THE ROLE OF ATTENTION CULTIVATION IN

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS: A

NARRATIVE INQUIRY

by

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ABSTRACT

Since the late 1980s, a different way to do business began to achieve more widespread support. The intention of this form of business—sustainable business—is to conduct itself in a way that does not jeopardize the basic needs of present and future generations by unnecessarily sacrificing environmental, social, and economic resources. This is in contrast to traditional Western business practices that focus on maximizing short-term financial profit without much consideration of the impact on environmental and social resources. It appears that any change in business from the single bottom line of monetary profit to a triple bottom line of "people, planet, and profit" requires a different type of leadership. Research indicates that some practices that are meant to cultivate attention (e.g., meditation) contribute positively to leadership behavior, yet there is very little empirical evidence on the specific impact of attention cultivation practices on leadership capacities that may enhance sustainability in business.

This study uses the qualitative method of narrative inquiry in which six co-participants and I explore the role of attention cultivation in furthering sustainability in business. The six co-participants were clients in my leadership

attention coaching practice who had received at least nine months of attention coaching, were employed at the time they received coaching, and were alumni of or currently enrolled in an MBA program geared towards sustainable business. Through a narrative analysis of interviews, narrative excerpts, and images of artwork, this study reveals three behavior patterns: Acquiring Equanimity, Nonjudgmental Attention, and Letting Go. Further examination of these patterns reveals that the impact of this specific attentional practice may support a leader's capacities for mindfulness, adaptive and authentic leadership, postconventional stages of mental complexity, and systems thinking, all of which have been suggested in the literature as capacities that contribute to furthering sustainability in business.

This study suggests that the primal faculty of the deployment of attention is foundational in a leader's capacity for movement that advances sustainability in business. Recommendations are offered for programs that train leaders in sustainable business, for leaders who are interested in advancing sustainability in business, and for further research.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This narrative study seeks to explore the relationship between attention cultivation and furthering sustainability in business. The purpose of this study was to explore with a sample of business leaders their lived experience of engagement in attention cultivation in their pursuit of furthering sustainability in business; that is, conducting business activities in such a way that does not jeopardize the basic needs of present and future generations by unnecessarily sacrificing environmental, social, and economic resources.

The inquiry herein employed the qualitative method of narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2004) using a purposive sample of seven leaders, including myself, who have engaged in attention cultivation in their pursuit of furthering sustainability in business.

This chapter begins with the context and background that frames the problem this study explores. Following this is the problem statement, the statement of purpose, and accompanying research questions. Next the research design overview is discussed, as well as my relationship to the problem and my assumptions. Then there is a discussion of the proposed rationale and significance of this study. Finally, definitions of some of the key terminology are provided.

Background and Context

This section provides a summary of the literature review detailed in Chapter 2. By providing this overview, my hope is to build a case for why this study is relevant at this time.

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Since the mid-1980s there have been many efforts by the United Nations to address the impact of human activity (development) on the natural and human environment. One such effort was the appointment by the United Nations General Assembly of the World Commission on Environmental and Development (WCED) in 1983. In its report, the WCED (1987) concluded:

> There has been a growing realization in national governments and multilateral institutions that it is impossible to separate economic development issues from environment issues; many forms of development erode the environmental resources upon which they must be based, and environmental degradation can undermine economic development. Poverty is a major cause and effect of global environmental problems. It is therefore futile to attempt to deal with environmental problems without a broader perspective that encompasses the factors underlying world poverty and international inequality. (p. 3)

This report laid a foundation for subsequent efforts by the United Nations, including: (a) 27 principles identified to help guide sustainable development (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992), (b) eight Millennial Development Goals (United Nations General Assembly, 2000), and (c) updated global sustainability recommendations (United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability, 2012). While this repeated push by the United Nations (UN) for global action on the part of governments, countries, and societies to stop environmental degradation and social injustices has resulted in some progress towards global sustainability, the efforts and their results are still limited.

In reply to the UN's call, Western business practitioners and academics have responded with a form of commerce referred to as sustainable business. In

contrast to the traditional Western business driven by a single focus on maximizing short-term financial profit, sustainable business aims for commerce promoting a way for humans to live and work that does not jeopardize the basic needs of present and future generation by unnecessarily sacrificing the environmental, social, and economic resources (Doppelt, 2003; Hart, 2005; Hawken, 1994; Willard, 2012).

The work of Hawken, A. Lovins, and L. Lovins (2000); Hart (2005); and Korten (2010) suggests that the single bottom line focus of leadership is characterized by dominating nature, displaying superiority, and governing by hierarchy. While there does not appear to be one standard model for sustainable business (Bocken, Short, Rana, & Evan, 2014; Boons & Lüdeke-Freund, 2013), a shift in business focus from the single bottom line of monetary profit to the more complex and intentional effort to consider environmental, social, and economic resources (the triple bottom line) will require a different type of leadership. In contrast to the more reactive type of behaviors exhibited in single bottom line leadership, the research on adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1998; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997) and authentic leadership (Eagly, 2005; B. George & Sims, 2007; Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2007) suggests that these leaders behave in ways that are creative, highly self-aware, and utilize positive energy to create change. According to Cook-Greuter (2005), about 12% of adults routinely behave in these ways (p. 2). The constructive-developmental

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theory research of Torbert et al. (2004) and Joiner and Josephs (2007) appears to support Cook-Greuter's findings.

Constructive-developmental theorists posit that adults may develop in stages and that as adults evolve through these stages they are more effective in dealing with the complexities of life (Berger, 2012; Cook-Greuter, 2005; Joiner & Josephs, 2007; Kegan, 1982; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Torbert et al., 2004). The stages that represent the about 12% of leaders are referred to as the postconventional stages of adult development (Cook-Greuter, 2005, p. 2; Torbert et al., 2004). It appears that leaders at the postconventional stages of adult development are better suited to navigate the more nuanced and complex world of sustainable business (Berger, 2012, Chapter 2; Joiner & Josephs, 2007, Chapter 6; Schmidt & McEwen, 2007, pp. 34–39).

Joiner and Joseph (2007) and Schmidt and McEwen (2007) suggest that cultivation of attention is important in order to evolve to the postconventional stages of adult development. Joiner and Joseph (2007) found that leaders at these later stages are much more likely to have an attentional practice such as yoga, tai chi, and various forms of meditation (p. 222). While Joiner and Josephs and Schmidt and McEwen assert the importance of attentional practices to evolving to the later stages of adult development, their research does not specifically focus on the impact of attentional practices on leaders facing sustainability challenges.

According to Cook-Greuter (2005), as one evolves through the developmental stages, one's comprehension of "multiple interconnected systems

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of relationships and processes" (p. 24) expands; that is, a type of systems awareness grows. This capacity is referred to as "systems thinking," which has its roots in the general systems theory of Von Bertalanffy (1969) and is a separate, but related, area of study from constructive-developmental theory.

In contrast to the mechanistic worldview of Cartesian-Newtonian science, in which physical phenomena are explainable through an understanding of their constituent parts, just like the individual parts of a machine, systems thinking views physical phenomena (including biological, cultural, and social phenomena) as integrated wholes and not just a series of constituent parts (Capra, 1997; Meadows, 2008; Sahtouris, 2000). Systems thinking and the goal of sustainable business appear to be intertwined in that one needs to see the interrelationship between the goals of business and its impact on environmental, social, and economic resources, and vice versa. The literature suggests that to further sustainability efforts in business, a systems thinking perspective is obviously required (Goleman, 2013; Meadows, 2008; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013; Senge, Smith, Kruschwitz, Laur, & Schley, 2010).

A relationship between attentional practices and systems thinking has been suggested in the work of Goleman (2013) and Scharmer and Kaufer (2013). Goleman (2013) asserts the importance of attentional practices (such as meditation, focusing on the positive, achieving mastery in sports) to more effective leadership, including the ability to effectively navigate systems. He describes three types of attentional abilities: (a) a focus of attention that provides

self-awareness (Chapters 6–8), (b) a focus of attention that results in more effective connections with other people (Chapters 9–11), and (c) a focus of attention that results in an effective navigation of the world (Chapters 12–14). Goleman's conclusions, however, are based on a synthesis of existing research findings, which do not systematically identify the possible impact of attentional practices on systems thinking.

In their work on Theory U (a leadership framework for creating social change), Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) assert, "The essence of our view concerns the power of attention: We cannot transform the behavior of systems unless we transform the quality of attention that people apply to their actions within those systems, both individually and collectively." (pp. 18–19). Through theoretical and action-based research, Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) assert the importance of attentional practices to systems thinking, but their research does not systematically identify the possible impact of attentional practices on systems thinking, however.

To many people, attention is closely related to mindfulness. From a Buddhist perspective, mindfulness is attending closely within the present moment, without cognitive processing of past, present, or future experiences (Wallace, 1999, 2011). For the Western medical community, Bishop et al. (2004) have operationally defined mindfulness as

> a process of regulating attention in order to bring a quality of nonelaborative awareness to current experience and a quality of relating to one's experience within an orientation of curiosity, experiential openness, and acceptance. We further see mindfulness as a process of gaining *insight*

[italics in original] into the nature of one's mind and the adoption of a de-centered perspective (Safran & Segal, 1990) on thoughts and feelings so that they can be experienced in terms of their subjectivity (versus their necessary validity) and transient nature (versus their permanence). (p. 234)

The research of Sauer and Kohls (2011) and Boyatzis and McKee (2005) suggests the potential benefits of mindfulness in leadership effectiveness. Sauer and Kohls (2011) theorize that mindfulness may have a beneficial impact on a leader's ability to process information, to interact with others, to engage in decision making, and to behave morally. Boyatzis and McKee's (2005) resonant leadership model suggests that the capacity for mindfulness makes a major difference in a leader's performance and level of emotional intelligence. Studies show that emotional intelligence has a positive impact on a leader's effectiveness (J. M. George, 2000; Goleman, 2005). While both Sauer and Kohl (2011) and Boyatzis and McKee (2005) make the connection between the potential benefits of mindfulness in leadership, they do not identify the role of mindfulness in sustainable business.

The research of Lamberton (2005) is a theoretical study on the application of a Buddhist perspective on economics. Lamberton's model of sustainable sufficiency describes achieving financial economic objectives that are consistent with the welfare of people and the preservation of the natural environment (p. 61); that is, Lamberton's theory describes yet another sustainable business model. This sustainable sufficiency framework springs from the Buddhist idea of mindfulness (p. 60), though Lamberton does not provide details.

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The relationship between mindfulness and sustainability is also suggested in a study by McGaw (2005). In her research, she identified characteristics of leaders who would be more effective in furthering the goals of sustainability. Data was analyzed drawing on conversations with leading thinkers in leadership development from organizations (academic and business) throughout the world. While the results showed mindfulness as one of the four characteristics that contribute to a leader's capacity for "consciousness, awareness and presence" (p. 32), the study does not provide many details on the impact of mindfulness on leadership within the context of sustainable business.

To summarize, the literature suggests a positive relationship between attention cultivation and the postconventional stages of adult development, systems thinking, and mindfulness, which have all been suggested in the literature as helping to further sustainability in business. Following from those findings, this research seeks to conduct an empirical study that further explores the role of attention cultivation for leaders who want to conduct business activities in a way that does not jeopardize the basic needs of present and future generations.

Problem Statement

Research indicates that some attentional practices contribute positively to leadership behavior, yet there is very little empirical evidence on the specific impact of attention cultivation practices on leadership capacities that may enhance sustainable business practices.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this narrative inquiry study was to record and interpret the lived experience of seven leaders who have engaged in attention cultivation in their pursuit of furthering sustainability in business. To shed light on the problem, the focus of the research is: What do the stories of leaders who have applied the lessons of attention coaching tell us about the role of attention cultivation in sustainable business? This research has attempted to address this general inquiry by seeking answers to the following questions: (a) What do leaders learn in attention coaching?; (b) How do the lessons of attention coaching contribute to furthering sustainability practices in business?; and (c) What are the perceptions and insights of these leaders concerning how attention cultivation relates to more innovative and sustainable business solutions? I anticipate that by forwarding a better understanding of the impact of one specific attention practice on leadership capacities, more leadership development programs—especially more holistic one—would be encouraged to offer attention cultivation practices (e.g., meditation or attention coaching). Concomitantly, more leaders involved in furthering sustainability in business would be encouraged to seek this type of training and more researchers would be encouraged to further study the relationship of attention cultivation and sustainability in business.

Research Design Overview

With the approval of California Institute of Integral Studies Human Research Review Committee, I studied the experiences and perceptions of seven

leaders, including myself. The co-participants were clients in my leadership attention coaching practice who had received at least nine months of attention coaching, were employed at the time they received coaching, and were, at the time we worked together, alumni of or currently enrolled in an MBA program geared towards furthering sustainability in business.

The qualitative method of narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2004) used involved data gathered primarily through in-depth, semi-structured, open-ended interviews. Additional data from each participant included an image of visual art that metaphorically represented the relationship between the lessons of attention coaching and their pursuit of greater sustainability in business. An overview of how this data yielded the findings of this study appears later in this section. Each participant was identified by a pseudonym, and all interviews (whether over the phone or in person) were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Participants were given the opportunity to review their transcribed interview(s).

In qualitative research, a researcher uses triangulation to check the integrity of the inferences drawn from the data (Schwandt, 2007, p. 298). In this study, I do data triangulation using three main sources—interview results, images of visual artwork, and participant descriptions of the artwork—and three methods of analysis: (a) thematic analysis (Saldaña, 2013), (b) structural analysis (Gee, 1991), and (c) a structural-visual analysis (Gee, 2010). Themes and patterns of themes (categories) were developed and refined on an ongoing basis.

The first sentence of this chapter states: "This study seeks to explore the relationship between attention cultivation and furthering sustainability in business." Figure 1 is a depiction of how this study attempts to establish a connection between attention cultivation and sustainable business.

The top half of Figure 1 depicts the process of data collection and initial analysis. The three main data sources ("Interview Transcripts," "Visual Art," and "Participant Descriptions") were analyzed, using three different data analysis methods relevant to narrative inquiry ("Thematic & Structural," and "Structural-Visual"). This analysis produced three meta-patterns ("3 Categories") with two to three significant themes each (for a total of "8 Significant Themes"). A discussion of these categories and themes yielded "15 Insights" that identified what participants learned from attention coaching.

The bottom half of Figure 1 depicts the consolidation of the "15 Insights" (some of which had redundant information) into "10 Attentional Abilities," which became the response to the first research question "What do leaders learn in attention coaching?" The results of an analysis of these Attention Abilities in light of the relevant literature suggest that these abilities may support a leader's capacities for mindfulness, adaptive and authentic leadership, postconventional stages of mental complexity, and systems thinking, which all have been suggested in the literature as capacities that contribute to furthering sustainability in business. This is the response to the second research question "How Do the

Lessons of Attention Coaching Contribute to Furthering Sustainability Practices
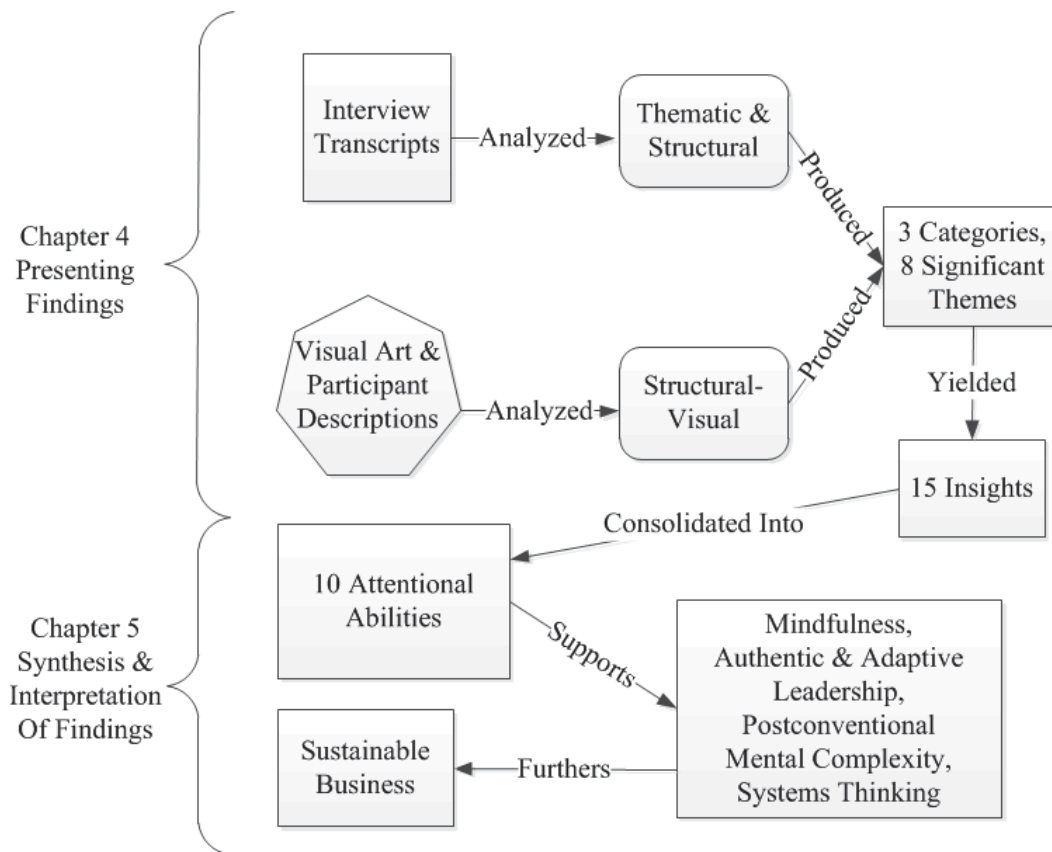
in Business?"

Figure 1. Chart depicting how a connection was made between attention cultivation and sustainable business.
Author's image.

Assumptions

Based on my experience and background as a business practitioner, as a protégée of mentors who taught me about attention, and as a leadership coach and teacher, there were three primary assumptions I had regarding this study: (a) The business practice of solely maximizing short-term financial profit is short-sighted. To continue business as usual will significantly degrade the quality of life for all

humans and be detrimental to the natural environment. (b) The cultivation of one's attention in a mindful way will improve one's quality of life and positively impact one's actions in business. (c) Attention cultivation supports one's capacity to make meaning, navigate, and engage with the complexity of the world.

The first assumption is one I acquired initially by working in the business world for 15 years and subsequently by my getting an MBA in Sustainable Business. During the MBA program, I read research (both empirical and theoretical) asserting that single bottom line Western businesses were less aware of the interdependent nature of their activities with stakeholders (anyone with an interest or concern with a business) and the natural environment.

