anything else you would like to say about your GTT breathwork experience or artwork that has not been asked or said?

For closure, the researcher will ask and state: How was the interview for you? [wait for response] How are you feeling right now? [wait for response] Thank you for your time and participation. You will receive a copy of the transcribed interview for your review, additions or revisions as well as a summary of the group results once it is complete. Please feel free to contact me by e-mail if you have any questions or concerns about this interview.

Appendix K: Resonance Panel Member Selection Criteria

The Resonance Panel is intended to test the consistency and resonance of a study. The panel member selection criteria include being:

- at least 25 years old
- a certified GTT Holotropic Breathwork™ facilitator
- willing and able to read the researcher's list of interview themes and emerging patterns while looking at the participant's mandala artwork, and write a two page summary of whether or not they experience a resonance with what they have seen from past participants in prior Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat group mandala artwork and retreat experience sharing. The purpose is not to analyze, interpret, or judge the list of themes or the artwork (referred to texts) but to take the texts at face value.

Appendix L: Advertisement for Resonance Panel Participants

Call for Certified GTT Facilitators as Resonance Panel Participants

Become a Resonance Panel member for a Qualitative Intuitive Inquiry Study about Holotropic Breathwork™ and the Mandala Artwork Experience. Resonance panels are suggested to strengthen the validity of qualitative, Intuitive Inquiry studies. It will take about 3-4 hours of your time to read, reflect and document your review.

My name is Rubye Cervelli. I am a fifth year doctoral student at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology. My dissertation research study is on experiences arising out of participation in the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork.

This research is intended for publication, and confidentiality will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms assigned to both panel members and the participants. Please note that this is an independent study that is not affiliated with GTT in any way. If you would like to participate in this study, please contact me at rubyecervelli@gmail.com or call me at xxx-xxx-xxxx for more information on how you can participate.

Appendix M: Resonance Panel Member Screening Interview

The researcher will describe the study and the reason for needing a Resonance Panel as follows:

This is a qualitative study using the Intuitive Inquiry method to explore experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork. The study does not intend to prove anything but is intended as an exploration of the experience in hopes of gaining increased understanding and insight. There will be 12 participants in the study, and each will be interviewed within 4 weeks after taking a 6-day GTT-equivalent retreat. From the interviews, the researcher will create a list of the emerging themes and patterns.

A three person Resonance Panel is being enlisted to independently review the researcher's list of recurring themes and patterns and to determine and document whether there is resonance of the recurring themes and patterns with the past experience of shared experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique and the integral mandala artwork. It is estimated that each Resonance Panel member's review and two-page documentation will take approximately 3-4 hours. Is being on the Resonance Panel still of interest to you? If yes, then the researchers will ask following questions:

1. Are you 25 years old or more? Yes_____ No_____
2. Are you a GTT Certified Facilitator? Yes_____ No_____
3. If not, how many more GTT modules do you need to be certified? _____
4. You are not being asked to analyze, interpret or judge any of the data or mandala artwork but to take it at face value. Are willing to:

 read the researcher's list of interview themes and emerging patterns while looking at the participant's mandala artwork (confidentiality maintained by the use of pseudonyms)? Yes_____ No_____

 write a two page summary of whether or not you experience a resonance with what you have seen from past participants in prior Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat group mandala artwork and experience sharing (about 3-4 hours of your time)? Yes_____ No_____
5. Is there any physical reason that you know of that would prevent you from participating? Yes_____ No_____
6. Do you have access to and the ability to use e-mail? Yes___ No___

That is all of the questions. I will contact you within a few days to let you know how we will proceed. Do you have any questions? Thank you for your time and consideration.

Appendix N: Resonance Panel Member Informed Consent

To the Resonance Panel Member Participant:

You are invited to participate in a research study that will explore experiences arising out of a GTT-equivalent Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat and the integral mandala artwork. This is a qualitative study that employs semistructured interviews. The study is designed to gain a fuller understanding of the experience of Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork. It is not designed to prove or disprove anything. Current research suggests that sharing one's experience can have potential benefits. Participation in this research has a potential to increase your understanding and deepen your appreciation for Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork.

The study's 12 participants will be individually interviewed within 4 weeks of completing a generally available 6-day GTT-equivalent Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat. The researcher will list recurring themes and patterns from the interviews.

You will be asked to be part of a panel of three individuals who will each independently review and comment in writing on your resonance with the initial results of the researcher's list of recurring themes and patterns that emerge from the interviews. This review and write-up is expected to take approximately 3-4 hours, be double spaced and about 2 pages in length. No transcription services will be needed because the panel members will be sending in computer-typed comments to the researcher that will not require transcription.

Using only the participant's pseudonyms, the researcher will e-mail you the preliminary, password protected copy of the themes and patterns and copies of the participant's mandala artwork (the combination to hereinafter be referred to as texts). The researcher will call you to provide you the password.

Through reading the texts, without analyzing the texts, you will be asked to document whether or not the texts resonate with your past Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat experiences of participants sharing of such texts. Is there consonance or dissonance of the themes and mandala artwork as compared to your past experiences? It is important to note that the mandala artwork and recurring themes and patterns must be taken at face value and not analyzed, interpreted or judged. All communications will be done through e-mail and Microsoft word attachments, neutral mediums and procedures.

For the protection of your privacy, all information received from you will be kept confidential as to the source and your identity will be protected. You will be asked to choose a pseudonym and that pseudonym will be used in all the documents instead of your name. Any documents with your actual name on them will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office where only the researcher will have access to them. In the reporting of information in published material, any information that might identify you will be altered to ensure your anonymity.

The texts provided to you under this study will be used by you only as prescribed by the researcher exclusively for the purposes of this study and may not be used or reproduced for any other purpose. Once the prescribed use is completed, the documents and mandala artwork provided to you by the researcher must be returned to the researcher in their entirety. The resulting research and integral artwork are intended for publication. By agreeing to participate you will also be agreeing to the publication of the results of your input.

Participation as a panel member is designed to minimize potential risk to you. As you read the list of themes you may experience some discomfort. If at any time you have any concerns and questions the researcher will make every effort to discuss them with you and inform you of options for resolving your concerns.

If you have any questions and concerns about the study, you may call the researcher collect at xxx-xxx-xxxx or e-mail the researcher at ruby.cervelli@gmail.com or call Genie Palmer, Ph.D., Dissertation Chairperson, at 650-493-4430, or Kartik Patel, Ph.D., the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, at 650-493-4430.

If you decide to be on the Resonance Panel for this research, you may withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time during the conduct of the study and for any reason without penalty or prejudice.

You may request a written summary of the research group findings by providing your mailing address with your signature.

By signing below, I attest that I have read and understood this form and had any questions about this research answered to my satisfaction. My participation in this research is entirely voluntary, and I agree to participate in this study without any pressure having been applied. My signature indicates my willingness to be a participant in this research.

Participant's Name (please print)

Participant's Signature

Date

Please write in your pseudonym here

Date

Mailing Address (if you want a written summary of the group findings.):

E-mail address (please print clearly or type):

Researcher's signature
rubby.cervelli@gmail.com
xxx-xxx-xxxx
[UPS P.O. Box]

Date

Appendix O: Resonance Panel Member Demographics Questionnaire

Each Resonance Panel member will be asked to complete the questionnaire below and return the completed document to the researcher by e-mail. The potential panel member's background must meet the Resonance Panel member's selection criteria.

Name: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Today's Date: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Gender: _____

Highest Level of Education Completed: _____

Occupation/ Profession: _____

Marital Status (please circle one):

Single

Never Married

Married

Partner

Widowed

What religious or spiritual practices, such as meditation, Tai Chi, yoga, etc., do you engage in on a regular basis?

Appendix P: Resonance Panel Member Request for Review and Comment

Dear _____:

I appreciate your agreeing to be part of the panel of three individuals who will each independently review and comment in writing on my initial write-up of themes and patterns and the study participants' mandala artwork (confidentiality maintained through the use of pseudonyms).

Attached is a copy of the initial results of my recurring themes and patterns of this study's participants' experiences arising out of their 6-day GTT-equivalent Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral Mandala Artwork retreat.

Through reading the recurring themes and patterns and looking at the mandala artwork (hereinafter referred to as texts) and without analyzing either of the texts, please document whether or not the texts resonate with your past Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat experiences of participants sharing of such texts. Limiting your document to two pages, double spaced will be appreciated. It is important to note that the mandala artwork and recurring themes and patterns must be taken at face value and not analyzed, interpreted, or judged.

Also, as part of your written input, adding your experience of your review will be appreciated. After reading the attached analysis, did you feel inspired or moved? Did you experience a shift in your perspective about the experience of Holotropic Breathwork™ and the integral mandala artwork? If so, what was the shift? Was there a feeling of authenticity in the study? Did the study have a quality of depth?

Please provide me with your comments and responses within 2 weeks of receiving this document. If you have any concerns about the process, feel free to contact me at ruby.cervelli@gmail.com or xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

Ruby Cervelli

Appendix Q: Letter to Resonance Panel Members

The letter below was sent to each Resonance Panel Member. Accompanying this letter was the complete list of themes set forth in Appendix R.