The second assumption is what initially drove me to this inquiry. Cultivating my attention under the guidance of mentors, I feel, has improved my quality of life. As a teacher of leadership development in an MBA program in sustainable business and as an attention coach for leaders, I get anecdotal reports that learning how to more effectively deploy one's attention does improve one's behavior and results in the workplace.

Finally, the third assumption is one I acquired by being a participant in a leadership development program which was primarily informed by constructive-developmental theory (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Kegan, 1998). As I participated in this 15-month program, I found that what I learned in attention cultivation very much related to the practices taught in the program. Subsequently, this

assumption was reconfirmed as I started to read books on constructive-developmental theory as part of my teaching in the MBA program.

Personal Relationship to the Topic

At the beginning of the PhD journey, three interests had converged which influenced my area of inquiry: attention, sustainable business, and leadership development.

In September 1984, I entered the business world as a consultant for Andersen Consulting (now called Accenture). In 1997, I left the business world and for a period of time became a visual artist. My foray into art was an attempt to leave the stress of the business world behind. It was during this time that I met the mentors.

For a ten-year period starting in January 1999, I was a protégée of four mentors. They were masters in the area of presence and awareness. They held no special degrees for this mastership. They were, in fact, part of a lineage of mentors and protégées who transmitted their knowledge through experiential and oral methods outside of the academic mainstream. Under their guidance, I learned and experienced many things, but the area in which I gained the most knowledge was attention. One of my biggest insights is reflected in the words of William James (1890/2007): "*My experience is what I agree to attend to*" (italics in original, p. 402). Over the years, in my work on attention, this insight has remained true for me and has stood as a source of inspiration.

A couple of years after meeting the mentors, I felt a desire to return to the business world, but I wanted to do business differently. Influenced by the awareness gained in my work with the mentors, I did not want to re-enter the grind of business where the goal was to rise as far as one could on the career ladder while maximizing profit for the company and income for one's self. In my research about how to do business differently, I came across an article on an MBA program in a boutique graduate school. Their mission was "To prepare students from diverse backgrounds to build enterprises that are financially successful, socially responsible and environmentally sustainable." I decided to learn more about sustainable business, so I entered that MBA program in the fall of 2004.

In contrast to my traditional view of running a business with a single bottom line of monetary profit, this MBA program taught me about sustainable business's triple bottom line: people, planet and profit. I learned there is a way to operate in business that considers all stakeholders and not just shareholders. In this way of conducting business, stakeholders include (but are not limited to) the planet, animals, ecosystems, people of all ages, cultures and socioeconomic classes, employees, suppliers, vendors, *and* shareholders. In embracing this global, systemic view of conducting business, I felt I was doing something beneficial for the planet and all of its inhabitants.

The MBA curriculum included two years of a Leadership and Personal Development (LPD) course. It was in this course I discovered the intersection of

my work with the mentors and the business world. Much of the material in LPD is about developing an awareness of what is happening on the inside of one's self and watching how this affects what happens outside of one's self. The material is influenced by the adaptive leadership (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997), authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Walumbwa et al., 2007), and sustainability leadership (Ferdig, 2007; Metcalf & Benn, 2012) models. I did well in this course, so much so that one year after I graduated I was asked to be a teaching assistant for the course. The following year I was asked to co-teach the course, and in fall 2010 I began teaching my own section of students.

In parallel with teaching LPD, I started an attention coaching practice. In spring 2008, I took what I learned from the mentors and the MBA program and began coaching people who were interested in sustainability regarding their careers and/or their personal life. My work in teaching LPD, my leadership attention coaching practice, and my belief in sustainable business are what have inspired my area of inquiry.

Leadership Attention Coaching Practice

Attention cultivation practices include yoga, tai chi, and various forms of meditation. But for the purposes of this study, participants were past and present clients of my leadership attention coaching practice. The techniques taught to and information shared with clients in my leadership attention coaching practice are designed to stop their habitual patterns of attention deployment (how they pay attention). There are at least three areas of focus in this practice: (a) Attention

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Awareness, (b) Subtle Energy and Physical Body Awareness, and (c) Emotional and Mental Model Awareness.

With coaching in attention awareness, a client becomes aware of their attention as a distinct phenomenon, which allows me to plan my work with them. The objective of this attention awareness (coupled with physical body awareness) is for a client to establish and maintain relationships with crucial "allies;" that is, those connections that can support them in their day-to-day living. These allies include their physical body, their subtle energy body[1] (possibly the source of the energy of attention), Earth, and time. The objective of emotional and mental model awareness is for a client to "see" the personality of their limiting "self" and to experience and live more from their larger "SELF." These techniques and information help to free a client's attention from habitual uses so that it may be deployed more fluidly and beneficially.

As an illustration of how I developed my attention coaching practices, in 1999, there was an exercise I was taught to raise awareness of my attention as a distinct phenomenon from my visual faculty. I was asked to look at something in

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[1] Roll describes "the long body," an Iroquois term, as "our psychic self"; it includes significant others as well as our lands and possessions (as cited in Tart, 1997). It stretches back in space-time, farther than the [physical] body's life" (p.63) and "ESP, PK, psychometry, and precognition connect and coordinate the limbs of the long body across space and time" (p. 64). The long body is a type of subtle energy "body double" to our physical body. Roll's definition of the long body comes closest to describing what I refer to as the subtle energy body. P. Nelson (personal communication, February 13, 2012) refers to the subtle energy body as "the human bio-field." He chose this term because he perceives it to be more of a field than "energy," which he defines as the ability to do work, as that term is understood in physics.

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the room, so I chose a point on the wall about 20 feet in front of me. I was then asked to slowly look to the left but to keep a connection to what I originally was looking at. I slowly turned my head and I eventually lost sight of the point on the wall. I noticed that even when the point on the wall moved out of my field of vision, I had a connection to the point that seemed to emanate from somewhere in the upper half of my physical body; that is, a connection that felt like a transparent rope that started from somewhere in the upper half of my body and extended to the point on the wall. This, I was told, was my attention, deployed. For my attention coaching practices, I have modified this exercise and use it as part of the attention awareness portion of my work.

Rationale and Significance

My exposure to the challenges of training leaders in sustainable business and my observation of changes in my clients, along with their anecdotes of transformation, inspired me to explore more deeply through means of this inquiry. I expected to learn more from their stories as they shared what meaning-making they derived from their experience. I suspected there were patterns and themes that I could only discover from a more in-depth exploration through narrative inquiry. The lessons I extracted from my clients' stories, combined with relevant literature from several disciplines, have provided a look into what supports leadership capacities that help to further the sustainable business movement.

This narrative inquiry is important for two main reasons: (a) the potential impact on leaders and leadership development in sustainable business, and (b) the impact on my leadership attention coaching practice.

The results of this study can demonstrate to leaders in the sustainable business movement the role of attention cultivation in leadership development. The primary audience for this inquiry is people interested in supporting the progress of sustainable business; this would include academics, researchers, MBA students, and current and potential business leaders.

While the focus of the study was within the sustainable business movement, any audience interested in leadership development should find this inquiry valuable, including academics, researchers, MBA students, and business leaders.

While this study is not about the efficacy of my leadership attention coaching practice, this inquiry has given me a deeper understanding, philosophically and theoretically, of the foundations of my practice. Also, documenting the impact of my leadership attention coaching practice will allow me to use the findings to refine and expand my own work.

Definitions

Awareness: the perception of stimuli. "Stimulus" is anything that elicits a response (Matsumoto, 2009, p. 522).

Attention: the focus of awareness on one out of what seem several simultaneously possible stimuli. James' (1890/2007) definition of attention as

"the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought" (pp. 403–404).

Attention cultivation: the deliberate process of refining one's deployment of one's attention.

Attention cultivation practices or attentional practices: practices that one performs for attention cultivation, for example, meditation and yoga.

Leader: one who engages in the leadership process (see "leadership" definition below). While Bennis' (2009) view on leadership includes leading others, at the core of Bennis' (2009) view is the principle that "becoming a leader is synonymous with becoming yourself. It's precisely that simple, and it's also that difficult" (p. xxxvii). This principle greatly influences how I view a leader; that is, one can be engaged in leading others and/or one can just be engaged in leading themselves in a manner that fully expresses who they are.

Leadership: the process in which one engages to fully express who they are in a manner that thoughtfully considers others and inspires actions in one's self and/or others towards common goals. In this definition of leadership, it is not necessary to inspire actions in another person. This definition is influenced by the work of Bennis (2009), Northouse (2012), and Burns (1978). Northouse (2012) defined leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 5). Burns (1978) defined "leadership" as a process of engaging in a dynamic relationship between leaders and followers that has the potential to raise the consciousness of followers (transformational

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relationship) and/or, at a minimum, engages both leaders and followers in a common enterprise (transactional relationship) (pp. 444–462).

Mental complexity: one's personal capacity to make meaning, navigate, and engage with the complexity of the world (Berger, 2012; Cook-Greuter, 2005; Joiner & Josephs, 2007; Kegan & Lahey, 2009).

Mental complexity of leaders: the capacity of leaders to make sense of, navigate, and engage with the complexity of the systems through which they express themselves in the larger context of a complex world.

Mental models: deeply held internal images, assumptions, stories, or beliefs a person or a group of people hold that determine how they make sense of the world and that influence how they act. Some emotions can be thought of as the feeling tone of a mental model (Senge, 1994, Chapter 10).

Mindfulness: a quality of engaged awareness that can occur if attention is cultivated and deployed in a way that is not reactive to what is presently happening, but is more fluid and flexible. This definition of mindfulness is influenced by the Buddhist perspective—mindfulness is attending closely within the present moment, without cognitive processing of past, present or future experiences (Wallace, 2011)—and on Bishop et al. (2004) definition stated earlier.

Sustainable development:

A process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change . . . meets the needs of the present without

compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987, p. 15).

Sustainability: the goal of sustainable development is "sustainability:" the creation of a way for humans to live and work that does not jeopardize the basic needs of present and future generations by unnecessarily sacrificing our environmental, social, and economic resources (Doppelt, 2003, Chapter 3; Willard, 2012, Introduction).

Sustainable business: a business which conducts its activities in a way that promotes sustainability (Doppelt, 2003; Hart, 2005; Hawken et al., 2000).

Sustainability in business: While many businesses do not fall into the category of sustainable business, many of these businesses have implemented sustainable business practices; that is, practices that promote sustainability, for example, providing employee paid time-off in order to do humanitarian work, recycling used office paper, manufacturing of a green line of products. Throughout this study, I refer to sustainable business and sustainable business practices. Technically they are not the same thing, but they are both in the spirit of promoting sustainability in business. Therefore, for the purposes of this study "sustainability in business" refers to both sustainable business and sustainable business practices.

Systems thinking: a perspective which emphasizes the viewing of systems (including biological, social, cultural, and organizational systems) as integrated wholes and not just individual parts (Meadows, 2008; Sahtouris, 2000).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

I read a wide variety of literature in order to shed light on the primary research inquiry "What do the stories of leaders who have applied the lessons of attention coaching tell us about the role of attention cultivation in sustainable business?" and sub-questions: (a) What do leaders learn in attention coaching?; (b) How do the lessons of attention coaching contribute to furthering sustainability practices in business?; and (c) What are the perceptions and insights of these leaders concerning how attention cultivation relates to more innovative and sustainable business solutions?

The literature reviewed in this chapter and in subsequent chapters (especially Chapter 5) have been selected because they (a) are relevant classic and landmark studies, as well as more current work; (b) illustrate the necessity of this study by identifying "holes" in the current body of knowledge; and (c) demonstrate how this study will advance the dialogue on the importance of attention cultivation in furthering sustainability in business.

I begin this review by describing how I identified the relevant literature. The first body of literature examined is in the area of sustainable business, beginning with a brief history of how sustainable business gained more widespread support in the late 1980s. Three approaches to sustainable business are then discussed. Next, "leadership" is defined and two relevant established leadership models are identified. Specific characteristics of leadership in these two models and in traditional business leadership are then situated in the context

of constructive-developmental theory. This context gives perspective on the

mental complexity required to achieve the goals of sustainable business. Attention

cultivation is identified as one method to evolve mental complexity. Next,

systems thinking, a different but related area of study to constructive-development

theory, is discussed as it relates to furthering sustainability in business. Attention

cultivation is identified as one method to enhance a person's systems thinking

capacity. Then, to give perspective on the importance of the phenomenon of

attention, the history of attention research in Western psychology and attention

development in Buddhism are briefly examined. Finally, literature on

mindfulness, leadership, and sustainable business is discussed.

Identifying the Literature

While formal review of the literature for this study began during the PhD

program, I had begun an informal review of the literature when I started studying

with the mentors in 1999. During that time, I read and practiced what they

provided to me with regards to attention. It was then I also became interested in

the teachings and works of Pema Chodren, American Buddhist nun, Thich Nhat

Han, Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Jiddu Krishnamurti, East Indian spiritual

teacher, and Dean Radin, senior scientist at Institute of Noetic Sciences. As a

member of an MBA program in Sustainable Business, first in 2004 as a student

and then eventually as a teacher, I read literature on sustainable business,

leadership, and systems thinking by academics such as Bob Willard, Peter Senge,

Otto Scharmer, Robert Kegan, Ronald Heifetz, Susanne Cook-Greuter, Donella

Meadows, Elisabet Sahtouris, and Fritjof Capra. What I found interesting was that in some of these academics' works the teachings I had been exposed to previously were mentioned—it seemed these academics were influenced by some of the teachings with which I had begun my journey. By the time I started the PhD program, I already had a good background in the literature and keywords from which to begin a more comprehensive literature search.

There are three main disciplines or areas of study that fit together conceptually and are most relevant to my work. They represent the core literature of this study: (a) *Sustainable Business* is the overarching "force" in pursuit of a positive contribution to planetary existence which this study is meant to support. (b) *Leadership* is the expression of human activity within the context of business with which this study is concerned. (c) *Attention* is the primal human faculty from which the necessary change for effective leadership begins.

There are an additional three disciplines or area of studies that help to weave the core literature into a research "story" that supports the relevance of this study: (a) constructive-developmental theory, (b) systems thinking, and (c) mindfulness.

Sustainable Business

To assess the state of the natural and human environment over most of the 20th century, in 1983 the United Nations General Assembly created the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) comprised of members from 21 countries (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987,

Chairman's Forward). The WCED's research and discussions resulted in the

landmark report *Our Common Future* (1987), commonly known as the

Brundtland Report. They identified the following positive aspects of human

activity:

> Infant mortality is falling; human life expectancy is increasing; the proportion of the world's adults who can read and write is climbing; the proportion of children starting school is rising; and global food production increases faster than the population grows. (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 2)

At the same time, the human activity that resulted in these gains also

resulted in trends that were (and are) not sustainable for our human environment.

The Brundtland Report identified that, more than ever before, there

> 1. were more people who were hungry, who could not read or write, lived
>
>   without safe water or homes, were short of wood fuel; and
>
> 2. was an ever-widening gap between rich and poor nations (WCED,
>
>   1987, p. 2).

Additionally, the WCED (1987) found several natural environmental

trends that were of particular concern:

> Each year another 6 million hectares of productive dryland turns into worthless desert. . . . More than 11 million hectares of forests are destroyed yearly. . . . Much of this forest is converted to low-grade farmland unable to support the farmers who settle it. In Europe, acid precipitation kills forests and lakes and damaging the artistic and architectural heritage of nations; it may have acidified vast tracts of soil beyond reasonable hope of repair. The burning of fossil fuels puts into the atmosphere carbon dioxide, which is causing gradual global warming. This 'greenhouse effect' may by early next century have increased average global temperatures enough to shift agricultural production areas, raise sea levels to flood coastal cities, and disrupt national economies. Other industrial gases threaten to deplete the planet's protective ozone shield to

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such an extent that the number of human and animal cancers would rise sharply and the oceans' food chain would be disrupted, industry and agriculture put toxic substances into the human food chain and into underground water tables beyond the reach of cleansing. (pp. 2–3)

Based on their findings, the WCED (1987) concluded:

There has been a growing realization in national governments and multilateral institutions that it is impossible to separate economic development issues from environment issues; many forms of development erode the environmental resources upon which they must be based, and environmental degradation can undermine economic development. Poverty is a major cause and effect of global environmental problems. It is therefore futile to attempt to deal with environmental problems without a broader perspective that encompasses the factors underlying world poverty and international inequality. (p. 3)

Building on the foundation laid by the Brundtland report, the United

Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992), also known as the

"Rio Earth Summit," produced a report that identified 27 principles intended to

help guide sustainable development. Eight years later, utilizing the growing

awareness of the connection between poverty, inequality, and environmental

problems identified in the Brundtland Report, the United Nations General

Assembly (2000) adopted eight Millennial Development Goals, goals which

recognized the interrelationship between poverty eradication, environmental

protection and human rights. Almost 20 years later, the United Nations Secretary-

General's High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability (HLPGS, 2012) suggested

that progress had been made towards global sustainability but that as a result of a

lack of "decisive and coordinated" action in national and international forums,

"Economies are teetering. Inequality is growing. And global temperatures

continue to rise" (HLPGS, 2012, p. 1). With the long-term vision "to eradicate

poverty, reduce inequality and make growth inclusive, and production and consumption more sustainable, while combating climate change and respecting a range of other planetary boundaries" (p. 6), HLPGS published updated global sustainability recommendations.

Western business practices traditionally focus on investing money to provide a product or service to a customer for the purposes of making a short-term financial profit (Friedman, 1983; Fulcher, 2004). The findings and recommendations in the Brundtland Report, the sustainable development principles identified by the Rio Earth Summit, the Millennium Development Goals, and HLPGS's sustainable development action plan appear to have motivated some academics and practitioners to seek another way of doing business.

Among them was Western business practitioner Paul Hawken (1994), who challenged more businesses to conduct commerce and production in a way that is sustainable and restorative to the human and natural environment. Inspired by Hawken's manifesto, others have argued that over most of the 20th century, driven by a single focus on maximizing short-term financial profit, the actions of traditional, Western business have misused and overused natural resources; negatively impacted the environment; and ignored, denied, or downplayed the negative social impact of its actions (Hart, 2005; Hawken et al., 2000; Korten, 2001).

An alternative to the singular financial profit bottom line of traditional business is to be found in sustainable business. This form of business values a "triple bottom line" (Elkington, 1998, p. xiii) which considers social and environmental justice as well as financial profitability. Elkington (1998) refers to this as "people, planet and profit" which he coined while working at SustainAbility.

One of the building blocks of the sustainable business model is sustainable development, which is defined as

> A process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change . . . meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (WCED, 1987, p. 44)

Put another way, the goal of sustainable development is "sustainability:" the creation of a way for humans to live and work that does not jeopardize the basic needs of present and future generations by unnecessarily sacrificing our environmental, social, and economic resources (Doppelt, 2003, Chapter 3; Willard, 2012, Introduction). Similarly, the intention of sustainable business is to conduct business activities in a way that promotes the above goal (Doppelt, 2003; Hart, 2005; Hawken, 1994; Willard, 2012).

While the research on the impact of sustainable business activities appears to be divided as to whether these activities are positively related to profitability (Margolis & Elfenbein, 2008; McWilliams & Siegel, 2000; Servaes & Tamayo, 2013), there appears to be no shortage of ways to operate a sustainable business.

In fact, there appears to be no one standard model for sustainable business (Bocken et al., 2014; Boons & Lüdeke-Freund, 2013). The three models described next reflect sometimes complementary, sometimes contrasting approaches to sustainable business.

The first model is Natural Capitalism by Hawken et al. (2000). The term "Natural Capitalism" appears to be a play on the phrase "natural capital" and the word "capitalism." Hawken et al. define natural capital as the Earth's natural resources and ecological systems that all living things need in order to survive; it is the resources that cannot be produced by human activity (pp. 150–152), such as forests, wetlands, water, air, and watersheds. The basic premise of Natural Capitalism is that natural capital is scarce so it should be used wisely (Chapter 1). Hawken et al. assert that this model of sustainable business—appropriate for any-sized business, as well as communities and countries—is based on four core principles: (a) dramatically increase natural resource productivity by doing more with less; (b) eliminate waste by using nature as a model, measure, and mentor; (c) shift to a service-based business model; and (d) reinvest in natural and human capital (Chapter 1).

While the phrase "Natural Capitalism" makes it appear that this model focuses solely on natural capital, in addition to the fact that 11 of the 15 chapters of the book focus on natural capital, there is also discussion about the preservation and wise use of "human capital," which includes educated people, skilled people, culture, and wisdom (Hawken et al., 2000, Chapter 14). Hawken et al. (2000)

consider that human capitalism can transcend natural capitalism: while the focus

of utilizing natural capital more wisely results in a sustainable economy, the

addition of the wise use of human capital results in a sustainable society (pp. 306–

308). In contrast to the four core principles centered around natural capital, there

do not appear to be corresponding principles for human capital (Chapter 14).

In contrast to Hawken et al.'s (2000) approach to a sustainable business

model that fits all, Hart (2005) argues that multinational corporations (MNCs) are

the key to this type of reformed business. Some MNCs have found that it serves

their profit-oriented bottom line to work towards global sustainability in

collaboration with nonprofits, governments, and multilateral agencies (p. 3).

Throughout Hart's book, he cites examples of MNCs that are tapping new sources

of profitable revenue by *fostering* global sustainability. Hart's view is that the key

to global sustainability lies with MNCs which co-develop local market solutions

with people at the BOP ("bottom of the economic pyramid"). These MNCs would

disperse what they learn, based on indigenous knowledge and experience,

throughout the rest of the organization and associated organizations, effectively

changing the way they and others do business (Chapters 5–6).

To effectively do business with people at the BOP, Hart (2005) introduces

the concept that MNCs will need to operate with "radical transactiveness" (RT)

which is characterized by innovations such as developing products and services at

a local level, partnering with nonprofits and local agencies rather than national

governments, and embracing other forms of economy than the cash-driven model

(pp. 170– 207). Practicing RT will allow an MNC to become an active member of a local community instead of being an outsider dictating changes (p. 208).

Korten (2010) has a different take on reforming business than either Hawken et al. (2000) or Hart (2005). Korten's approach is more comprehensive in that he addresses the capitalistic economy as a whole. His adjustments to this economy would (a) replace financial indicators with indicators of human- and natural-systems as the basis for determining economic performance; (b) dismantle Wall Street and redirect the flow of money to Main Street businesses; (c) create a more equitable distribution of power and real wealth (not just financial wealth); (d) adopt a "triple bottom line" approach to business; (e) create self-reliant local economies free from corporate (MNC's) domination; and (f) restructure global rules and institutions to support these changes (Korten, 2010, pp. 167–185). According to Korten (2010) this new economy would effectively shift accumulation of phantom wealth (i.e., the accumulation of money that gets generated as a result of accounting entries, the inflation of asset bubbles unrelated to the creation of anything of real value, and the debt pyramid created by financial institutions) to real wealth (i.e., wealth that has intrinsic value like land and labor) (Chapter 2).

Clearly, any change in business from the single bottom line of monetary profit to a triple bottom line of "people, planet and profit" (Elkington, 1998) is not an easy road. It appears that one common thread among the approaches to sustainable business is the need for a different type of leadership.

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Leadership

Hawken et al. (2000), Hart (2005), and Korten (2010) all identify leadership characteristics that inhibit the innovation and motivation needed for a more sustainable business direction. Hawken et al. (2000) assert that the transition to sustainable business will require leaders to shift from the use and abuse of nature (including humans) to valuing and prioritizing nature (Chapter 1). Additionally, according to Hart (2005), a shift toward a more sustainable way of business would require leadership within MNCs to operate from the assumption that one does not "know" what another person from another culture needs, and to be open to learning from persons other than the known or powerful stakeholders (p. 170). Traditional ways of "doing business" will not suffice: Korten (2010) asserts that the movement from accumulation of phantom wealth to accumulation of real wealth will not be accomplished by a hierarchical leadership (i.e., decisions from the top); it will require leadership at the grassroots level (pp. 222–232). Rather than leading by dominating nature, by displaying superiority, and governing by hierarchy, sustainable business calls for a new way to lead.

The leadership characteristics identified by Hawken et al. (2000), Hart (2005), and Korten (2010) were reflected in some of the findings in a research study conducted by Hind, Wilson, and Lenssen (2009) on how organizations can develop leaders who have the competencies necessary to help further sustainability in business. This research included conducting in-depth interviews of 24 senior managers in 11 leading European-based multinational corporations.

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In their analysis, they found three competencies necessary to furthering

sustainability in business: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In addition, they

identified the major abilities or attributes necessary in each area of competency.

1. Knowledge:
   - understanding the competing demands of different stakeholder groups;
   - understanding how the core business activities create opportunities for other actors in society and how the company can make a contribution to society;
   - understanding the social and environmental risks and opportunities of the company and its industry sector; and
   - understanding the institutional debate on the role and legitimacy of the firm.
2. Skills:
   - well founded and balanced judgment;
   - critical thinking;
   - team player;
   - creativity, innovation and original thinking;
   - communicating with credibility;
   - business acumen;
   - listening skills;
   - managing stakeholder network relationships; and
   - emotional intelligence
3. Attitudes:
   - honesty and integrity;
   - long-term perspective;
   - open-mindedness;
   - appreciating and embracing diversity;
   - conviction and courage;
   - the drive to contest resistance; and
   - the capacity to think outside the box. (Hind et al., 2009, p. 15)

Further analysis and distillation of these competencies resulted in five

"reflexive" abilities: "1. systemic thinking; 2. embracing diversity and managing

risk; 3. balancing global and local perspectives; 4. meaningful dialogue and

developing a new language; and 5. emotional awareness" (Hind et al., 2009, p. 15).

While several leadership models were discussed in the article by Hind, Wilson, and Lenssen (2009), a specific definition for "leadership" was not provided. In an in-depth review of leadership literature, Northouse (2012) discovered "there are almost as many different definitions of *leadership* [italics in original] as there are people who have tried to define it" (p. 2). Northouse found varying definitions of leadership based on one or more of the following factors: (a) the focus of group processes, (b) a combination of special traits or characteristics, (c) an act or a behavior which brings about change in group, (d) the power relationship that exists between leaders and followers, (e) a transformational process that inspires others to accomplish more than expected, and (f) the possession of certain specific skills and knowledge (Chapter 1). Based on what he discovered, Northhouse defined leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 5).

Two additional academic approaches to leadership that influence the definition of leadership for this study are the works of Burns (1978) and Bennis (2009). In a theoretical study of leadership, Burns (1978) defines leadership as a process of engaging in a dynamic relationship between leaders and followers that has the potential to raise the consciousness of followers (transformational relationship) and/or, at a minimum, engages both leaders and followers in a common enterprise (transactional relationship) (pp. 444–462). Drawing upon

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Lawrence Kohlberg's theories of moral stages of development, this conception of leadership envisions, through raising the consciousness of one's followers, the actualization of one's full potential (Burns, 1978). In a another vein, at the core of Bennis' (2009) view of leadership is the principle that "becoming a leader is synonymous with becoming yourself. It's precisely that simple, and it's also that difficult" (p. xxxvii). While Burns (1978) mostly focuses on the learning that occurs in others by means of the leader-follower dynamic, Bennis (2009) emphasizes the emergence of the qualities of leadership that happens in the context of a life fully expressed. This occurs through relationship with others, embracing mistakes, expression of vision, encouraging dissent, and the cultivation and growth of others (Bennis, 2009, pp. 185–198).

Based on Burns's (1978), Bennis's (2009), and Northouse's (2012) definition of leadership, for the purposes of this study "leadership" is defined as the process that one engages to fully express who they are in a manner that thoughtfully considers others and inspires actions in one's self and/or others towards common goals. Two leadership models (complementary to the definition of leadership above) that are relevant to this study are the adaptive leadership model by Heifetz (1998) and the authentic leadership model (Eagly, 2005; B. George & Sims, 2007; Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2007). In addition to the leadership capacities identified in the research by Hind et al. (2009) describe earlier, these more established leadership models were also

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chosen because their combined impact would seem to support the shift toward the kind of leaders needed to achieve the goals of sustainable business, which I discuss next.

In the adaptive leadership model, the leadership process explores the question "What's really happening here?" (W. C. Taylor, 1999). Influenced by his skilled musicianship as a cellist, Heifetz claims that carefully listening to and interrogating the reality of others and of the surrounding environment, listening not just analytically but also "musically," allows one to get underneath the presenting challenges (W. C. Taylor, 1999). This creative listening attunes (with heart) to the dissonance, silence, and harmony of the reality of a challenge.

In the reality of a leadership challenge, according to Heifetz (1998), are both technical and adaptive aspects. Technical challenges are those problems that can be addressed using an already existing body of knowledge (pp. 71–72); for example, a department is behind in submitting its budget and the director redeploys personnel to get the work done. Technical challenges can be addressed by technical solutions, which could include new methods, new facts, and/or new ways of organizing information and people in order to get the budget submitted.

Adaptive challenges, on the other hand, present problems whose solutions are not as clear-cut (Heifetz, 1998, pp. 73–76); for example, in the redeployment example above, the director discovers that staff within the department display passive-aggressive behavior to any suggested changes in their work; simply "trying something new" will not achieve the desired result. An adaptive solution

could include the director acknowledging and dealing with his or her own emotions with regards to the staff's passive-aggressive behavior, and identifying and changing his or her own limiting world views; that is, becoming more self-aware and creative in response to working with the passive-aggressive staff behavior. The adaptive leadership model identifies a previously missing and essential leadership quality in the ability to apply flexible, creative, and adaptive solutions to challenges instead of attempting technical solutions to all problems.

In contrast to the adaptive leadership model, which is based on a deficit-reduction leadership development strategy (i.e. enhancing one's leadership abilities by improving how one reacts to a challenge), the authentic leadership model (Eagly, 2005; B. George & Sims, 2007; Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2007) draws on both the positive psychological capacities of the leader and the circumstances and facts within which the leadership is expressed. Northouse (2012) describes this model as focusing on leadership that is "genuine and 'real' [and] honest and good" (p. 253). Northouse (2012) suggests that the interest in this model of leadership was due to the fear and uncertainty generated by "the destruction on 9/11, corporate scandals at companies like WorldCom and Enron, and massive failures in the banking industry" (p. 253).

Authenticity is defined as the process of knowing one's true self by owning one's own thoughts, emotions, needs, preferences, or beliefs and behaving in accordance with them (Harter, 2005; Seligman, 2002). Expanding upon this, Walumbwa et al. (2007) operationally define authentic leadership as

a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development [italics in original]. (p. 94)

While this conceptualization of authentic leadership is focused on the leader themselves, this form of leadership emerges in a reciprocal process between leaders and followers (Eagly, 2005) and can be triggered by major life events (Northouse, 2012, p. 254).

As Northouse (2012) discovered, there is no standard definition of or uniform way to attain and express leadership. And it might be said that "a leader is a leader is a leader;" that is, that the qualities of a good leader are the same in any environment and any endeavor. But the evidence of several centuries of traditional business leadership seems to make clear that, driven by a single focus on maximizing short-term financial profit, the actions of leaders in traditional, Western business (the ways that these types of leaders respond to challenges) are characterized by domination, superiority, and hierarchy. The combined styles of adaptive and authentic leadership exhibit different behaviors in the face of challenge. The literature suggests that these types of leaders face reality head on—creatively, adaptively, highly self-aware, and utilizing positive energy to create change. What can account for the ability of these adaptive and authentic leaders to employ these more evolved characteristic behaviors? Is leadership in sustainable business really different than leadership in traditional business?

Constructive-Developmental Theory

One way to account for the ability to employ these more evolved characteristic behaviors and to explore whether leadership in sustainable business is different is by looking at research on adult development most frequently associated, according to McCauley, Drath, Palus, O'Connor, and Baker (2006), with management and leadership: constructive-developmental theory.

The movement to understand adult development began with the work of Piaget (1954) on how children develop into young adults. Other psychologists, building upon Piaget's work, have focused on how adults develop from a child's narrow point of view on life to the mature wisdom and complex action of adults (Kegan, 1980; Kohlberg, 1969; Loevinger, 1966). Building upon the work of these researchers, constructive-developmental[2] theorists posit that adults may develop in stages and that as adults evolve through these stages they are more effective in dealing with the complexities of life (Berger, 2012; Cook-Greuter, 2005; Joiner & Josephs, 2007; Kegan, 1982; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Torbert et al., 2004). In this study, I refer to a subset of constructive-developmental theories that is most relevant for sustainability.

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[2] "Constructive-developmental" was a term coined by Kegan (1980) referring to the work of neo-Piagetian stage-based adult developmental theorists.

The basic propositions and assumptions of constructive-developmental

theory are summarized here according to the texts of McCauley et al. (2006) and

Cook-Greuter (2004):

- Developmental growth occurs through an interplay between a person and

  his or her environment, not just by one or the other (Cook-Greuter, 2004,

  p. 277).

- To engage in the world, people subjectively construct ways of

  understanding and making sense of themselves and the world (referred to

  as "meaning making") (McCauley et al., 2006, p. 636).

- There are identifiable patterns of meaning making that people share in

  common with one another; these patterns are referred to as stages. They

  can also be referred to as orders of consciousness, ways of knowing, levels

  of development, and orders of development (McCauley et al., 2006, p.

  636).

- Stages unfold in a specific sequence, with each successive stage including

  and transcending the previous one. Earlier perspectives remain part of

  one's experience and knowledge (Cook-Greuter, 2004, p. 277; McCauley

  et al., 2006, p. 636).

- Each stage supports more comprehensive understanding than earlier

  stages. "As development unfolds, autonomy, freedom, tolerance for

  difference and ambiguity, as well as flexibility, reflection, and skill in

interacting with the environment increase," while the need to defend one's perspective decreases (Cook-Greuter, 2004, p. 277).

- "People's stage of development influences what they notice or can become aware of, and therefore what they can describe, articulate, influence, and change" (Cook-Greuter, 2004, p. 277). "The depth, complexity, and scope of what people notice can expand throughout life" (Cook-Greuter, 2004, p. 277).

- During times of challenge, especially a very unfamiliar challenge or one requiring a more complex way of understanding themselves and the world, people may regress temporarily and operate from a previous stage of development (Cook-Greuter, 2004, p. 278).

The concept of developmental stages reflects research results that demonstrate a narrowing gap between the complexity of the world (i.e., confusing, contradictory ideas; paradoxes; multiple realities; and other subtleties) and one's ability to comprehend it. As one evolves through these developmental stages, there is less and less of a "mismatch between the world's complexity and one's own [mental complexity] at this moment" (Kegan & Lahey, 2009, p. 12). Mental complexity is not just a matter of an adult coping with the world; rather, the concept implies the developing adult's personal capacity to make sense of, navigate, and engage with the complexity of the world. Similar to mental complexity, other researchers use the terms "action logics" (Torbert et al., 2004) or "self-complexity" (Berger, 2012). For the purposes of this study, I define the

"mental complexity of leaders" as the capacity of leaders to make sense of, navigate, and engage with the complexity of the systems through which they express themselves in the larger context of a complex world.

While the phrase "developmental stages" may conjure up an image of hierarchy, Drath, McCauley, Palus, Van Velsor, O'Connor, and McGuire (2008) describe the stages using the metaphor of a web. As one transitions from one developmental stage to the next, the web grows such that it contains one's previous mental complexity, now perceived in the light of a new more comprehensive mental complexity (p. 650). Cooke-Greuter (2004) describes the stages as an "ever-widening spiral" (p. 277) moving upward. Also, hierarchy can be associated with "higher is better." Joiner and Josephs (2007) view the developmental model as not about status hierarchy or becoming more perfect, but instead about a person becoming more "whole" (p. 246), though it is not clear what they mean by "whole."

To assess the developmental stage of adults, Loevinger (Loevinger & Wessler, 1970) developed the Washington University Sentence Completion Test (WUSCT), a statistically-validated personality assessment tool used on thousands of research projects worldwide. Loevinger's (1976) constructive-developmental framework identifies six relevant stages of mental complexity: conformist, conscientious/conformist, conscientious, individualistic, autonomous, and integrated. Torbert and his associates (1987) applied Loevinger's framework to professional subjects in organizational settings and eventually developed their

own framework and development intervention more applicable to that environment. Torbert's framework identifies seven relevant stages of mental complexity: diplomat, expert, achiever, individualist, strategist, alchemist, and ironist (Torbert, 1987; Torbert et al., 2004). The first three stages are referred to as "conventional" (Torbert et al., 2004, pp. 92–93). The last four stages are referred to as "postconventional" (Torbert et al., 2004, pp. 93–95).

Cook-Greuter's (2004, 2005) assessment tool, Sentence Completion Test Integral - Maturity Assessment Profile (SCTi-MAP), is a revision of the WUSCT, incorporating Torbert's framework. Her work includes more rigorous definitions and measurements of later stages. SCTi-MAP has been used to statistically assess 7,000 leaders' profiles. Cook-Greuter's (2005) framework identifies seven relevant mental complexity stages: conformist, conscientious/conformist, conscientious, individualistic, autonomous, construct-aware, and unitive (p. 5). The first three stages are similar to Torbert et al.'s (2004) conventional stages of mental complexity and are also referred to as conventional (Cook-Greuter, 2005, p. 2). The last four stages are similar to Torbert et al.'s (2004) postconventional stages of mental complexity and are also referred to as postconventional (Cook-Greuter, 2005, p. 2).