Dear Resonance Panel Members:

I appreciate your giving your time, energy, and insight to this research project. Your efforts will help strengthen and reinforce the findings and contributions of this study's purpose, which is to deepen the understanding of experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ technique.

To accomplish this goal, recurring themes from 15 breathwork participant interviews were extracted to provide a microscopic view of what happens during the sessions of a week-long Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat. As a Resonance Panel Member you will be providing verification of my initial synthesis of the themes. The title *Resonance Panel* is descriptive of what is being asked of you as well as why you were chosen. Your extensive training in and experience with Holotropic Breathwork™ are the qualifications that will allow you to know whether the themes pulled from the interviews resonate with you.

As you consider the attached list of themes, without analyzing them, please document whether these themes resonate with your past Holotropic Breathwork™ retreat experiences. As you read through and mull over the themes, it may help to ask yourself—*Do I experience a resonance with the themes as compared to my past experiences of reports from others as well as my own experiences arising out of the Holotropic Breathwork™ method? Are the themes in alignment with my knowledge of experiences of breathwork sessions I have seen, heard about, or experienced?*

The themes you will be contemplating are listed in the attached table. The titles in each column in the first row define each column. It is important to note that the recurring themes and patterns must be taken at face value and not analyzed, interpreted or judged. Also, contrast is used to help clarify the selection criteria for each theme. Therefore, at the end of each category is an example of what was excluded. Only your own feeling of resonance is important and needs to be considered.

Once you have formulated your impressions and reactions, thru an email attachment, please provide me with a write-up of your reflections in a Microsoft word document within 30 days of receiving these instructions. This write-up needs to be **at least one page, but no longer than two pages, double-spaced, using 12-point font.**

Please feel free to contact me by email or phone at xxx-xxx-xxxx if you have any questions or want clarification. Thank you in advance for your participation and contribution to my study and I hope you enjoy the process.

Ruby

Appendix R: Examples of Themes Attached for Resonance Panel Members

This is an example of the complete set of themes and the subset of themes that accompanied the letter in Appendix Q sent to each Resonance Panel Member. Preceding the tables was the brief explanation of how the themes and its subset were derived and organized.

To be counted and included in a particular theme, the participant had to have made a statement where their words were congruent with the definition of the theme. Therefore, although there are 15 participants, only a subset of the total were considered as having an experience under a particular theme. However, just because the participant's words did not fit into that category does not necessarily mean they did not have the experience categorized as a theme, but for the purposes of this study their experience could not be counted. For example, to be counted under the theme 'self-actualization', a participant would have to use words that indicated a movement towards a sense of self being fostered as Adam did when he stated *I came into myself. Not intellectually. Physically.* Therefore, 11 out of 15 participants interviewed used terminology that allowed these to be categorized under the self-actualization theme.