Through application of Loevinger's (1976), Torbert's (1987), and Cook-Greuter's (2004, 2005) research, assessments and frameworks, and using their own empirical research of 220 managers, Joiner and Josephs (2007) created a leadership framework which focused on leadership agility—the "ability to take

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wise and effective action amid complex, rapidly changing conditions" (p. 6).

Their framework adds more to the definitions of various stages. Joiner and

Josephs's (2007) framework identifies six relevant mental complexity stages:

conformer, expert, achiever, catalyst, co-creator, and synergist (pp. 8–9). The first

three stages are similar to Torbert's (2004) and Cook-Greuter's (2005)

conventional stages of mental complexity but are referred to as "heroic" (Joiner &

Josephs, 2007, pp. 7–10). The last four stages are equivalent to Torbert's (2004)

and Cook-Greuter's (2005) postconventional stages of mental complexity but are

referred to as "post-heroic" (Joiner & Josephs, 2007, pp. 7–10).

At the conventional and heroic stages of mental complexity, leader

characterizations include (a) causation is linear and mostly predictable; (b) a

stable reality requires social categories, norms, laws, and power-structures; (c)

work is assigned and individual completion is preferred. At the postconventional

and post-heroic stages of mental complexity, leader characterizations include (a)

causation is circular, relational, and within whole dynamic systems; (b) reality

depends on one's perspective and interpretation; (c) work is agreed upon and/or

performed collaboratively (Cook-Greuter, 2004, 2005; Joiner & Josephs, 2007;

Torbert et al., 2004).

McCauley et al. (2006) found that the body of research they reviewed

using constructive-developmental theory included restricted samples and research

designs. While the WUSCT (Loevinger & Wessler, 1970) and SCTi-MAP (Cook-

Greuter, 2004, 2005) have been statistically validated by thousands of completed

profiles, these assessments require training in order to score them (determine a person's stage) reliably, unlike many leadership assessments which can be scored using a computer application. This may be one of the reasons for the restricted samples in the research. The restricted research designs McCauley et al. (2006) found included lack of longitudinal studies that examine the dynamics of developmental changes in leaders, and the lack of other variables in the design, such as personal styles and preferences, which have been shown to influence leadership. These limitations may reduce the potential impact of constructive-developmental theory on leadership within organizations and leadership in general.

While these limitations exist, the work of constructive-developmental theory can provide insight as to why some of the behaviors of adaptive and authentic leaders are different than traditional Western leadership, and whether leadership in sustainable business is really different than leadership in traditional Western business. For example, Kegan's (1982, 1998) constructive-developmental model has been suggested as an explanation for why some leaders exhibit more transactional leadership behaviors and others more transformational leadership behaviors (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987).

The work of Hawken, A. Lovins, and L. Lovins (2000); Hart (2005); and Korten (2010) suggests that the single bottom line focus of leadership is characterized by dominating nature, displaying superiority, and governing by hierarchy. According to Cook-Greuter (2005), at the conventional stages of

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mental complexity "knowledge, measurement, and prediction are taken for granted as means to control nature, self and society" (p. 21).

By contrast, the characteristic behaviors of adaptive and authentic leadership are creativity, adaptation, high self-awareness and utilization of positive energy (Heifetz, 1998; Walumbwa et al., 2007). At the postconventional stages, the meaning of things depends on one's perspective and interpretation; that is, the meaning of things is seen as being self-constructed (Cook-Greuter, 2005, p. 21). Because reality is viewed as self-constructed, leaders at these stages find "novel ways of looking at problems" (p. 23) and "dreams, fantasy, and imagination" (p. 27) may even be utilized for more creative solutions. They tend to "not want to impose their interpretations on others" (p. 23); instead they choose to create space for others to express "their voices and opinions" (p. 23). The result is a better understanding of others and a possible source of creative, adaptive solutions from the collective. The capacity to empathize and tolerate different ideas and behaviors from others is due to an increased capacity for self-awareness, including the capability of "'owning' and integrating many disparate parts of themselves" (p. 24). At these stages, psychological well-being is a priority (pp. 25–26), thus allowing the access and use of more positive energy. Thus it can be seen that the characteristic behaviors of adaptive and authentic leadership appear to be representative of adults occupying the postconventional stages of mental complexity as defined by Cook-Greuter (2005).

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Using SCTi-MAP to measure mental complexity, Cook-Greuter (2005) found that about 12% of adults occupy the postconventional stages of mental complexity (p. 2) . In another statistical four-year study of 604 participants from a business setting, using the "leadership agility" constructive-developmental model by Joiner and Josephs (2007), it was demonstrated that about 10% of the participants occupy the post-heroic (equivalent to Cooke-Greuter's postconventional) stages of mental complexity (p. 10).

The triple bottom line goals of sustainable business are grounded in a more nuanced and multi-layered worldview and sense of priorities (Doppelt, 2003; Hart, 2005; Hawken et al., 2000). The later stages of mental complexity (Cooke-Greuter's (2005) postconventional stages and Joiner and Josephs' (2007) post-heroic stages) appear to represent the mental complexity that leaders need in order to navigate the more nuanced and complex world of sustainable business (Berger, 2012, Chapter 2; Joiner & Josephs, 2007, Chapter 6; Schmidt & McEwen, 2007, pp. 34–39). This suggests that leadership in sustainable business may be different than leadership in traditional business, especially leadership focused on maximizing short-term financial profit.

How can one progress through the mental complexity stages? There are many programs for helping leaders to evolve through to the later stages, but one method in particular is of most interest to this study. Joiner and Josephs (2007) claim it is through the "capacity to live 'in attention' that one can move into and through" the later mental complexity stages (p. 221). This claim is based on their

findings that, at the post-heroic stages, leaders are much more likely to have an

attentional practice such as yoga, tai chi, and various forms of meditation (p. 222).

Similarly, the work of Schmidt and McEwen (2007) also supports the ideas that

(a) evolving mental complexity is a necessary development for leaders dealing

with sustainability challenges and (b) evolving the capacity to expand what one

can pay attention to is important in this development (p. 32). While Joiner and

Josephs and Schmidt and McEwen assert the importance of attentional practices

to leadership development, their research does not specifically focus on the

impact of these practices on leaders facing sustainability challenges.

Systems Thinking

The United Nations' effort to encourage action towards sustainable

development (and sustainability in general) on a global scale appears to be a call

for problem-solving through the lens of complexity; that is, for a nuanced analysis

which takes into account the dynamic nature of the many elements involved, for

example, poverty, inequality, culture, economics, and the natural environment

(United Nations General Assembly, 2000; HLPGS, 2012; WCED, 1987). This is

what Morin (2008), one of the leading thinkers on complexity theories in Europe,

Latin America, and French-speaking Africa, implies when he writes, "Nothing is

really isolated in the universe. Everything is interrelated….What happens at any

point on the Globe can have repercussions on every other point at well" (p. 84).

Complexity theories and systems theories appear to provide perspectives

that help to avoid the oversimplification of sustainability problems (Wells, 2013,

Chapter 2). To discuss complexity theories and systems theories as separate

disciplines is in and of itself an oversimplification—they are interwoven.

Abraham (2011) suggests that complexity theories have their roots in cybernetics,

general systems theory, and systems dynamics. Cybernetics, beginning during

World War 2 with the work of Norbert Weiner, is an interdisciplinary study of

systems based on the similarity in structure and behavior of living organisms and

machines (Vallée, 2003; Verveen, 1971). General systems theory (GST), evolving

from the theoretical biology work of Ludwig von Bertalanffy in the 1920s, views

physical, biological, and social systems as similar and attempts to identify the

laws and principles which commonly apply (Von Bertalanffy, 1969). Just as

sustainability is grounded in the interdependent nature of the world, so too are its

predecessors in earlier systems of thought.

Systems dynamics has its origins in dynamical systems theory (DST)

which came from the mathematical work of Isaac Newton and has since been

modernized by Henri Poincaré in 1890 (Abraham, 2011, p. 383). The work of Jay

Forrester (1961) and his group at Massachusetts Institute of Technology

beginning in 1956 involved the combined use of DST, digital computers, and

computer software in order to understand the behavior of complex dynamical (i.e.,

non-static) systems over time. Forrester's work came to be known as systems

dynamics. In 1970, Forrester attended a Club of Rome meeting that was focused

on the impact of human actions on Earth. This led to the Limits to Growth project

(Meadows, Goldsmith, & Meadow, 1972) in which a computer simulation of

economic and population growth showed that human actions would reach the limits of Earth's available resources within a century.

The preceding is a simplified and condensed view of the history of complexity and systems theories. In this study, I do not attempt to distinguish between the two because, as I stated earlier, their histories, foundations, and applications are interwoven. Abraham (2011) suggests that the three roots of complexity theories have intertwined and branched out into many distinct areas of study like chaos theory and Gaia theory (pp. 386–388). One such area of study, systems thinking, is most relevant to this research.

According to Cook-Greuter (2005), as one evolves through the mental complexity stages, one's comprehension of "multiple interconnected systems of relationships and processes" (p. 24) expands; that is, a type of systems awareness grows as one evolves through the developmental stages. This capacity is referred to as 'systems thinking' and is a separate, but related, area of study from constructive-developmental theory.

The mechanistic worldview of Cartesian-Newtonian science perceives the world as a machine, in which physical phenomena are explainable through the simple, causal, one-to-one relationship of early scientific method. Among other things, this idea of the scientific method formed the basis for a supposed scientific management, a way of managing work processes and human behavior within an organization in order to achieve economic efficiency developed during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (F. Taylor, 1947). Systems thinking stands in

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contrast to this approach of viewing phenomena mechanistically and breaking them down into their constituent parts, in an attempt to understand and better manage them. Systems thinking, emerging in the first half of the 20th century from its roots in GST, emphasizes the viewing of systems as integrated wholes and not just individual parts. In a departure from scientific management, a system came to be seen as set of elements that form a whole which serves a purpose; for example, a watch, a human, a wetland (Meadows, 2008; Sahtouris, 2000). This holistic worldview in turn appears to have influenced gestalt psychology, ecology, and quantum physics (Capra, 1997, Chapter 2).

Systems thinking and the goal of sustainable business appear to be intertwined. The goal of sustainable business is not just economic efficiency but to conduct business activities in a way that does not jeopardize the basic needs of present and future generations by unnecessarily sacrificing our natural environmental and social resources (Doppelt, 2003, Chapter 3; Willard, 2012, Chapter Introduction). To do this, one needs to see the interrelationship between how one conducts business, its impact on stakeholders (which includes, but is not limited to, present and future generations, the natural environment, and communities of people) and how stakeholders in turn impact the business. Systems thinking as applied to organizations sees "interrelationships rather than linear cause-effect chains" (Senge, 1994, p. 73). A system thinker views humans as interconnected and interdependent with each other, organizations interconnected and interdependent with other organizations, and everything as

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interconnected and interdependent with the natural environment (Senge, 1994, Chapter 5). To further sustainability efforts in business, a systems thinking perspective is obviously required (Goleman, 2013; Meadows, 2008; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013; Senge et al., 2010).

What might be the relationship between attentional practices and systems thinking? The work of Goleman (2013) and Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) sheds some light on this question. Goleman (2013) claims that for leaders to be effective they need three kinds of attentional abilities: (a) a focus of attention that provides self-awareness (Chapters 6–8), (b) a focus of attention that results in more effective connections with other people (Chapters 9–11), and (c) a focus of attention that results in an effective navigation of the world (Chapters 12–14). Goleman's claim of effective leaders requiring "inner, other, and outer" (p. 224) attentional abilities is based on a synthesis of existing cutting-edge research on attention and case studies in diverse fields (e.g., sports, arts, and business), and on his past work on emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2005; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013) and social intelligence (Goleman, 2007).

The "inner" attentional ability mostly relates to emotional intelligence; the "other" attentional ability mostly relates to social intelligence; and the "outer" attentional ability is about paying attention to "the operations of the broader systems that shape our lives" (Goleman, 2013, p. 205). This systems awareness ability, according to Goleman (2013), does not come as naturally to someone from Western society as the other two types of attentional abilities (p. 132).

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Through case examples, Goleman (2013) identifies a variety of possible ways to cultivate the three attentional abilities. These include achieving mastery in sports, memorizing long texts or sound tracks, meditation, focusing on the positive, playing "smart" games intended to train attention, and doing breathing exercises (Chapters 15–17). While Goleman generally asserts the importance of attentional practices for more effective leadership (including being able to effectively navigate systems), his work is based on a synthesis of existing research findings which does not systematically identify the possible impact of attentional practices on systems thinking.

Theory U (also referred to as Presencing), a leadership framework for creating social change, highlights the relationship between attention and systems thinking (Scharmer, 2009). Based on theoretical and action-based research, this model claims that identifying and implementing innovative sustainable business practices that will contribute to dealing with sustainability challenges requires a recognition of the blind spot in leadership—the inner place from which we attend (Scharmer, 2009, p. 11). Based on a synthesis of research findings in leadership, management, economics, neuroscience, contemplative practice, and complexity research, Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) assert, "The essence of our view concerns the power of attention: We cannot transform the behavior of systems unless we transform the quality of attention that people apply to their actions within those systems, both individually and collectively" (pp. 18–19). While Scharmer and Kaufer assert the importance of attentional practices to systems thinking, their

research does not systematically identify the possible impact of attentional practices on systems thinking, either.

Attention and Mindfulness

In Western society, beginning with René Descartes in 1641, interest in attention arose in the field of philosophy (Johnson & Proctor, 2004, p. 4). Western philosophers primarily focused on the role of attention in consciousness awareness and thought and conducted little experimental research on the topic, but the contributions by these philosophers laid the foundation for the scientific study of attention in ensuing years (p. 5).

The period from 1860 to 1909 was an important one in the study of attention in Western society. The field of psychology shifted from a philosophical pursuit to one of scientific inquiry with emphasis on experimental investigations. By the end of this time period, the study of attention was central to the field of psychology (Johnson & Proctor, 2004, p. 14). The views of William James (1890/2007) on attention influenced the work of these early psychologists. James defined attention as "the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought" (pp. 403–404).

In the period from 1920 to 1949, the research in Western society on attention slowed because much of the psychological research shifted to a behavioral emphasis (Johnson & Proctor, 2004, p. 15). The period from 1950 to 1974 was characterized by a major interest in human information processing.

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During this time, much was learned about auditory attention (pp. 18–20). In the early 1970s there was a shift from studying auditory attention to studying visual attention, and a view that attention is a single, limited capacity resource (pp. 263–264). In the latter part of the 1970s, researchers proposed that attention was better viewed as being comprised of multiple resources (p. 274).

In summary, the theories and views of attention in Western society from 1920 until the last quarter of the 20th century have focused on how we attend to information, how we divide our attention, and how our attention can decline over time. This research predominantly originated from cognitive psychology (Ward, 2005, p. 27). In a recent period of research, the major focus has been on neuropsychological evidence related to the brain mechanisms that underlie attention (Johnson & Proctor, 2004, p. 22). This direction promises to advance the study of attention in Western psychology significantly in the first half of the 21st century.

While Western psychology has focused on attention since the late 19th century, Buddhists have been students of attention for the past 2,500 years (Wallace, 1999, p. 176). Their major contribution has been in the training of attention so that it could be a more reliable, precise instrument of observation (p. 176). This type of Buddhist attentional cultivation is called Samatha (sometimes written as Shamatha), which involves various meditation practices. Samatha is "a path of attentional development that culminates in an attention that can be sustained effortlessly for hours on end" (Wallace, 2006, p. xii).

Attention cultivation is closely associated with mindfulness, which is usually identified with Buddhism. According to the Theravadin Buddhist monk Nagasena, mindfulness is the act of attending closely to what is occurring in the mind and body in the present moment (Wallace, 2011, p. 56). Another Theravadin Buddhist monk, Buddhaghosa, adds to this definition by referring to mindfulness as a faculty that has the capacity to remember what has been known and what holds experience together, not cognitively processing it, but with engaged awareness from moment to moment (p. 56). Also, mindfulness can be prospective in nature (p. 57). From a Buddhist perspective, mindfulness is attending closely within the present moment, without cognitive processing of past, present or future experiences.

Over thirty years ago, Kabat-Zinn (1982) introduced mindfulness to the Western medical community. Since then many people have come to recognize a relationship between mindfulness, emotional well-being, and mental health. To provide distinguishable and empirical characteristics for research purposes, mindfulness has been operationally defined as

> a process of regulating attention in order to bring a quality of nonelaborative awareness to current experience and a quality of relating to one's experience within an orientation of curiosity, experiential openness, and acceptance. We further see mindfulness as a process of gaining *insight* [italics in original] into the nature of one's mind and the adoption of a de-centered perspective (Safran & Segal, 1990) on thoughts and feelings so that they can be experienced in terms of their subjectivity (versus their necessary validity) and transient nature (versus their permanence). (Bishop et al., 2004, p. 234)

This definition of mindfulness appears to be focused on the present, whereas in the definition by the Theravadin Buddhist monks mindfulness can have a past, present, or future focus (Wallace, 2011). Based on these definitions of mindfulness and attention, for purposes of this study the relationship between these two terms is as follows: mindfulness is a quality of engaged awareness that can occur if attention is cultivated and deployed in a way that is not reactive to what is presently happening, but is more open, accepting, and curious. The fact that this phenomenon of attention has captivated some of the best minds of the West and the East is an indication that the deployment of attention can be viewed as a primal faculty worth further consideration in leadership development.

Mindfulness, Meditation, and Leadership

In a search on "attention cultivation" and "leadership," "attention practices" and "leadership," and "attention" and "leadership," I found no further research studies on the topic. Due to the close association of mindfulness and mediation with attention, I then searched on "mindfulness" and "leadership," and "meditation" and "leadership" and found some literature relevant to this study.

In a recent theoretical study by Sauer and Kohls (2011) on the potential benefits of mindfulness in leadership, mindfulness was defined as "keeping one's attention on what is happening at the moment without cognitively evaluating it" (p. 293). The focus of this study is on mindfulness as a state of being, less so on the practices required to achieve mindfulness, although Sauer and Kohls acknowledge practices are required to achieve this way of being either formally

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(like meditation) or informally (like brushing your teeth while bringing awareness

to the experience) (p. 293). This study theorizes that mindfulness may have a

beneficial impact on leadership effectiveness (information processing,

interpersonal interaction, and decision making) and moral behavior (p. 301).

Sauer and Kohls found a substantial amount of research on the effects of

mindfulness on health and behavior-related parameters, and only a limited amount

of research on the effects of mindfulness on leadership (p. 303), suggesting an

opportunity for further research, such as the next two studies.

Based on primary and secondary research, and on their own practitioner

experience, Boyatzis and McKee's (2005) resonant leadership model suggests that

mindfulness in one's leadership makes a major difference in performance

(Chapter 6). They define mindfulness as the capacity to be fully aware of what is

happening inside and outside of one's self (p. 112) and assert that "developing

mindfulness means developing [a leader's] emotional intelligence" (p. 136).

Studies show that emotional intelligence has a positive impact on a leader's

capacity (J. M. George, 2000; Goleman, 2005). While the resonant leadership

model identifies the role of mindfulness for a leader in sustaining relationships

with others, their team, and their organizations, it does not directly make the

connection between mindfulness and sustainable business.

In a theoretical study on the application of a Buddhist perspective on

economics, Lamberton (2005) describes "sustainable sufficiency" as achieving

financial economic objectives that are consistent with the welfare of people and

the preservation of the natural environment (p. 61). The sustainable sufficiency framework is based on a Buddhist perspective of economics; this perspective, in turn, springs from the Buddhist idea of mindfulness; more specifically, focusing attention "on the present moment" (p. 60). Lamberton's sustainable sufficiency framework suggests a connection between mindfulness and sustainable business but does not provide many details on the impact of mindfulness on leadership within the context of sustainable business.

The above studies focused on mindfulness as a way of being without describing the practices to achieve mindfulness. Meditation is one of the best known mindfulness practices. There are studies that examine the effects of meditation on workplace behavior, but the focus on meditation literature specifically on leadership, such as the next study, is more relevant to this inquiry.

In a recent study on the effects of the Maharishi Transcendental Meditation technique (Llewellyn & Pearson, 2011, p. 3) on leadership behaviors, McCollum (2011) found, in the quantitative results of the study, that the use of this meditation technique twice a day grows the leadership behaviors as identified by the Leadership Practice Inventory assessment by Kouzes and Posner (1990): (a) challenging the process, (b) inspiring a shared vision, (c) enabling others to act, (d) modeling the way, and (e) encouraging the heart (McCollum, 2011, p. 171). The results of the qualitative portion of the study showed (a) greater effectiveness in work, (b) increased energy for work and home activities, (c) greater comfort showing initiative, and (d) increased evenness in stressful

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situations (McCollum, 2011, p. 173). While the detailed impact of meditation on leadership behaviors was identified, this study did not relate the results of meditation to leadership within the specific context of sustainable business, although the results contribute to a good starting point for such a study.

In a review of three research studies examining the relationship between leadership, consciousness, and psycho-physiological refinement, Harung, Travis, Blank, and Heaton (2009) found that top leadership performers have more electrical activity in the parts of the brain that positively correlate with higher emotional stability, moral reason, inner stability, and lower anxiety; they also have more peak experiences.[3] They suggest that Transcendental Meditation, a practical method for psycho-physiological refinement, can be useful in enhancing the capacities for seeing larger perspectives, making new connections, and seeing new paradigms, all of which have been suggested in the literature as effective leadership abilities (p. 886).

In a study on the effect of Vipassana meditation on management practices, Marques and Dhiman (2009) identified a positive correlation between the practice of Vipassana meditation and favorable leadership characteristics such as greater attentional focus, greater emotional intelligence, enhanced awareness of surrounding reality, less negative emotions, and less ego focus. This study was

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[3] Peak experiences involve "holistic cognition, resolution of polarities or conflicts, transcendence or ordinary time and space, and profound experiences of integrated self, accompanied by feelings of bliss and wonder" (Harung, Travis, Blank, & Heaton, 2009, p. 876).

not empirical; instead, their findings are based on group discussions of 20

scholars from around the world who participated in a Vipassana workshop. These

20 scholars also identified some disadvantages that may occur:

- A person who engages in vipassana [*sic*] meditation may become overly sensitive, and therefore less capable of coping in an indifferent work environment.
- Engaging in vipassana [*sic*] meditation is not an easy task and may be considered too painful a journey to those who are set in their daily patterns and behaviors.
- Vipassana may enhance awareness within the worker, leading him or her to increasingly question the meaning of several of his or her activities.
- Vipassana, being a pure mindset, could be hard to maintain when exposed to toxic work environments.
- Vipasana [*sic*] requires a high level of discipline, in that it needs to be practiced on a regular basis in order to keep the senses awakened. (Marques & Dhiman, 2009, p. 82)

Mindfulness and related attentional practices, such as Samatha, are

techniques that have been around since ancient times (Wallace, 1999). They are

meant to cultivate a way of being in the world that appears to bring about a better

quality of life. For these reasons and more, modern day research of the effects of

this ancient knowledge and experience on health and behavior-related parameters

has grown substantially (Sauer & Kohls, 2011). The research of the effects of this

knowledge and experience (and even more modern forms) on leadership and other

domains is growing. This research is benefitted by the fundamental research done

in the context of everyday living and in clinical and medical settings.

Summary

It has been suggested in the literature that one of the consequences of traditional Western business practices, which focus on maximizing short-term financial profit, is the threat to environmental and social well-being; further, that this threat is a result of leaders behaving in ways that are influenced by the need to dominate nature, accumulate phantom wealth, and govern by hierarchy. To overcome this threat, a way for leaders to make meaning of and navigate and engage with the complex reality of making business more sustainable is needed; that is, a greater mental complexity is called for. The combined impact of the adaptive and authentic leadership models offers an alternative approach to leadership that supports developing mental complexity.

The idea that attention plays an important role in the development of mental complexity in leaders of sustainable business is implied by the research efforts of Joiner and Josephs (2007), and Schmidt and McEwen (2007). More specifically, Joiner and Josephs claim that it is through attention cultivation practices that leaders evolve their mental complexity. However, while one can derive the importance of attentional practices to leadership development from the work of these researchers, none of their efforts are specifically focused on the impact of attentional practices upon leaders facing sustainability challenges.

According to Cook-Greuter (2005), as one evolves through the mental complexity stages, one's comprehension of "multiple interconnected systems of relationships and processes" (p. 24) expands; that is, a type of systems awareness

grows. This capacity is referred to as "systems thinking" and is a separate but related area of study from constructive-developmental theory. To further sustainability efforts in business, many believe a systems thinking perspective is required (Goleman, 2013; Meadows, 2008; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013; Senge et al., 2010). Goleman (2013) argues for the importance of attentional practices for more effective leadership, which includes being able to effectively navigate systems. But his work is based on a synthesis of existing research findings which does not systematically identify the possible impact of attentional practices on systems thinking. Similarly, Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) assert the importance of attentional practices to systems thinking, but their research does not systematically identify the impact of attentional practices on systems thinking, either.

Mindfulness and related attentional practices, such as Samatha, have been around for millennia (Wallace, 1999). They are meant to cultivate a way of being in the world that appears to bring about a better quality of life. For these reasons, modern day research on the effects of these ancient knowledge and experience on health and behavior-related parameters has grown substantially (Sauer & Kohls, 2011). The growing body of research on the effects of these techniques and related experiences on leadership demonstrates that attention cultivation continues to capture the attention of scientists.

In conclusion, I suggest that the role of attention cultivation in sustainable business warrants further exploration guided by the question: What do the stories

of leaders who applied the lessons of attention coaching tell us about the role of

attention cultivation in sustainable business?

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

This study's primary research inquiry, "What do the stories of leaders who have applied the lessons of attention coaching tell us about the role of attention cultivation in sustainable business?," is explored using the qualitative method of narrative inquiry. This method is primarily theoretically grounded in the work on narrative inquiry by educational researchers Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2004), sociology researcher Catherine Riessman (2007), management studies researcher Barbara Czarniawska (2004, 2007), and linguistic researcher James Paul Gee (1991, 2010).

In this chapter, there are five sections. In the first section, I examine narrative inquiry by exploring a brief history of the method, how I view this method philosophically, and the rationale for the suitability of this method for addressing the proposed research questions. Next, I discuss participants and the interview protocol. Then, I discuss methods and tools used for analyzing the data. In the fourth section, I discuss measures taken to enhance the validity of this study. Finally, in the last section, I discuss the scope of the study and the potential weaknesses of this study.

A Brief History of Narrative Inquiry

Riessman (2007) summed up the history of narrative inquiry by writing that "the precise beginnings of narrative study in the human sciences are contested; there are taproots in a variety of fields that converged and informed narrative inquiry" (p. 17). Based on the variety of literature I read, I have

identified three "taproots:" qualitative research, the philosophy of John Dewey, and storytelling.

Qualitative Research

Quantitative research, embedded in the worldview of the Enlightenment period of the 17th century, emphasizes an objective, value-free measurement and analysis of cause and effect relationships in the natural world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 10; Piantanida & Garman, 2009, p. 48). Research in the 20th century began with the dominant assumption that the social world "could and should be studied in the same way as the natural world" (Piantanida & Garman, 2009, p. 49); that is, through scientific quantitative research. Then, starting in the mid-20th century, the Chicago school established a complementary style of inquiry referred to as qualitative research which is a more subjective, interpretive approach to the social world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 10; Piantanida & Garman, 2009, p. 48). According to Creswell (2006), qualitative research, as "an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures, and various blends of material" (p. 35), mirrors the complexity of the human social experience and helps a researcher interpret carefully the many nuances of human experience. More specifically, qualitative research is an activity that "stud[ies] things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). From this intricate fabric, which is qualitative research, emerges narrative inquiry, one way to make sense of the nuances of human experience.

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John Dewey

John Dewey was an American philosopher, psychologist and education reformer who counted among his influences the work of William James (1890/2007). Dewey's (1938) work on education and experience in turn influenced the work of educational researchers Clandinin and Connelly (2004). According to Clandinin and Rosiek (2007), there are three aspects of Dewey's (1980) conception of experience that permit a better understanding of the social sciences. The first aspect is that, for Dewey, experience is the ontological bottom line—to strive to understand human experience is to understand reality. All inquiry proceeds from experience and "the regulative ideal for inquiry is to generate a new relationship between a human being and her environment" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 39).

The second aspect of Dewey's (1980) concept of experience is that it is continuous: "experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004, p. 2). From this, inquiry then becomes "an act within a stream of experiences that generate new relations that then become a part of future experiences" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 41).

The third aspect of Dewey's (1890) concept of experience is that it is both personal and social. "People are individuals and need to be understood as such, but they cannot be understood only as individuals. They are always in relation, always in a social context" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004, p. 2).

Working from Dewey's (1980) formulation of experience, Clandinin and Connelly (2004) saw story as the ideal unit of experience to analyze.

Storytelling

Storytelling as a common mode of communication is what Czarniawska (2004) meant when she wrote, "People tell stories to entertain, to teach and to learn, [and] to ask for an interpretation" (p. 10). Storytelling has been a part of being human for a very long time. With regard to sharing experience, "storytelling and story comprehension are ultimately grounded in the general human capacity to conceptualize—that is, to structure experiential elements into wholes" (Polkinghorne, 1991, p. 142). This "whole" is a narrative structure that "gives coherence to imaginatively created stories about fictional characters and events, as well as to stories about actual human events. . . . Narrative structuring functions to make stories meaningful through the various formats in which they are expressed" (p. 143). Analyzing narrative structure is a valuable resource for understanding human experience.

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Locating Narrative Inquiry

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In locating narrative inquiry within a paradigm in the quest for knowledge, the challenge is that there is no one specific way to "do" narrative inquiry. There is not a harmony of philosophical perspectives among narrative researchers (Clandinin, 2006, p. 1; Creswell, 2006). As a result, I had to choose. I chose to ground my understanding of narrative inquiry in the work of specific researchers. From Clandinin and Connelly (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2004), I

drew the concept of story as the ideal unit of experience to analyze. Riessman's (2007) and Gee's (1991, 2010) work gave me an understanding of how to analyze a story. Czarniawska's (2007, 2004) perspective broadens the reach of narrative inquiry by extending it into organizational studies, to which leadership studies are closely related. What follows regarding narrative inquiry is mostly based on my reading of these scholars' works.

In narrative inquiry, experience is the ontological bottom line and meaning is made of it through the collection, re-telling, and analysis of stories. Stories are the fundamental units of knowledge in narrative inquiry, situated within a three-dimensional metaphorical space of time (past, present and future), situation (place/location), and interaction (personal/social) (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2004; Riessman, 2007). This metaphorical three-dimensional space makes these units of knowledge "complex and filled with ambiguity" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004, p. 91); a slight shift in positioning in the three-dimensional space can change the meaning of a story for a researcher and participant. This implies that reality shifts; for example, a story I understood to mean one thing at one time can change in meaning at another time. The meaning of the stories of my relationship with the mentors is different now than it was five years ago, and five years from now the meaning may change even further. The meaning from five years ago does not negate the meaning I make today. Ontologically speaking, narrative inquiry is constructivist in nature in that reality is constructed in the

mind by an individual and can change depending on time, situation, and interaction.

From an epistemological standpoint, in narrative inquiry the researcher does not stand outside of the field of that which is being researched. The researcher is in relationship with the participants, and with the place where the stories are being told (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004, p. 62). While a participant shares his or her story, the researcher also has his or her own story. "We see ourselves (the researcher) as in the middle of a nested set of stories" (p. 63). I had story about the importance of this research study in my life while I was collecting stories from my participants. Some of the stories I collected were on the beautiful campus of an MBA graduate school. (The campus is a 255-acre outdoor sustainability learning center in the middle of the woods on an island near Seattle.) The combined factors of me (with my story) collecting stories from participants at a physical place that also has its own unique and interesting story have a great potential to influence each other. From an epistemological perspective, narrative inquiry can be characterized as socially constructed, influenced by relationships between the teller and the listener, and relationships between the participants and the interview location.

With regard to axiology, because narrative inquiry is relational, the researcher's and the participants' cultural and social norms and values cannot be eliminated from the research process; that is, research using the narrative inquiry method is value-laden. Czarniawska (2004) writes, "[t]he use of narrative devices

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in social science should lead to more inspired reading. . . .and an inspired—and inspiring—writing" (p. 136). From my perspective, the process of reaching out to readers through inspiring writing, especially readers outside of one's circle, requires a researcher to be motivated by his or her values.

The values that inspire me in conducting this research are learning, love, and relationship to the transcendent. These values have motivated my choice of inquiry and it is with these values that the reality comprised of the shared knowledge of this research will be constructed. From an axiological perspective, my use of narrative inquiry in the course of this research will utilize a constructivist lens.

From the perspective of Clandinin and Connelly (2004) and Clandinin and Rosiek (2007), narrative inquiry is philosophically rooted in Dewey's (1977) concept of pragmatism. There is an ongoing discussion about the relationship between constructivism and Dewey's (1977) concept of pragmatism (Hickman, Neubert, & Reich, 2009). The discussion concerns the extent of the commonality between Dewey's concept of pragmatism and contemporary constructivism. It appears that my choice to view narrative inquiry from a constructivist perspective does not represent a significant departure from this method's pragmatist roots.

Rationale for Narrative Inquiry

The use of narrative inquiry in the study of leadership and organizational studies has been slowly edging its way into the social sciences (Klenke, 2008). In one such use of this method, Shamir, Dayan-Horesh, and Alder (2005) argue that

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A leader's life-story is an important source of information from which followers and potential followers learn about the leader's traits and behaviors, that the leader's life-story provides the leader with a self-concept from which he or she can lead, and that telling the life story or parts of it is an important leadership behavior. (p. 13)

In their narrative inquiry on leader's life-stories, they identified four story themes that potentially provide useful information to a leader and his or her followers. (The construction of one's leadership life-story is one exercise I use in teaching a leadership development course in an MBA program. I have used this successfully to help leaders identify their personal development plan.)

In a similar vein, academics and practitioners from the Research Center for Leadership Action have encouraged the use of narrative inquiry in research studies of how people at all levels of organizations and across all sectors of society can contribute to leadership for the public good (Dodge, Ospina, & Foldy, 2005; Ospina & Dodge, 2005a, 2005b). Czarniawska (2007) supports this view when she writes, "organizational stories have become a legitimate topic of management and organization studies since the 1980s" (p. 384). This mode of knowing and communicating in organizations appears to allow a dialogical relationship between organizational practitioners and organizational scholars (pp. 399–400).

Within the framework of a qualitative approach, the use of narrative inquiry in this study contributes to the growing use of this methodology in leadership studies. Additionally, the use of narrative inquiry on leaders' stories of the relationship of attention cultivation and sustainable business has the potential

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to help "mobilize others into action for progressive social change" (Riessman, 2007, p. 9) and environmental justice, which are goals at the heart of the sustainable business movement.

<div align="center">**Participants and Interview Protocol**</div>

This section begins with identifying the number of participants, the selection criteria, and the method of deciding on participants. Then an introduction to each participant is provided. Finally, the interview protocol is provided discussing how the data was gathered.

Participants

Including myself, there were seven participants. The reason for having this many participants is that conducting in-depth open-ended interviews on a purposive sample of seven participants allowed me the time and attention to "get closer to the [participant's] perspective" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 12), thus facilitating "thick descriptions that characterize qualitative interview data" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010, p. 106).

It was not the intent of this study to have all participants of a specific gender, or to achieve a specific gender mix. The participant pool was selected according to a ranking system (described later in this chapter) and resulted in five females (including myself) and two males, ranging in age from 31-51 years old, and all U.S. citizens living in the western United States.

With regards to why I am included as a participant in this study, it was during the reading of Ming He's dissertation journey (Clandinin & Connelly,

2004; He, 1998) that I realized that her choice to include her own story in her research was something I should consider for mine. To wit, I am both an outsider and insider in the study as researcher and as a proposed participant. I have over 15 years of business experience and have been coached for over 10 years in the use of my attention, which focused a great deal on how I deployed my attention.

Midway through this experience, I earned my MBA in Sustainable Business. I had the intention of starting my own business with a focus on the triple bottom line of people, planet and profit (Elkington, 1998). Instead, I began teaching a Leadership and Personal Development course in the same MBA program and also coaching clients on the deployment of their attention. My clients were committed to sustainability in their business and/or personal life. As a result, I have a story to tell about how attention coaching has affected the way I do my part to change business for the good, not only as an attention coach but as someone who has received attention coaching and is immersed in the education of sustainable business leaders.

This study shows the impact of attention coaching on the co-participants and me; all of the participants are involved in furthering sustainability in business. I am a participant in my research study because only by articulating and analyzing my story can I make sure I am not unconsciously imposing my experiences onto the co-participants in this study.

Co-Participant Selection Criteria

The co-participants have been clients of my leadership attention coaching practice who have received at least nine months of attention coaching. This insured that these co-participants had sufficient time to meaningfully experience how the lessons of our coaching sessions have impacted their lives and, more specifically, the effect of these lessons on their pursuit of helping to make business more sustainable. While I was not specifically researching the efficacy of my leadership attention coaching practice, this study did not have participants from other leadership attention coaching practices because most of the attention coaching I have found outside of my own practice was for people diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

All co-participants received an MBA in Sustainable Business or were currently in the MBA program where I teach. All co-participants were working at the time they were receiving attention coaching, although the organizations for which they work were not required to be sustainability-oriented. In all cases, it was necessary for a co-participant to be committed to sustainability and working in order to have had the opportunity to apply the lessons of attention coaching to their work environment.