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
Self-actualization (11 Participants)	Individuality, fostered	Creative self- expression, encouraged	"Actually, they [flower petals] were different ways to express myself, like writing and speaking. A lot of them had to do with communicating. . . .coming towards creative self-expression." (Maya)
		Self-worth, promoted	"That was the whole gist of this breathwork . . . to feel myself, that I am somebody who can give something to the world." (Ishad)
		Self- knowledge, discovered	"To me it's the simple concept of having a safe container . . . so that I can become permeable. . . The essence of that experience, it was as if I came into myself. Not intellectually. Physically—physically I came into myself." (Adam)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
		Facet of self, discovered	“I felt really inconsolable in that breathwork . . . I had never discovered in any other way or just thinking that way about myself—inconsolable. . . spirit is consoling, having the divine consoling. . . It was just a glow.” (Jane)
		Self as love, revealed	“I became, on the peak of the mountain, this Guru figure living in an ashram. I was receiving visitors and radiating love to them all.” (Frank)
		Connection to diversity, revealed	“I experienced myself simultaneously as a fetus . . . in the womb, but at the same time being connected to all, not just one mother. Being connected to all of this diversity.” (Mooranth)
		All aspects of self, invited	“I had this sense of every aspect of myself and every other self that’s ever existed and that I was inviting into life.” (Michael)
		A different person, revealed	“This. . . loss of my dad. . . was the . . . dark cloud . . . everything that needed to be dealt with on a deeper level . . . bubbled up to the surface waiting to be dealt with. And it feels like quite efficiently I went through kind of one subject to another to another to clear it . . . by the end, I definitely felt like ‘I did it!’ . . . I completely felt like a hundred percent different person.” (Leones)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
		Unknown part of self, revealed	“I get this sense of reducing down—physically reducing down to an infant or a fetus. . . . not just a baby, but some kind of other. . . . a being that would be bound.” (Lena)
		New perspective, revealed	“It seems like I moved forward in time. When I was . . . breathing . . . I saw . . . these purple eyes. . . . when we watched the Vicarious video by Alex Gray, the artist, it was like—oh, those were the eyes. I had drawn the eyes previously and saw the video three hours later. I thought that was sort of unique . . . I’ve never done that before.” (Chauncey)
		The me, environmentalism, group pride, and chi energy, revealed	“The general things were the me coming out, the environmentalism, the pride in my group . . . the chi energy.” (John Utah)
Self-healing (8 Participants)	Aspect of self, recovered	Ability to live in the present and future, fostered	“A lot of the breathworks I’ve done have been about healing something from the past. This breathwork was more about how to live now and in the future.” (Maya)
		Acceptance and insight, recognized	“I definitely could recognize that a lot of healing and growth did take place, like acceptance and . . . insight into a lot of things, psychology.” (John Utah)
		Divine consoling, discovered	“It’s an opening, not just in my heart . . . but my whole nervous system is getting released and opened and calmed and soothed. . . . spirit is consoling, having the divine consoling.” (Lena)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
		Warrior-self, revealed	“When the person put the pressure on, I suddenly became another—I was a full-blown other personality. I had the image of a primitive Mongol—a warrior kind of thing.” (Adam)
		Revitalization through the female body, revealed	“For some reason, it suddenly became amazingly clear to me that this was taking place inside the woman’s body and that the entire cycle of the Sun God’s journey represented the masculine energy revitalizing itself through the female body.” (Frank)
		Pain, healed	“Reliving it in a safe place is hard—it’s hard to do this work . . . we need to go through the pain to heal, and I definitely, definitely went through the pain. . . I feel . . . really healed.” (Leoneess)
		Heaviness, lifted	“It was a feeling lightness right after that happened . . . a heaviness had been lifted. . . It occurred to me that it felt like this framework that had been holding me up all of my life was gone, and that was a good thing, because I think it’s been a framework that hasn’t served me well.” (Ann)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
		With spirit, connected	“I think it probably goes back to being sexually abused as a kid, and . . . just my soul fragmenting off—like, losing that conscious connection with spirit, with the divine . . . beyond just the everyday physical world. . . Nirvana is a reminder of it’s always there. I don’t expect myself to be in Nirvana all the time, but you know, it’s a reminder, I guess, is the best word, that that connection is there.” (Jane)
Sensation (12 Participants)	Physical (12), mental acumen (10) or emotional (9), aspect, experienced		
	Physical aspect, experienced (12 Participants)	Head pressure, encountered	“I had pressure on my head and I was kind of rocking and put a pillow around my head. I was feeling stuck, like I couldn’t get out” (Maya)
		Nervous system, released, opened and relaxed	“It’s an opening, not just in my heart, and it certainly is coming through my heart, but it’s almost like my whole nervous system is getting released and opened and calmed and soothed.” (Lena)
		Head and genital pain, perceived	“I also had an absolutely splitting headache and pain in my genitals that I associate with circumcision” (Frank)