Method of Deciding on Co-Participants

While I had 27 current and past clients to choose from, each of them was ranked based on criteria related to their job status and their status as a client. Specifically, points were awarded as follows: one point for being employed

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during the time of selection; one point for every three additional months beyond the minimum of nine months of coaching; three points if they were a current client at the time of the selection (I temporarily stopped seeing clients after all interviews were completed); and two points if they were a past client within one year. Total points were added and a ranked list was created in descending order.

The target was to have seven to ten participants (including myself). On the ranked list of potential co-participants, total points ranged from two to 12. After looking at my coaching session notes for each of the potential co- participants, I made the cut-off at five points because it was from that point and above where I felt there was potentially rich information to explore that would yield insight to help in answering the research questions. This resulted in eight potential co-participants. I contacted each of them via email, asking them to consider participating in my research (see Appendix A). Attached to this email was an Informed Consent Letter (see Appendix B) and a Personal History form (see Appendix C). Of the eight potential co-participants, six agreed to participate.

Prior to their participation, each of them sent me a signed Informed Consent Letter and the Personal History form. Before the interview took place, they each received a copy of the Informed Consent Letter, signed by me and my dissertation chair, and the "Bill of Rights for Participants in Research" (see Appendix D). These documents informed the participant of what he or she was entitled to as part of the research process, including the right to be fully informed about the interview process and to ask any questions about the study. It also

provided the participant with an address and email contact for the Human Research Review Committee that has approved this study.

All participants were treated in accordance with the California Institute of Integral Studies Human Research Review Committee guidelines. No compensation was provided for participation in the study. Lastly, the co-participants were offered an opportunity to receive a copy of the completed dissertation.

Introduction to Co-Participants

In chronological order of interviews, the co-participants were Joe, Helen, Tanya, Shawna, Janet, and Robert.

Joe. At the time of the interview, Joe was 31 years old, originally from the Midwest, living in Oregon. In addition to his MBA degree, Joe has a BA in Intercultural Studies and Conflict and Peacemaking. At the time of the interview, Joe had been a client for nine months, and was an entrepreneur in a commercial aquaponics venture. Other attention cultivation practices he claimed he had participated in included meditation, prayer, journaling, and long distance running and cycling. The best job experience Joe had when he was in high school and then in college was when he worked at a frozen custard shop. This small business was where he learned how important good leadership is.

Helen. At the time of the interview, Helen was 31 years old, originally from and living in California. In addition to her MBA degree, Helen has a BS in Environmental Studies. At the time of the interview, Helen had been a client for

34 months, and was working as a project manager for an integrated managed care consortium in California. At the beginning of our coaching session, she was a trip reduction supervisor for a hospital in Washington State. Other attention cultivation practices she had participated in included Vipassana meditation and yoga. While going to undergraduate school in environmental studies, the last thing Helen thought was that she would be involved in working for a business, let alone be getting her MBA degree.

Tanya. At the time of the interview, Tanya was 36 years old, originally from and living in Oregon. In addition to her MBA degree, Tanya has a BS in Biology. At the time of the interview, Tanya had been a client for 18 months; she was Co-Founder and Chief Financial Officer of a social lending start-up business, and a small business advisor at a local university's business outreach program. During our coaching sessions, she was an office manager and patient advocate at a wellness center. Other attention cultivation practices she claimed she had participated in included yoga, touch and body movement, meditation, ecstatic dance, and sweat lodge experiences. At a young age, Tanya's love for the outdoors grew during the times in camps put on by the Audubon Society and at experiential educational river trips in New England.

Shawna. At the time of the interview, Shawna was 32 years old, originally from the East Coast and living in Washington State. In addition to her MBA degree, Shawna has a BS in Engineering. At the time of the interview, Shawna had been a client for 22 months, and was Founder and Facilitator of a new

mommy support start-up business. During our coaching sessions, she was a project coordinator at a public utility company. Other attention cultivation practices she had participated in included therapy, yoga, and meditation. Prior to joining the MBA program, Shawna found a passion for renewable energy by working in a couple of renewable energy companies.

Janet. At the time of the interview, Janet was 32 years old, originally from and living in Washington State. In addition to her MBA degree, Janet has a BA in International Studies and Communications. At the time of the interview, Janet had been a client for 19 months, and was a business consultant for a multi-national consulting company. Other attention cultivation practices she had participated in included yoga and meditation. From a young age, Janet had a strong connection with nature. One of the things she enjoyed about going to graduate school was that the monthly four day intensives were conducted on a campus that was situated in the middle of the woods.

Robert. At the time of the interview, Robert was 48 years old, originally from Spain and living in Washington State. In addition to his MBA degree, Robert has a BA in Chemistry. At the time of the interview, Robert had been a client for nine months, and was an independent business consultant for a university athletics department. Prior to our work together, he had not participated in other attention cultivation practices. Prior to joining the MBA program in which I teach, Robert was in the Peace Corps in Ghana. He joined the Peace

Corps after leaving a career in which his jobs were all chemical-related, including being an analytical chemist and a sales person for a chemical company.

Interview Protocol

A majority of the data collected consisted of field text from interviews. The questions used in the interviews (see Appendix E) were open-ended, allowing space for "thick" descriptions to emerge, and are mostly narrative in nature; that is, "detailed accounts [of experience] rather than brief answers or general statements" (Riessman, 2007, p. 23).

Prior to being interviewed, each participant was asked to find a piece of visual art that metaphorically represented the relationship between what they have learned in attention coaching and its impact on their goal of furthering sustainable business. Much like the use of Rorschach inkblots, the artwork was used to indirectly access the unconscious of the participants. Access to this tacit knowledge added richness to their story and further data to the study.

The Rorschach test was developed to probe the unconscious mind in order to examine a person's personality characteristics and emotional functioning (Exner, 1980). In a research study using fine art to uncover tacit views of leadership, Lindsey (2010) refers to the Rorschach test as an "interpretative assessment [that] uses neutral images or a third thing as a vehicle for accessing and analyzing" (p. 57) a participant's perceptions. Lindsey's use of fine art as the "third thing" allowed her research participants to "give voice to intuitions and tacit understandings [they] might never express in response to direct questions."

Settegast (2002) suggests that examining our lives through the use of art can help us to make meaning of our experiences. Therefore, the use of visual art metaphors facilitated verbal articulation of the tacit knowledge that allows business leaders to comprehend their experience of applying what they have learned in attention coaching to their contribution towards a more sustainable world. Additionally, the metaphors identified by the participants were viewed alongside the artwork to supplement the thematic and structural analysis of the stories. More information about this type of structural-visual analysis is provided later in this chapter.

The first part of the data-gathering procedure for this study used myself as a participant and was implemented as follows:

1. I found a piece of visual art that metaphorically represented the relationship between the lessons of attention coaching and my pursuit of greater sustainability in business.

2. I responded to the questions in the Interview Guide.

3. I wrote field notes on my experience of being a participant.

The second part of the data-gathering procedure for this study engaged the other participants and was implemented as follows:

1. I asked a participant to find a piece of visual art that metaphorically represented the relationship between the lessons of attention coaching and their pursuit of greater sustainability in business. Prior to an interview, the participant emailed me a photo of their artwork.

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2. For the first several participants, I read through my notes generated during previous interview sessions conducted with other participants. This information helped me to refine the questions in the Interview Guide. After several interviews, I no longer needed to refine the questions.

3. At the beginning of each interview, I attempted to mitigate the risk of having the participant respond to the questions in a way they felt would please me by stating the following: Because of our past/present relationship, it would be natural for you to want to respond to the interview questions in a way that you feel would please me. Please do not do this. It would be best for you to respond to the questions with as much honesty as possible regardless of whether you feel it would please me or not.

4. I conducted interviews using the Interview Guide (which may or may not have been modified) as a framework. I left time for follow-up questions and for each participant to bring up topics of their own that related to the inquiry.

5. After each interview, I wrote field notes.

Five of the initial interviews took place in person and one of then took place over the phone. Follow-up interviews took place over the phone or email. The interviews that took place in person or over the phone were audio-recorded and transcribed by me, with the interviewee's permission. After an interview,

each co-participant was sent a copy of his or her interview transcript. They were invited to review the transcript and make any clarifying comments or additional statements that they desired, and then to send the modified transcript to me. Only two co-participants made changes to their transcripts. At the end of all interviews, the data for each participant consisted of a Personal History Form, an image of visual art, transcribed interview(s), and field notes.

Data Analysis

I collected the data through in-depth, semi-structured, open-ended interviews of seven participants (including myself). Narrative analysis requires progressing from data received from participants to presentation, synthesis, and interpretation of the findings. This progression included a "back and forth" motion between data and "interim" data (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004, pp. 119–135). The objective of this motion was to derive meaning and significance from the stories told (a.k.a. data) in order to eventually retell the story through the presentation, synthesis, and interpretation of the findings. Interim data (any writing related to the research which is not considered the final product) in this study took the form of memos, notes from conversations with committee members, and entries in my reflective research journal.

Included in the transition from data through interim data to the presentation, synthesis, and interpretation of the findings was an analysis that consisted of three forms: thematic, structural, and structural-visual.

Thematic

A thematic analysis was done on all transcripts using a two-cycle coding process outlined in Saldaña (2013). To better manage this process, all transcripts were loaded onto Dedoose (2014), a web-based qualitative and quantitative data analysis tool created by SocioCultural Research Consultants. This tool helped me to store, organize, manage, and reconfigure the data as needed.

The first cycle of coding was done on the transcripts. It involved using insights drawn from the literature that informed this investigation and a combination of Emotion Coding (Saldaña, 2013, pp. 105–110) and Process Coding (pp. 96–100). Emotion Coding identifies the emotions expressed and/or experienced by the participant (p. 105), and Process Coding identifies the actions (gerunds) (p. 96). The first cycle of coding resulted in an initial list of themes that attempted to capture the essence of the data.

Then, in the second cycle, Pattern Coding (Saldaña, 2013, pp. 209–213) was used on the initial list of themes from each interview in order to identify the key concepts and larger categories of themes that existed between interviews. These "meta-code[s]" (p. 209) grouped together similarly coded data, and eventually resulted in becoming the findings of this study. Review with committee members resulted in further refinement of the themes and categories.

Structural

At this point, thematic coding had been done on all of the interview transcripts. The next step was to confirm and refine the themes and categories,

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and to interpret stories described by participants by conducting a structural analysis on narrative excerpts within the transcripts. Narrative excerpts are stories which describe events that have taken place at a specific time period in which a participant shares in order to make a specific point (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004, Chapter 1; Polanyi, 1989, Chapter 2). Based on this definition, I extracted 16 narratives from all of the participants' data.

It took two tries to find a narrative structural analysis approach that worked. The first approach I used was a technique created by Labov (1972) ("Labovian method"). The Labovian method requires the identification of six structural elements within a narrative excerpt: (a) summary or "point" of the story; (b) orientation to time, place, characters, or situation; (c) complicating action; (d) narrator evaluation; (e) resolution; and (f) a coda (Chapter 9). There may be multiple occurrences of a specific structural element (such as orientation), or they may be no occurrences (such as a coda). Coding a narrative excerpt with these structural elements allows a researcher to follow the story and to determine what is most important. I applied the Labovian method to at least two narrative excerpts, but I could not extract anything of significance. One of the problems was that the Labovian method required narratives have the traditional beginning, middle, and end in the depiction of a story. The narrative excerpts I had did not always follow this linear time sequence.

The second and final approach I used was a technique created by Gee (1991) referred to as an ethnopoetics approach to narrative structural analysis.

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This technique did not require that a narrative excerpt have a linear time sequence and the technique included a focus on words that were being emphasized by a speaker. Next, I describe the process I used to structurally analyze a narrative excerpt using a modified version of Gee's approach. See Appendix F for an example of this process applied to a narrative excerpt.

The first step was to structure a narrative excerpt in Gee's (1991) ethnopoetics form, which presents a story broken down into lines, stanzas, strophes, and (depending on the size of the story) parts (pp. 22–28). Each line is further broken out into prosodic phrases, a segment of speech that is "the characteristic rhythm of English" (p. 21). A prosodic phrase may point to what is important in a long stream of speech. Most prosodic phrases have a pitch glide which is identified by a "movement in the pitch of the voice that (in English) falls, rises, rises and falls, or falls and rises in relation to the normal pitch level of the sentence (Bolinger, 1986; Crystal, 1979; Ladd, 1980)" (p. 21). A pitch glide helps to locate the focus of the phrase, although the focus may not be the word within the pitch glide, "but rather all the words preceding this word (in the sentence) which in context are taken to be new or asserted information (Brazil et al., 1980; Jackendoff, 1972)" (p. 21). By structuring the narrative in this ethnopoetics form, interpreting the meaning becomes much like interpreting the meaning of a poem, with the additional aid of prosodic phrases (separated by "/") and pitch glides (capitalized words).

To help structure a narrative in this manner, I played audio clips of the excerpt using the AVS Audio Editor (2013) software. By doing this, I was able to both listen to the audio and to see the waveform of the audio. This combination of auditory and visual aids allowed me to better identify the prosodic phrases and the pitch glides. For example, when the waveform flat-lined, this usually indicated it was the end of a prosodic phrase. It usually took several passes of the audio to identify the prosodic phrases and pitch glides.

Once a narrative excerpt was formatted into Gee's (1991) ethnopoetics form, I summarized the narrative by creating a progression of images (Gee, 1991, pp. 33–36) depicted in the narrative. By repeatedly going back and forth on the narrative in Gee's ethnopoetics form and the progression of images depicted in the narrative, I was able to formulate an interpretation. Once that was done, I coded the stanzas of the narrative excerpt in ethnopoetics form using the themes I identified during thematic analysis. Finally, I wrote up a second interpretation of the narrative, taking into consideration the themes identified. This additional interpretation included the main point of the narrative and a summary of events. To identify the main point of the narrative I reflected on the question "What is the point of this story?" taking in to consideration all of the analysis I had done up to this point.

In summary, at the end of structurally analyzing a narrative excerpt the result was (a) the narrative in Gee's ethnopoetic form; (b) stanzas within the form coded using the theme list from thematic analysis; (c) a table of the progression of

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images depicted in the narrative; (d) one interpretation that extracted meaning by describing the narrative linearly; and (e) a second interpretation that succinctly described the main point and a summary of events of the narrative.

Structural-Visual

I asked participants about their chosen artwork as a way to evoke discussion on how the lessons of attention coaching contributed or could contribute to their efforts in sustainable business. The final step to the data analysis was to conduct an analysis on the visual images from the participant and on the responses given by the participant to how each of their images represents how the lessons of attention coaching contributed or could contribute to their efforts in sustainable business. I used Gee's discourse analysis tools (2010) and ethnopoetics approach to narrative structural analysis (1991). Gee's discourse analysis tools are a set of structural processes and questions primarily used in analyzing language. They can also be used to analyze static or moving images; and texts that combine words, images, and music (2010, p. xii) because, according to Gee, "discourse analysis is about communication and in most cases images and multimodal texts are seeking to communicate" (p. xii).

I found Gee's method (1991) very helpful when analyzing stories and, even though a participant's description of an image is not a story per se, the structure of what is being shared along with the content helps me to understand what is being emphasized. Hence, the first step in this structural-visual analysis was to put a participant's response to their chosen visual image in Gee's

ethnopoetics form using only stanzas, prosodic phrases, and pitch glides. I then applied an adaptation of Gee's discourse analysis tools (2010, pp. 187–193): I used a set of modified Gee's discourse analysis questions and responded to applicable questions by repeatedly going back and forth between the visual image (in some cases there was more than one image for a participant) and the participant's response in Gee's ethnopoetics form. Then, using the set of responses to the questions, I responded to the following questions for each of the narrative excerpts from that participant: How do the responses to the questions supplement the last interpretation of the narrative done during structural analysis? What themes are corroborated? Finally, using everything done to this point in the structural-visual analysis, I identified what theme(s) were best exemplified by the image and the participant's response to the image. See Appendix G for an example of this structural-visual analysis.

In summary, after conducting a structural-visual analysis of an image and reviewing a participant's response to the image, the result was (a) the participant's response in Gee's ethnopoetics form, (b) one interpretation responding to a modified set of Gee's discourse analysis questions, (c) further interpretation on all the narrative excerpts for the participant based on what I learned from the structural-visual analysis, and (d) the theme(s) best exemplified.

Validation Strategy

This inquiry is an honest recounting by participants who have gone through a particular experience of their constructed story of those experiences at

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the time. No measurement of "facts" was done in this study. Hence, generalization of the findings will not be possible and was not the intent of this study. To establish the trustworthiness of the quality of the findings in this study, a validation strategy needed to be identified.

Qualitative researchers have developed different perspectives to help establish the trustworthiness of a qualitative study (Creswell, 2006, pp. 202–206). Lincoln and Guba (1985) use terms such as "credibility," "authenticity," "transferability," "dependability," and "confirmability." Eisner (1991) uses "structural corroboration," "consensual validation," "referential adequacy," and "ironic validity." A strategy to help ensure validity in this study would be to adopt one or several of the choices recommended by these academics. As articulate as these perspectives were, I found myself unable to choose. I stepped back and contemplated a question by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2010): "How do you know whether your findings are plausible and will be received as a credible explanation or interpretation of the phenomenon you are studying?' (p. 48). Still nothing moved me to choose.

What am I really doing in this study? What is it about this study that is so worthwhile that others need to be convinced of its validity? Perhaps the findings of this study may contribute to some body of knowledge concerned with leadership development, especially in the face of complex sustainability challenges. But what else is happening?

"The self is contrasted from continuing uncertainty, but it can include or reflect a community or even the entire biosphere, can be both fluid and stable, can be fulfilled in learning rather than in control" (Bateson, 1995, pp. 234–235). This study is just one more step down the path towards self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). If I had approached this study with the intent to protect or control, I would be trying to reaffirm something I already suspect or to confirm an existing belief; that is, to close myself off from something new. While this may be acceptable from a validation perspective, it did not inspire me to provide a contribution worth validating in the first place. If instead I viewed this research journey as "governed by the intent to learn . . . to go beyond the boundaries of the already known, understood, and believed in order to discover something currently unknown, something perhaps surprising and even uncomfortable" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, pp. 162–164), there was the potential to produce findings worth validating.

Holding gently, yet seriously, this intent to learn, I was inspired to choose the following validation strategy: (a) use of triangulation; (b) clarify researcher bias from the beginning; (c) solicit co-participants' feedback on the interview transcriptions; and (d) provide rich, thick descriptions. This strategy will allow readers to determine credibility and transferability of the research findings for themselves (Creswell, 2006, pp. 207–209).