		Warm heart, experienced	“there was an overall warm sensation . . . a warm heart . . . after you ride out the tetany sensation” (John Utah)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
		Physicality, realized	“I physically came into myself in a way that was a different way of knowing myself—experiencing.” (Adam)
		Body enlargement, sensed	“increasing sense of the body being larger . . . it was like getting blown up kind of like a Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade float.” (Mooranth)
		Headache and shaky, recognized	“A bad headache and shaky and feeling exhausted, but it’s not really about sleep or lack of it. It’s just sort of that wanting to check out stuff.” (Jane)
		Vibrating fingers and hands, recognized	“My fingers and my hands were vibrating—like I’d feel a motor like rrrrr.” (Tko)
		Stuck in body, acknowledged	“I felt stuck in my body, like I couldn’t get into the experience really, and my body just wanted to shut down and go into hibernation mode.” (Leoneess)
		A feeling of Suffocation, realized	“I had that feeling of suffocating, and I realized that I wanted to . . . tighten that feeling of suffocation and go deeper into it.” (Ann)
		Awareness of recreating self, increased	“Ultimately it boiled down to this feeling of a sensation or experience of recreating myself—my physical self from inside out . . . it’s almost like if you were going to build something from clay from the inside out.” (Michael)
		Sense of wholeness, recognized	“I felt my heart was there, my body was there. . . . I was altogether whole. I felt like a wholeness.” (Ishad)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
	Mental acumen, experienced (10 Participants)	Pattern of abandonment, acknowledged	"I have a co-ex [pattern] around abandonment, and how through living life as one breathwork, I've been able to bring the microscope of awareness onto this pattern." (Maya)
		Breath connects us, realized	"I had this realization . . . you're totally conscious before the breath, but . . . breath . . . connects you to the outside world or some other world." (Pseudoswami)
		Pattern of identification, discovered	"As soon as it became clear what this is all about, I had no more pain. I had no more identification with him. My boundaries were clear all of a sudden, who I am and where I begin and stop, in relation to him. . . . This was an incredible discovery because I realized how I do this in a lot of situations." (Ishad)
		Connection with ancestors, recognized	"The thought comes that this Akchui character is a piece of my past, my ancestors. That there are countless cross-sections through that, and he's just one piece of that. That his energy pattern is embedded in me." (Adam)
		Paranoia, recognized	"It's more than a paranoia, I was convinced the whole thing was fake....but there was certainly a level of paranoia there that I'd never experienced before. . . . I shouldn't say I'd never experienced [paranoia] before . . . in the early '80s after I left home. . . . I didn't trust anyone." (Morfran)
		Theme of making life difficult, realized	"I heard myself say 'I must make things difficult for myself', and realized that this is a theme in my life." (Frank)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
		Order and a plan, recognized	“By the time I get spun off without all the chaos . . . it means something to me to say, okay, there is some kind of order here, there’s some kind of plan, there’s something going on . . . keeping us alive, keeping us from blowing up, I guess. So it’s . . . a consoling thing to . . . see this large scale order when there’s so much disorder.” (John Utah)
		Working with energetic experience, realized	“I’ve been having more of this energetic experience with my spine and all the rest of that, so it feels like a piece, to me, that’s both . . . becoming aware of and learning how to work with it over time.” (Lena)
		Body as messenger, recognized	“I think the body sort of locking up or numbing or lack of feeling . . . the metaphor . . . for the heart of the spirit being locked up. . . the body is the messenger.” (Jane)
		Need to face our illusion, realized	“The mirror . . . [with the] image of reflections of her own face . . . represented the idea of facing everything and facing our . . . self and the illusion that we have some kind of real control over our lives . . . the only way out is to . . . really see our own reflection.” (Michael)
	Emotion aspect, experienced (9 Participants)	Contentment, experienced	“I had a feeling of contentment.” (Maya)
		Awareness of suffering and Sadness, recognized	“The sadness is usually associated with . . . the general global suffering . . . also I have the experience of sadness about individuals.” (Pseudoswami)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
		Sad and depressed, encountered	"I started feeling a little sad and depressed. . . . I've had that experience before and it [coming out of black hole] usually brings feelings of isolation and loneliness." (Morfran)
		Many emotions, encountered	"a lot of emotion, it was kind of a roller coaster between . . . general anxiety in the experience, sadness, a strong sense of loss at periods. Happiness. I cried for happiness a few times." (John Utah)
		Delight, encountered	"I was delighted by what I had experienced and how real it seemed." (Frank)
		Ecstasy, experienced	"there was a sense of ecstasy." (Mooranth)
		Joy, experienced	"I felt joy and thrill sucking in all of the cosmic energy that I could invoke." (Tko)
		Emotionally drained, experienced	"that was such an energy release and it felt like a knot had been untied and I was emotionally just drained afterwards and it felt good to be relieved of that." (Adam)
		Frustration, encountered	"That was just really frustrating too that I felt like I was just stuck and this energy was stuck in me." (Leones)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
Non-ordinary state of consciousness (12 Participants)	An uncommon way of perception, encountered	Self as ego-less state, experienced	"I felt like my heart was there, my body was there . . . a wholeness. . . there is still somebody there who is the ego-less state." (Ishad)
		Yogic, collective-like energy, experienced	"Some of my breathwork is that yogic experience, no way to describe it, but it represents collective energy representations more than visual . . . it wasn't physical the way that the body was involved, no pains or obvious sensations . . . not attached to emotions." (Morfran)
		Birth process, experienced	"The breathwork started with a birth process, where I had pressure on my head. I was rocking left and right and put a pillow around my head." (Maya)
		Birth, experienced	"I felt like I was really at the tail end of birth. It was nothing very dramatic but it was just a little kind of, you know, pop through, so I must have been way at the tail end." (Chauncey)
		Own birth, experienced	"My second experience of breathwork was my experience of my mother giving birth to me, so it was interesting that this time around it was my experience and my own birth." (Ann)
		The void, recognized	"[I] go in the void and come back, kind of like your consciousness just dissipates and it comes back later . . . I feel refreshed when I come back." (John Utah)
		Womb, re-experienced	"I was back in the womb, and I had a twin brother I hadn't previously been aware of. . . The water broke, in the womb and I just watched the life drain out of him." (Frank)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
		Oneness, experienced	"I've had moments of that experience of oneness with certain things, but never for that length of time. It was an altered experience." (Adam)
		Sense of acceleration into the universe, recognized	"I wasn't trying to avoid being blown up like a Macy's Thanksgiving float but it just seemed—it seemed good to stay grounded in some way. I had the sense that I could just. . . accelerate into the universe and fly around." (Mooranth)
		Head and body opening up, experienced	"It was the expansiveness at the end of this birth process. . . my head feels like it opens up and the rest of my body feels like it opens up to. . . the sky. It's as open as the sky." (Lena)
		Being in space and on light, experienced	"I was feeling that I was in space. . . just sitting there. . . sitting on a pillow of light, a light cushion." (Tko)
		No mind, beyond the personal, experienced	"It was just . . . Nirvana. . . . There was not a mind—the mind wasn't going . . . it was like beyond the personal." (Jane)
Potential (9 Participants)	Aptitude, realized	Different ways to express self, recognized	"Each petal represented a different way to express myself . . . many possibilities." (Maya)
		Self as mystery, recognized	"To me, life is a mystery that includes myself." (Ishad)
		Awareness, fostered	"It just . . . feels like all your cells are awake. . . . I feel . . . alive so this is good. My whole body feels good . . . After I rode out of the tetany . . . I'm alive and a little more alert. So I guess overall an increase in awareness." (John Utah)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
		Inner authority, revealed	“What feels important about it is there is an inner authority in me which I have never felt before.” (Adam)
		Creative potential, experienced	“the whole session was about the incredible creative potential of diversity” (Mooranth)
		Own power, acknowledged	“I became the Sun god. I was on the peak of the mountain and I was looking out across this desert and I was wondering whether or not I had the authority to use the power that I had to command the weather in this session. I realized that because it was a desert everywhere, that I really had no other option and I sent out rain and the wind was my breath.” (Frank)
		Spirit, discovered	“I went to meetings frequently for years, but I still didn’t feel the spirit. I was learning about it, but I wasn’t feeling it. . . it’s like the moonbeams, it was just showing me ‘this is here.’ It’s really here. That this is not forbidden territory. Yeah, that, you know, it’s yours, it’s everybody’s.” (Jane)
		With positive, loving, nurturing energy, filled	“I had cleared all this out and now I could fill back up with all this good, positive, loving, nurturing energy.” (Leoneess)
		More possibilities in life, recognized	“That felt like real growth for me, too. . . . I’m choosing to put myself in a better place, and I’m choosing that there will then be more possibilities for me in my life.” (Ann)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
Fulfillment (8 Participants)	Gratification, enhanced	Feeling gorgeous and whole, experienced	“I felt I was embodying the flower, I felt gorgeous and whole and like I had so many ways to express myself and each petal represented a different way to express myself.” (Maya)
		With joy and bliss, filled	“It’s like there’s no burdens—it’s just pure joy and pure bliss and I just feel wonderful that I’m in it.” (Pseudoswami)
		Confidence, increased	“I’m going to go on my own, like give up my business. And that breathwork was sort of a confidence builder for me. . . . to visualize myself as like . . . fulfilling kind of person who is standing on his own in the world.” (Ishad)
		Aliveness, encouraged	“Coming out of it I felt amazing for weeks after . . . I had this great glow . . . I felt really alive . . . the majority of things in my daily consciousness were beautiful. Like everything was fun, couldn’t get on my nerves.” (John Utah)
		Support, discovered	“Rather than try and incorporate him, it’s this wonderful feeling of support, that this is part of the supporting cast that’s already there—whole.” (Adam)