Triangulation

In qualitative research, a researcher uses triangulation to check the integrity of the inferences drawn by a researchers (Schwandt, 2007, p. 298). In

this study, I do triangulation using two main data sources and three methods of data analysis. The data for each participant included a Personal History Form, an image of visual art, the interview, and field notes. The data analysis methods included the (a) thematic coding of interview transcripts (Saldaña, 2013), (b) structural analysis of narratives within the interviews (Gee, 1991), and (c) structural-visual analysis of images of visual art and responses by participants about the images (Gee, 1991, 2010). The use of multiple data sources and three different data analysis methods allowed a viewing of the data from multiple vantage points, thus allowing some form of convergence to occur.

Researcher Bias

I have been mentored for over a decade on my knowledge and experience of attention and I have been involved in sustainable business pursuits since fall 2004. Starting in the spring 2008, I have combined my knowledge and experience of attention with my sustainable business pursuits. Based on my years of experience, it is my belief that attention cultivation in leadership development for the purposes of helping to "Change Business for Good" is a positive thing. I did my best to suspend my views in order "to go beyond the boundaries" of what I already know and to keep the intent to learn at the forefront of my inquiry in order to find something "surprising and even uncomfortable."

The co-participants were current or past clients of my leadership attention coaching practice. While this study is not about the effectiveness of my practice, I may have only wanted to "see" the positive impacts of my coaching work (i.e.,

"protect" my practice), thus skewing the validity of the findings. To lessen the impact of this possibility, I practiced reflexivity, as recommended by Hesse-Biber and Leavey (2010, p. 39), by keeping a research journal, reflecting on the research process (including how the data do or do not fit together), looking over what I had written on a regular basis, and reflecting on my journal entries with the intent to see how I might have been compromising the research process in any way. I also spent time talking to colleagues about my work, reflecting on any concerns I had along the way. In addition, I included the possibility of negative experiences or impacts regarding attention cultivation (see Appendix E, Interview Guide).

Co-Participants' Feedback

Because the co-participants are current or past clients of my leadership attention coaching practice, this relationship might have influenced co-participants to respond to interview questions in a way they felt would please me. In an attempt to reduce this demand characteristic (Orne, 1962, p. 779), at the beginning of an interview I addressed this issue with the co-participant. (See Interview Protocol section above.)

A transcription of the interview was shared with each co-participant for their feedback on what may be misinterpreted or missing in order to accurately capture their story including the metaphoric description of their artwork. Only two co-participants made changes to their transcripts.

Rich, Thick Descriptions

According to Denzin (1998):

A thin description simply reports facts, independent of intentions or circumstances, . . . [whereas] a thick description, in contrast, gives the context of an experience, states the intentions and meaning that organized the experience, and reveals the experience as a process. Out of this process arises a text's claims for truth, or its verisimilitude. (p. 324)

There are just seven participants (including myself) in the study. I obtained their stories through open-ended, in-depth interviews. This purposive sample of participants gave me time and attention to develop rich, thick descriptions of their experience. Also, during and after the interviews I made note of the settings and my observations, thoughts and concerns. These field notes contributed to the creation of rich, thick descriptions of experience. These detailed descriptions will enable a reader to determine the possibility for the transferability of the findings.

Delimitations and Limitations

Even though I have had 27 clients in my attention coaching practice since April 2008, only seven participants (including myself) were chosen for this study. This study is limited in size to facilitate a deeper examination of the narratives for interpretation and insightful analysis. The focus of the research was on a sample of those who experienced attention cultivation through coaching for at least nine months and have applied what they have learned in their pursuit of greater sustainability in business. This study does not have participants from other leadership attention coaching practices because most of the attention coaching I have found (outside of my own practice) is for people diagnosed with ADHD.

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This study does not focus on subjects who have only participated in such attention cultivation practices as yoga or meditation because those practices do not necessarily focus on the direct application of attention cultivation to business leadership. This study is not meant to be an overview of attention cultivation in leadership development.

I recognize that this study revolved around a particular population with a particular experience of attention cultivation. The goal in narrative interviewing is to generate detailed accounts of a particular human experience; as a result, the findings of this study are not created for general application, but rather to offer compelling insights that allow "a reader to imagine their own uses and applications" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004, p. 42). In doing so, I seek to make a unique contribution to the body of knowledge around leadership development, especially focusing on attention deployment in leadership in the face of complex sustainability challenges.

Summary

The use of the qualitative method of narrative inquiry in this study contributes to the growing use of this methodology in leadership studies. Additionally, the use of narrative inquiry on leaders' stories of the relationship of attention cultivation and sustainable business has the potential to help "mobilize others into action for progressive social change" (Riessman, 2007, p. 9) and environmental justice, which are goals at the heart of the sustainable business movement.

I collected data through in-depth, semi-structured, open-ended interviews on a purposive sample of seven participants (including myself). The data for each participant consisted of a Personal History Form, an image of visual art, transcribed interview(s), and field notes. The methods used to analyzed the data included thematic coding of interview transcriptions (Saldaña, 2013), Gee's (1991) structural analysis method on narrative excerpts, and an adaptation of Gee's (1991, 2010) method to create a structural-visual analysis method on the artwork and associated description.

The validation strategy is comprised of: (a) the use of triangulation; (b) clarifying researcher bias from the beginning; (c) soliciting co-participants' feedback on the interview transcriptions; and (d) providing rich, thick descriptions. This strategy will allow readers to determine credibility and transferability of the research findings for themselves (Creswell, 2006, pp. 207–209). Care was taken to identify the scope of the study and the potential weaknesses of this study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTING FINDINGS

This chapter begins with a discussion of the categories and themes identified during data analysis. The more significant themes were identified for each category and are presented using exemplar data and an interpretation of the finding.

Categories

The identification of categories is an "interpretive act" meant to "*summarize, distill,* or *condense* data, not simply *reduce* them" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 4) into separate concepts. These categories are most likely interwoven. I separate them here for the purpose of understanding more about the details of each concept. Three categories emerged from the analysis: Acquiring Equanimity, Nonjudgmental Attention, and Letting Go. Each of the categories and the derivations of their names are explained below.

Acquiring Equanimity

Themes were grouped under the three categories. The first category, Acquiring Equanimity, contains six themes:

- A1 Being calm/calming down

- A2 Centering and grounding

- A3 Being at peace

- A4 Feeling safe

- A5 Feeling resourced

- A6 Feeling a larger expanse

Prior to identifying this first category, I noticed these themes were related in that they described a state of being (A3 through A6) or acquiring a state of being (A1 and A2) that appeared to help facilitate more effective behaviors under challenging situations. The closest term that described this state of being is "equanimity." The online Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines equanimity as an "evenness of mind especially under stress" (Equanimity, 2013). Acquiring equanimity, to me, best describes these six themes.

Nonjudgmental Attention

The second category, "nonjudgmental attention," contains six themes:

- N1 Stepping back and/or gaining perspective

- N2 Gaining clarity

- N3 Not resisting what is happening

- N4 Being more present

- N5 Not taking things personally

- N6 Being honest about mistakes

For purposes of this research, "attention" is defined as "the focus of awareness on one out of what seem several simultaneously possible stimuli" (see Definitions). What the data in these themes appear to reveal is an opening up of a participant's range of attention to include stimuli that he/she has habitually filtered out; that is, the stimuli appears undesirable or the participant has been unable to acknowledge the stimuli for some reason. For example, the stimulus may appear irrelevant (such as aspects of the bigger picture of a situation), the

stimulus may not be obvious (such as one's emotions or thoughts), or the stimulus is ignored in an act of defensiveness against something uncomfortable. I suggest that broadening the range of stimuli that one could pay attention to requires a type of nonjudgmental attention that reduces biases or preconceptions in order to admit more stimuli; hence the label, "nonjudgmental attention."

Letting Go

The third category, "letting go," contains three themes:

- L1 Being focused on things that really matter

- L2 Challenging mental models

- L3 Simplifying

Some of the research participants spoke directly to this category in their interviews. When asked about what she learned in attention coaching as it relates to sustainable business, Tanya says that one of

> the things that you have helped me with has been about letting go. I think that is another huge, huge thing. Still of course working on it. But the power of letting go, the thought that it is powerful to let go. That was a new thought for me.

Later in the interview Tanya said, "It is okay to let go and it's not weak if you let go. It is actually very empowering. You are in your power."

In an interpretation of Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*, Heider (1985) summarizes a segment of the book in this way: "Let go in order to achieve. The wise leader demonstrates this" (p. 43). In the above excerpt from her interview, Tanya mirrors this observation and it is significant to me that a member of the new generation of leaders has found this ability useful in service of furthering sustainability in

business. While not all the data for this group of themes explicitly contains the words "letting go," the category "letting go" best describes the shared concept of releasing (distractions, old ways of thinking and doing, unrealistic self-image, etc.) that runs through all these themes.

Themes

While many themes showed up at various points in the data, they were not all significant; that is, they did not all appear with sufficient frequency in the data to warrant further investigation. I used a two-step approach to decide on themes that were significant enough to explore in detail.

The first step involved a ranking system. I decided on criteria to use to identify potential significant themes. I then gave each of the criteria a ranking number based on importance. For each of the themes, a ranking value was calculated. The ranking values then gave me a sense of which themes were outliers in the process of discerning between those that were significant and those that were not. In the second step, I looked at the data for the themes that were in-between being significant and not significant. After a thoughtful review of the data, I decided the cut-off point where themes above that cut-off point were deemed significant, and themes below that point were not. The following are the details of this two-step approach to identifying significant themes.

Step One of Identifying Significant Themes

There were three criteria I looked at with regards to identifying significant themes: (a) In what percentage of the participants' interviews did the theme show

up? (b) In what percentage of the three data types (interviews, stories, art including art description) did the theme show up? (c) What is the percentage of total number of times that the theme showed up across all three data types in relation to the total for all themes for the category? I gave each criterion a numerical ranking which was used to calculate a total score for each of the themes.

I gave Criterion 1 (In what percentage of the participants' interview did the theme show up?) a ranking of 50%. Criterion 1 was given the highest ranking because I felt it was the most important from a credibility perspective that a theme is triangulated across as many of the participants' interviews as possible in order "to provide corroborating evidence" (Creswell, 2006, p. 208) of a theme's potential significance.

I gave Criterion 2 (In what percentage of the three data types did the theme show up?) a ranking of 30%. Similar to Criterion 1, Criterion 2 was given the second highest ranking because I felt it was the next most important from a credibility perspective that a theme be triangulated across many of the different data types using different data analysis methods in order "to provide corroborating evidence" (Creswell, 2006, p. 208) of a theme's potential significance.

I gave Criterion 3 (What is the percentage of total number of times that the theme showed up across all three data types to total for the category?) a ranking of 20%. This criterion was ranked as the third most important because, while the

total number of times that a theme showed up was important, I felt a high total alone was insufficient to indicate significance.

Table 1 represents the simple quantitative result of the data analysis for all themes within each category across all data types. The themes are ordered by total count, highest to lowest, within each category. The third column in the table is the total count by theme across all data types for all participants. For example, for all participants I coded the theme A1 (Being calm/calming down) 13 times across all interview texts, seven times across all narrative texts, and three times across all artwork and associated descriptions for a total of 23 times.

Table 1

Totals by Theme Within Each Category Across All Data Types

		Total	Interview	Narrative	Art
Acquiring Equanimity					
A1	Being calm/calming down	23	13	7	3
A2	Centering and grounding	17	13	2	2
A3	Being at peace	11	8	2	1
A4	Feeling safe	8	6	1	1
A5	Feeling resourced	5	5	0	0
A6	Felling larger expanse	4	3	0	1
Nonjudgmental Attention					
N1	Stepping back and/or gaining perspective	23	14	7	2
N2	Gaining clarity	21	13	8	0
N3	Not resisting what is happening	13	8	5	0
N4	Being more present	8	5	2	1
N5	Not taking things personally	7	2	4	1
N6	Being honest about mistakes	2	1	1	0
Letting Go					
L1	Being focused on things that really matter	14	9	3	2
L2	Challenging mental models	12	7	4	1
L3	Simplifying	5	4	0	1

Note. Table created by Author.

Table 2 depicts the ranking by theme within each of the categories. The fifth column is the score calculated for each theme. For example, for theme A1 (Being calm/calming down) a score of 65 was calculated using the following formula: 100*((50%*Participants %)+(30%*Data Type %)+(20%*Category %)), where "Participants %" = Criterion 1, "Data Type %" = Criterion 2, and "Category %" = Criterion 3.

Based on the score in Table 1, I decided on the themes that were significant and the themes that were not significant. Score values of 60 or higher created themes I considered significant. Score values of 49 and below were themes I considered as definitely insignificant. For the score values of 50-59, I applied a more subjective approach as described below.

Table 2

Results by Theme Within Each Category

		Participants	Data Type	Category	Score
Acquiring Equanimity					
A1	Being calm/calming down	57%	100%	34%	65
A2	Centering and grounding	71%	100%	25%	71
A3	Being at peace	57%	100%	16%	62
A4	Feeling safe	43%	100%	12%	54
A5	Feeling resourced	43%	67%	7%	43
A6	Felling larger expanse	29%	33%	6%	25
Nonjudgmental Attention					
N1	Stepping back and/or gaining perspective	86%	100%	31%	79
N2	Gaining clarity	86%	67%	28%	69
N3	Not resisting what is happening	71%	67%	18%	59
N4	Being more present	43%	100%	11%	54
N5	Not taking things personally	43%	100%	9%	53
N6	Being honest about mistakes	14%	67%	3%	28
Letting Go					
L1	Being focused on things that really matter	57%	100%	45%	68
L2	Challenging mental models	57%	67%	39%	56
L3	Simplifying	14%	67%	16%	30

Note. Table created by Author.

Step Two of Identifying Significant Themes

In the score value range of 50-59 are the following themes: A4 Feeling safe, N4 Being more present, N5 Not taking things personally, and L2 Challenging mental models. I reviewed the data for these themes for some insight into which themes to include as significant. What struck me was that data from just three participants was too scanty to extract any insightful meaning. Data from four participants in this score value range appeared to have just enough responses to work with. This decision was based on thoughtful review and reflection on the data. For these reasons, the only theme in this 50-59 range that was included as significant was L2 Challenging mental models.

In conclusion, there are eight significant themes. For Acquiring Equanimity the significant themes are (a) being calm/calming down, (b) centering and grounding, and (c) being at peace. For Nonjudgmental Attention the significant themes are (a) stepping back and/or gaining perspective, (b) gaining clarity, and (c) not resisting what is happening. Finally, for Letting Go the significant themes are (a) being focused on things that really matter and (b) challenging mental models. These themes will be explored in the following chapter within each associated category.

It is worth noting that the themes identified, significant and nonsignificant, appear to fall into two types: operational and phenomenological. "Operational" in a sense that a theme may describe a process or activity (Nelson, 1990, p. 38), and "phenomenological" in a sense that a theme may describe an experience or state

of being (p. 38). In this study, a theme may be operational, phenomenological, or both at the same time. For example, the theme "being at peace" is phenomenological in that it describes a state of being. On the other hand, as I read through the data that represents the theme "centering and grounding," I noticed that participants were describing the operations of centering and grounding, and the phenomenological experience of being "centered" and/or "grounded." It was not always apparent whether a participant referring to the phenomenological experience of centering and grounding had achieved that state of being through implementing the procedures of centering and grounding. What I have experienced both personally and in coaching is that, when the centering and grounding practice is done often enough, eventually one can achieve the state of being centered and/or grounded simply by recalling the phenomenological experience; that is, without having to actually do the practice. For this reason, I decided to not separate the operations of centering and grounding from the phenomenological experience of being centered and/or grounded. This theme represents both.

Major Findings

The major findings of this study are presented in the following sections through a more detailed breakdown of the identified themes in each of the three categories discussed above: Acquiring Equanimity, Nonjudgmental Attention, and Letting Go.

Acquiring Equanimity

There are two significant themes for this first category:

- A1 Being calm/being at peace and

- A2 Centering and grounding.

In this section, each of these significant themes is reported using exemplar excerpts and stories. One piece of artwork and its description, an exemplar for the entire category, is then reported. The section concludes with an interpretation that offers insights about the potential significance of this data.

Theme A1: Being calm/being at peace. Following the completion of all analysis, including thematic, structural, and structural-visual, this theme was initially coded as two separate themes within the category of Acquiring Equanimity: being calm/calming down, which had the second highest ranking at 65%, and being at peace, which had the third highest ranking at 62% (see Table 2). (Being at peace was coded when the word "peace" or "peaceful" was used.) Once I started to compare the analysis across all data types for these two themes, including interview texts, narrative, artworks and their descriptions, it became clear that "being at peace" was used synonymously with "being calm," hence the decision to combine these two themes into one. This combined theme showed up across four participants' data 33 times: 21 times across all interview texts, nine times across all narrative texts, and four times across all artwork and associated descriptions (see Table 1). What follows are excerpts, a story, and an artwork description that best exemplify the theme of being calm/being at peace.

Excerpt exemplars. The quotes below were chosen as exemplars because

they best describe the theme of being calm/being at peace, and they are listed in

specific order so that a more nuanced understanding of the theme unfolds.

Joe describes a benefit of attention cultivation practices (words in brackets

and italics are mine):

> I think that is another thing with attention and with other attention
> practices, it is about just about being, and being in the moment, and not
> being too far backward or too far forward. [*So what is it that you find is
> beneficial to being in the moment?*] The main benefit is this deep sense of
> peace.

What does this calm state of being have to do with business? As a

consultant, Janet has exposure to different business clients. She says,

> You are better able to listen and to really understand what is going on.
> You are able to put other people at ease and get to the root of the issue.
> One of the things I see so much in business, a lot of the problems, a lot of
> the reasons why things don't work out or projects fail or whatever, is
> because people aren't communicating with each other and listening to
> each other and being honest about what the real issue is. As a leader in the
> business environment, having that sense of calm, you are able to bring
> things to the surface, deal with those issues and conflicts, and move
> forward in a way that causes the least amount of damage.

Janet considers a calm state of being as essential for leaders in order to

effectively deal with the resistance which arises when the discussion focuses on

shifting the business model towards greater sustainability. Janet had asked her

General Manager (GM)

> if we could have a sustainability-focused quarterly meeting where we
> shared information about our carbon footprint, raise awareness, share
> statistics, etc. He declined with the following response: "I would love to
> do more/be more known for green efforts. We'll have to figure out our
> entry into this space, as I don't see the ability for consultants to necessarily
> recoup the investments quite yet.'"