		Fruitfulness, discovered	“Things arise out of this darkness that’s—it has a fruitful aspect to it. It isn’t just scary dark stuff, and it may have some difficult aspects to it, but it has a fruitful aspect to it as well.” (Lena)
		Fulfillment, recognized	“I felt like I was welcoming, and it was sort of exciting and it wasn’t big excitement, but it was a little bit of excitement there, but more fulfilling.” (Michael)
		Happiness, experienced	“I had this feeling with the music . . . that I could die happy.” (Tko)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
Archetypal symbol (8 Participants)	A universal, historically recognizable pattern or symbol, revealed	Invocation, revealed	“It’s not constantly, but as a kind of dance, a kind of a circle dance at a certain point. . . . a kind of festival or event where something is happening, something is being invoked.” (Mooranth)
		Universal female figure, recognized	“My vision was me crawling through the desert . . . energy coming from the egg-like figure towards me, but I had just been through this gate . . . I remembered this is from . . . that universal female figure.” (Pseudoswami)
		Self as warrior, experienced	“I felt myself as a warrior . . . and gave gratitude to the warrior.” (Tko)
		Unavailable parts of self, recognized	“That was the forbidden territory like standing in the doorway of the church and looking in, but not going in. I mean, this glow—I can still see that glow now. I mean, it was just an unbelievable orange glow, and the entire building was full of that glow.” (Jane)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
		Birth process being like a flower transforming from bud to bloom, experienced	“I ended up on my back with my arms and legs spread wide and taking up the whole space. And then, I had that image of a single chrysanthemum bloom. One bloom by itself, and I sensed that I had become that flower. The flower represents perfection, presence, joy. It was really nice. I had a feeling of contentment at that point, and the stress and uncomfortable feelings from both the birth process and then being tight in the bud were gone. I see some parallels between the birth process and being tight in the bud, the fact that I was on my right side in the fetal position and then coming out of that and then being a bloom. It was like a transformation, from bud to bloom.” (Maya)
		A warrior personality, revealed	“I suddenly became another—I was a full-blown other personality. I had the image of a primitive Mongolian—just a warrior kind of thing. And it was a full and complete other personality.” (Adam)
		Connection with others, discovered	“In the session. . . we went to a place . . . designated as my ‘place in the world’ . . . represented as a simple pagoda, with pillars, and a rectangular bench . . . It feels to me now as though I was connecting and finding a place within myself for all those children who hadn’t been held.” (Frank)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
		Desire for higher self, revealed	"Fire here represents all of humanity or human desire . . . the higher self for all human." (John Utah)
Unavailable parts of self (7 Participants)	Aspects of a person normally inaccessible, discovered	Repressed parts coming out, revealed	"parts of myself definitely . . . didn't want to be repressed anymore so they came out." (John Utah)
		Bliss, revealed	"Constant bliss, which makes it odd. . . There wasn't emotions, there wasn't memories, maybe that's part of what throws me. . . Because I'm usually left-brained, that it's an unfamiliar area and usually left brain is verbal." (Chauncey)
		Birth of the spirit, engaged	"I knew that because I was so in my body feeling it was very strong. And I had the sense that something was being born but without any stress, that is, it was to say it was kind of a birth of the spirit." (Mooranth)
		Having an open heart is possible, recognized	"There was . . . this damper on light and brightness in the home that I grew up in. So it was like, you know, doesn't matter any more. . . I can have an open heart, period." (Jane)
		Relationship with the feminine, revealed	"It's one part that is so important to me, is the flower and the bee and their intimacy was my relationship with her [the feminine], which took a new turn for me. . . This is definitely coming into relationship with her, with that part and not being totally engulfed by her." (Adam)
		Psychic communication, engaged	"I still couldn't even ask for help, so I just looked at him . . . please, please, please do help me I need help—like psychically trying to communicate that I needed help." (Leoneess)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
		Self as flower, experienced	“This is the first time I actually became a flower. The process I had before has been about blooms coming out of my chest.” (Maya)
Surrender (6 Participants)	Control, relinquish	Need to surrender to feeling stuck, realized	“I realized, okay, that’s what I need to do here: Surrender to this feeling of being stuck. I actually got to this place where I was very relaxed in my body. I didn’t feel like the birth process was complete, but I felt very relaxed and then I moved on to feeling like a tight bud on my right side. When I was in that place of being a tight bud, I felt a lot of embarrassment, like I shouldn’t take up space, along with a feeling of being insignificant.” (Maya)
		Inner conflict, recognized	“I hear about the fantastic stories so I want the fantastic experience. (laughs) And that’s kind of a conflict with, in conflict with what the inner healer, I guess, has in store for me. So that’s part of it. And that does seem to happen. Yeah, that’s interesting. And yeah, that’s why I’m disappointed about it. Intermittently, I let it pass. I don’t dwell on it too much.” (John Utah)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
		Letting go to enter the birth canal, recognized	“Abandonment and letting go were certainly common to both sessions. . . . I knew that I had to leave the ashram and I had to pass my power over to my disciples. I did that and I came down the mountain, very slowly filed down to the bottom, and the weather became less inclement as I got to the bottom. And then there was mud, mud at the bottom of the mountain and I knew that I needed to get lower. I was sinking in my knees into the mud and I knew that I needed to get lower, and lower still. It wasn’t down enough. I went down into the mud. There were underground tunnels. It was very, very narrow and suddenly I realized that I was in the birth canal.” (Frank)
		Surrender to sadness, experienced	“I feel sadness . . . It’s a surrender” (Tko)
		Arms locked up and then letting go, experienced	“I can’t remember if they were in pain, or what exactly was happening. And they worked with my arms—some body work—and then I just went into that Nirvana. It was almost like . . . being locked up and then letting go.” (Jane)
		Without hope, desire or seeking, experienced	“My language going into it [the breathwork session], was basically to be a weed, a useless thing, without hope or without desire or seeking anything—just the weed with no saving grace.” (Adam)
Surprise factor (5 Participants)	Astonishment, engaged	By inner healer, awed	“I was in awe of my Inner Healer and what it brought me.” (Maya)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
		At the spiritual aspect of a person, awed	“I can still see that glow now . . . it was just an unbelievable orange glow, and the entire building was full of that glow . . . it was like standing there in awe of this . . . demonstration of the cartography of a person is much vaster than the body and the personality . . . the spiritual, for lack of a better word . . . knowing that . . . really is the nucleus of self or the center of self and everything—that the energy of all that is—we’re all energy.” (Jane)
		By the clearness and lightness, awed	“It was just awesome to feel the kind of clearness and lightness.” (Leone)
		At laughing at self after pain, surprised	“I was surprised when each pain reached its crescendo to find myself laughing when it was released. I felt as though I had cleared energy blockages on each level separately with the physical being the last.” (Frank)
		By the beauty of existence, awed	“Awe at the beauty of existence. . . . It’s just, wow, these things are amazing, they’re great, they’re beautiful and they exist, you can see them.” (John Utah)
Observer (5 Participants)	Onlooker, engaged	Observer part of self, experienced	“The observer stayed fixed in a place beneath the heart chakra, with a different attitude, it was not a seeking thing but a fixed thing that would allow whatever wanted to be seen to bubble up.” (Adam)
		Observer part of self, recognized	“Some of this happened in my mind too . . . a lot of these things happen in one’s mind anyway. The observer is always in the mind somehow.” (Ishad)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
		Pure observer self, experienced	"I still wasn't aware of myself in this. I was just pure through this whole second thing I was pure observer." (Mooranth)
		Observing, encountered	"I see rays above my breath. Like if you're traveling on a highway and it's really, really hot. . . . I just zone out and observe it." (Tko)
		Self observational skills, increased	"I guess it adds some ability to cope or see or see what's going on in a situation. Without getting pulled into it necessarily, probably increased observational skills to a degree." (Chauncey)
Struggle (3 Participants)	Great effort, exercised	Opening up, after struggle and pushing, experienced	"It's after the struggling and pushing that I get to the center image—to the opening up aspect." (Lena)
		Struggle with need to ask for help, experienced	"I got very quickly into this 'I need help' . . . And they said . . . just try to get into it, start breathing, and I went very quickly, when I started breathing, into little girl kind of shut-down. . . . I couldn't even ask for help, which was very unusual for me." (Leoneess)
		Struggle with letting go of control, recognized	"I like the physical sensation of it . . . something about the tetany, the fact that I don't feel like I am fully in control of the physical aspect, and it's almost like the struggle of it." (Michael)
Emptiness (2 Participants)	No content, encountered	Emptiness that was full, experienced	"So that's what it feels like as if I opened up a bottle full of energy I didn't know existed. . . . it became—it was a long, long period of just emptiness that was full." (Adam)
		Emptiness, realized	"It just felt like there was a lot of emptiness . . . inside me that cleared so much of this darkness out." (Leoneess)

Themes (Label)	Subtheme: Definition of the Theme	Selection Criteria Aspect	Participant Illustration
Knowledge, (2 Participants)	Understanding, encouraged	A different way of knowing, revealed	“He’s [warrior] very—he has no manners—he could care less about propriety. . . . And it’s not in resistance to propriety; he just has no understanding of that. And it comes from an inner wholeness or self-assurance of the way things are. And the fact that he knows how to name things—that he knows the name of everything—means that it’s not an assimilated knowing. . . . The depth of the experience . . . and the quality of the feelings . . . a different way of knowing that’s entered my daily life. . . . There’s something inside of me that’s wonderful and complete.” (Adam)
		Wisdom knowledge, recognized	“I contemplated a lot of my non-commitments to spirituality, but at the same time I was able to recognize . . . the progress and it seems I feel like I’ve gained . . . spiritually and [in] wisdom knowledge.” (John Utah)