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That was a business decision made based upon an individual's assessment of our company and the market. My assumption was that either he was not well informed about the field, our consultants' sentiment about sustainability, and/or that he wasn't ready to take on another effort/focus for the company due to competing priorities; which means to me he didn't see the value in moving into this space. I'm sure he thought critically about the idea, largely using his existing mental models, however it was a change he wasn't willing to invest in and he certainly wasn't willing to have a conversation about what this might look like. Call it a decisive leadership decision or someone unwilling to change—it's hard to tell which.

In response to how a sense of calm could be beneficial to one's work in furthering sustainability in business, Janet said,

I would say sustainability is a tough thing because of the way that it is perceived. In my mind it is perceived as a cost center, and in business it is all about making money. It is hard to shift that mentality to thinking that you can do something that is good for the environment and good for your community and still be profitable. And so there is a lot of emotion around what that looks like. And change is hard. We have operated to a certain point; we have just been using and consuming for so long. To get people to understand that this is not a way we can operate any more is going to be a huge challenge; it *is* a huge challenge. So in bringing this type of attention work or perspective into that environment, [it] is super important to get people to actually put their guard down, have an intelligent conversation about what you are trying to do, where you are going, and look at the data around how this can be a smart business move or let's take a risk and here's what we might do. We might fail but, those kinds of things—getting people to the table and that attention and that sense of calm—is vital.

Janet's inability to convince her GM to take more action within their business to further sustainability has served as a kind of "negative example" of what is needed to catalyze this change within a more traditional business environment. Witnessing her employer's resistance has demonstrated to her that a calm state of being is "vital" for sustainability leaders because the change required for sustainability is "hard." Shifting people's mental model for business

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to include financial profitability AND doing "good for the environment" AND doing "good for [the] community" can be more effectively accomplished when a leader has a calm state of being. When encountering the kind of intransigence evidenced by her GM, it is clear to Janet that "a sense of calm" helps a leader to more effectively show others that sustainability "can be a smart business move."

In a specific instance of how a calm state of being was of benefit in my own work, I applied what I learned in attention coaching to a work situation. Early on in a webinar that I was conducting with business students, I ran into technical problems.

> I got quite angry during the session. I was able to shake the anger a bit in order to recover enough to do class. I remember after that session, I was angry with the IT department for at least three hours. How could they provide a platform that was not robust? Are they such idiots? I had a hard time sleeping. I talked with my husband about it and I realized the reason I couldn't let the anger go was because it was about the control issue—I wanted to be perfect in my delivery of class and I couldn't because of the technical problems. When I "saw" my egoic issue, I got calmer, I was able to go to sleep. I was able to interact the next day [with the IT department] in a calm, professional way. I let them know what happen[ed] to me and I was able to hear from them what I should do the next time (clear caches and hard wire into my router), all without any drama.

In my talk with my husband, I applied what I learned in attention coaching in order to see my "egoic issue" of needing to have control in order to appear perfect in front of my students. By paying attention to this "egoic issue," I was able to shift to a calm state of being and communicate with the IT department in an effective way.

Story exemplar: Co-presenting at a conference. The story below exemplifies the theme of being calm/being at peace. Because stories are more

complex and longer than just excerpts, analyzing them resulted in multiple themes

per story. The interpretation following the story will focus on just the theme of

being calm/being at peace (referred to as "calmer state of being"). A story from

Helen was chosen because, out of all the participants, Helen referred to a calmer

state of being the most during the interview process. In this story, Helen describes

a public speaking engagement during a time when she was being coached by me.

(Words in brackets and italics are mine. Prosodic phrases are separated using a

"/." Pitches glides are capitalized words.)

Strophe 1: Freaked-out vs fun.

Stanza 1: Public speaking—freaked-out.

1. Somehow my COWORKER DAN and I had gotten/involved in presenting at
   a CONFERENCE

2. And that scared me/I think it was right after I had gotten some feedback on
   my public speaking that was FAIRLY CRITICAL

3. Because of that timing I was EXTRA/nervous about it

4. PUBLIC SPEAKING had always/kind of FREAKED ME out/to start
   with/instead of being able to GO TO this space/in the PAINTING/and be
   more CALM AND RELAXED about it

Stanza 2: Public speaking—fun.

5. Some of the TOOLS you gave me were/to set an INTENTION/and I
   remember writing/all my intentions DOWN/good, bad and ugly/"I want to be
   COOL"/"I want to be POPULAR"/or WHATEVER it might have been

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6. And then to/find one and CIRCLE IT/ and SHARE IT/with SOMEBODY/and I DID THAT

7. I still remember that/my intention was to have FUN/during this particular PRESENTATION

8. I remember coming OUT/him and I were like/JOKING and having a great time/as we were CO-PRESENTING/and it was A LOT OF FUN to present at that conference/it WORKED

<center>Stanza 3: Coda to strophe 1.</center>

[*I didn't realize it was a conference. That's pretty cool. I thought it was just in front of people at your work.*]

9. No/that was a/it wasn't a big conference/but it was a LITTLE CONFERENCE

<center>Strophe 2: Past vs present.</center>

<center>Stanza 4: Public speaking in the past.</center>

[*So you guys had fun. What about relaxed and comfortable?*]

10. Yay I think/ever since I was a LITTLE KID even if it was just/being called on in CLASS

11. My whole body would TENSE UP/and I would feel really nervous

12. My voice would QUAKE/my FACE would turn red

13. I would feel ALL THESE THINGS happening since I was small

Stanza 5: Public speaking in the present.

14. I still remember having that anxious feeling in my stomach and being a little

    BIT JITTERY/but I don't remember like turning red/and I don't remember

    having my VOICE QUAKE

15. That stuff has LESSENED

16. It is interesting/over the course of the LAST/how long has that been?/three or

    four YEARS/a lot of that has fallen into the BACKGROUND/when it comes

    to PUBLIC SPEAKING

17. Like still I have INITIAL NERVES/ but usually once I STAND UP/and start

    OPENING my mouth I'm fine

Table 3

Progression of Images in the Narrative "Co-Presenting at a Conference"

We are chosen for presenting at a conference.
I am freaked-out about public speaking.
I wrote all my intentions down and chose one.
We had a lot of fun presenting at the conference.
I am still a little nervous to do public speaking these days but once I start I am fine.

Note. Table created by Author.

In this story, Helen describes finding out about a public speaking

opportunity with her co-worker. She had just received "fairly critical" feedback

about her public speaking skills (line 2). As a result of this and her problematic

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history of public speaking (line 4 and stanza 4), she felt "extra" nervous about this opportunity (line 3). She applied the practice of setting her intention for the presentation (line 5). This practice allowed her to acknowledge all the competing intentions that were happening for her and then to choose a specific one. Helen selected the intention of having fun for this presentation. In the past, just before speaking in front of people, she would be tense (stanza 4). With this practice, she was able to achieve a calmer state of being (lines 8, 14, and 15). From her perspective, the practice "worked" because she and her co-worker had a "great time" co-presenting, and it was "a lot of fun to present at that conference" (line 8).

Helen also acknowledges that, even three or four years later, when she does public speaking she still feels "initial nerves" but "once I stand up and start opening my mouth I'm fine" (line 17). With attention coaching, Helen's nervousness "has lessened" when speaking in public, and she is able to attain a calmer state of being once she starts speaking (stanza 5).

Theme A2: Centering and grounding. Centering and grounding is the most often used practice that I teach which can affect how one is paying attention. Clients use this practice as a way to settle themselves into their "center" (solar plexus area) and to connect themselves to the earth. This practice is often referred to as just "centering" or "grounding." As I stated in the Method Chapter, this theme represents both an operational act and a phenomenological experience.

This theme ranked as the highest (71%) within the category of Acquiring Equanimity and showed up across five participants' data 17 times: 13 times across

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all field texts, two times across all stories, and two times across all artwork (see Tables 1 and 2).

    Excerpt exemplars. The following quotes were selected as best exemplifying the theme of centering and grounding. They are listed in a sequence which supports a more nuanced understanding of the theme.

    When asked how centering and grounding contributes to a leader's efforts in sustainable business, Helen says, "I think sustainability is not the status quo." When asked to elaborate, Helen said (ellipses indicate a pause),

> I mean that it's not the normal. It requires a shift in so many things: individual behavior, our government, business, all these things. There is a lot of change. Change is hard for people and organizations . . . I think that to ask people to change and to be there with someone in asking them to change, whether [it] is a person or an organization or person in an organization, however you want to look at it, I think there is a space where you should hold and push at the same time. Like hold in terms of supporting someone through that change and helping them feel secure with change. And also pushing a little bit so that . . . helping is not the right word . . . pushing, pushing is the right word. Pushing or influencing them to want to make that change. I think that those two things can go together. I also think that there are ways of pushing where it totally turns people off and there are ways of pushing where it doesn't. And coming from a more grounded space I think affects that.

    According to Helen, a sustainability leader needs to "push" and "influence" people through change. If a leader pushes a certain way they can "totally turn . . . people off," and that by being grounded and centered, a leader can push in a way that doesn't turn people off. While what Helen shared is conceptual in nature, later in the interview Helen talked about a difficult dialogue she had with an employee in which Helen felt "more grounded in that conversation." It would be interesting to consider that this grounded state of being

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allowed Helen to more effectively communicate in order to "push" and

"influence" change in this employee. While Helen's experience with this

employee was not specifically about furthering sustainability in business, it is

about influencing change by "coming from a more grounded space" as she talked

to this employee about work performance issues.

Shawna also saw the benefit of leaders being grounded and centered.

According to her, grounding and centering is required

> to make any progress on anything. Being able to come in fresh, being able to stay centered and mindful of what is going on in yourself during those interactions as opposed to letting that relationship history guide everything. One of the most frustrating things about [my old employer] is that nothing ever changed. They were struggling with the same issues and had no [energy conservation] programs. They could have had fabulous programs, but none of it [happened] because they had the same people who had been there 20, 30 years and had huge grudges. They brought [bad relationship] stuff in with them every single time.

At her old employer, Shawna experienced sustainability leaders in her

department holding "huge grudges" that got in the way of influencing others to

make progress in implementing energy conservation programs. From her

perspective, being grounded and centered is a way of being for sustainability

leaders that is helpful for getting past these grudges so that they are able to work

more effectively with others.

The longer he studied sustainable business in the MBA program, the more

Joe realized how complex the issues were that sustainability leaders were facing.

When asked about the role of attention coaching in sustainable business, Joe said,

> The grounding exercises are meditative because they slow me down, get me present, let me be more aware of my environment and feelings, and

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allow me to get closer to self-realization because I am simplifying my life in that moment by letting go of external and trivial influences and my mind can focus on what it really wants to without so many distractions.

Joe refers to centering and grounding as evoking a state of being, one that allows him to slow down and to be more present and aware so that he can focus when the complexity that sustainability leaders face gets overwhelming.

Story exemplar: Asking for money at a strategic planning meeting. The story below exemplifies the theme of centering and grounding. This story was chosen because of Helen's explicit use of the centering and grounding exercise, what it did for her, and what may have happened if she did not do the exercise. In this story, Helen describes a presentation she gave at her company's strategic planning meeting which took place sometime between six to nine months after our coaching work ended. (Words in brackets and italics are mine.)

Strophe 1: The presentation.

Stanza 1: Wigging out.

1. I had to give a few PRESENTATIONS at/strategic planning LAST YEAR and that had me really wigged out

2. I definitely did centering before I went into those PRESENTATIONS

3. I was especially worried about Q&A

[*Is this in front of executives at [name of company]?*]

4. Yeah

Stanza 2: Centering and grounding.

[*Tell me, how did that turn out for you after centering and grounding?*]

5. I think/it helps A LOT/ PUTTING ME into a good mental state or/ I'm sure that is not the right word for it

6. I think/ like how I WALKED out of the room/is DIFFERENT

7. I center [when] I go into this PRESENTATION/ the goal was to GET MONEY FOR SOMETHING/ I got A LOT of hard questions

8. It was interesting/ I can REMEMBER/ someone in the room saying/"Helen, I'M SORRY"

Strophe 2: Reflection.

Stanza 3: At that moment—doing their job and feeling fine.

9. They apologized they felt like they were BEING/ MEAN or I don't know

10. I can't remember exactly what she said/ but she APOLOGIZED as I was walking out the door

11. I thought/ and I was like "You guys are just doing your JOB. It is your job to ask hard questions"

12. But I remember walking out the door/ and FEELING like I could laugh or cry right now and I didn't do either/ it FELT like/ THAT went fine/ and I didn't FEEL

Stanza 4: Past—would have felt criticized.

13. I think had I not CENTERED and had the various experiences in the last few years/ I felt like a different VERSION OF MYSELF would have felt personally attacked

14. I would have felt like I WAS/ being really CRITICIZED/ like I didn't do a good JOB

15. I would have looked down on MYSELF

16. I didn't feel like that AT ALL/ walking out of the ROOM/ I felt like/ you KNOW I did the best I could

Stanza 5: Expressing confidence to do it again.

17. I gave my PRESENTATION

18. I think I did a good job of ANSWERING QUESTIONS

19. I'll be back here AGAIN and I'll do it again

20. It was a really DIFFERENT/ does that make sense?

[*It makes sense. Very much like a confident place.*]

Stanza 6: Being at peace.

[*I go back to the picture you choose. It is like in that expansive place. You know you are doing the best you can in every moment.*]

21. Yay/ I guess kind of being at PEACE with/ what is done is DONE/

22. that is the presentation I GAVE/

23. I can rehash it and learn from it for NEXT TIME/ I don't need to REHASH it/ in a way that would be overly SELF-CRITICAL/ does that make sense?

[*Perfect. That's wonderful.*]

24. Like I SHOULD have done this and should have done that/ it was more kind of like/ "okay, next time I might do THIS"

Table 4

Progression of Images in the Narrative "Asking for Money at a Strategic

Planning Meeting"

I give a few presentations at strategic planning meetings and I was worried about the Q&A.

I center and ground myself and go into meeting to ask for money.

They ask hard questions and one person apologizes afterward.

I think I did a good job of answering questions.

I am at peace with what is done is done.

I learn from this and I will try something new next time.

Note. Table created by Author.

Helen felt uncomfortable before a strategic planning meeting (line 1), so she centered and grounded herself and that put her into a "good mental state" (line 5). After that meeting, where she was presenting in order to get money approved for a project (line 7), instead of feeling criticized for having received "a lot of hard questions," she felt members of the strategic planning group were "just doing [their] job" (line 11). Helen felt that, had she not done the centering exercise, she would have interpreted receiving these "hard questions" as a personal attack (line 13). The money wasn't approved (a decision made by the executives sometime after the meeting), nonetheless Helen felt she did a good job in responding to the questions (line 18) and was at peace (line 21) with her overall performance—she

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didn't feel she needed to rehash the experience "in a way that would be overly self-critical" (line 23).

   Art exemplar: **Dolce Far Niente***.* I asked participants about their chosen artwork as a way to evoke discussion about how the lessons of attention coaching contributed or could contribute to their efforts in sustainable business. Helen's artwork and her comments on her chosen artwork exemplify the themes of being calm/being at peace and centering and grounding. What follows is my description of the artwork, the interview transcript of Helen's description of the painting in Gee's ethnopoetics form, and the interpretation. I chose to take Helen's description and put it into Gee's ethnopoetics form in order to see the structure of what she was sharing. See Methods chapter for more information.

   Helen chose a digital online image called *Dolce Far Niente* by Linda Paul (2004).This is an impressionist landscape painting that was originally done using egg tempera, resulting in vibrant colors. Close to the center of the painting is a child dressed in a white collared shirt with a blue jacket sitting or standing at the edge of a patch of flowers overlooking the sea during sunset or sunrise. In the painting, we see the back of the child. In the center of the painting, in the background, is the light from the sunset or sunrise reflected on the ocean. In the foreground to the left is a tree whose branches reach to the right over the patch of flowers and the child. (Words in brackets and italics are mine.)

Part 1.

Stanza 1: Little Helen sitting and observing.

[*How does this represent the relationship between what you have learned in coaching and its impact on the goal of furthering sustainable business?*]

1. When I LOOKED at it I thought of a lot of things

2. I thought of the person sitting there as kind of like the ego and LITTLE Helen

3. I saw that person as LITTLE HELEN/sitting there and OBSERVING/and in that MOMENT

4. if that is little Helen she is in a peaceful PLACE/she is being taken CARE OF/ by that larger expanse in the BACKGROUND

Stanza 2: Little Helen peaceful.

5. That REMINDED me a lot of/ during the coaching SESSIONS

6. I feel that A LOT of what you helped me do was/to give little Helen that peace and EASE/so that she could sit STILL/ and that larger expanse could be PRESENT I guess

[*So what in the picture represents the larger expanse of you?*]

7. I think/it looks like the WATER and the sky/everything in the BACKGROUND of that artwork

[*Okay, so that horizon there.*]

8. Yeah.

Stanza 3: Light in the expansive background.

[*So what about the light in that picture? It looks like sunrise or sunset or something. Anything in there that is significant for you with regards to the question?*]

9. Well I think that it was SIGNIFICANT in that it was/ in the BACKGROUND/ rather than the FOREGROUND because I don't think

10. you know let's say/I just found out that Hank's SALARY is going to get deferred/that expansive place is not the FIRST THING that I see

[*It is little Helen that you see!*]

11. Yeah but then/I don't think I gave much thought to the LIGHT

12. But when you bring that UP it does make sense to me that/ that EXPANSIVE place/it does have dark spots and THERE ARE light spots

Stanza 4: Expansive space comforting.

13. I think those are kind of INTERCHANGEABLE/ like I think there were TIMES when/ you would TALK about/ having me shine that FLASH LIGHT/ through the DARK space

14. I didn't even think of it but looking at this painting NOW/ it seems that the LIGHTS up

15. I think there was/I get a COMFORT in that expansive space whether it was/ somewhere kind of DARK or rather somewhere bright like shining that light

16. That expansive space has a lot of COMFORT to me

Stanza 5: How can I participate?

17. What else I thought about WAS that/I think that one of the things I learned a
    lot about myself through the COACHING is that sometimes that I sit/ as an
    OBSERVER/ rather than PARTICIPATE

18. And something about this PICTURE reminded me of that

19. Also there is little Helen sitting there OBSERVING

20. Sometimes I'll notice/I'll notice that I'm doing that NOW and I'll think
    well/instead of just observing the situation how could I better PARTICIPATE
    right now

Stanza 6: Step into expansive space to do.

[*So in this situation you are talking about maybe observer…to not always be the
observer by default?*]

21. Yeah/like SOMETIMES/ what can I do in the MOMENT instead of

22. I think there is room for observing but I think I LEAN too heavily/ on
    OBSERVATIONS sometimes

23. Rather than taking a step forward say into that EXPANSIVE place and/doing
    something ABOUT it/I'll be STILL I guess

Stanza 7: Peaceful, warm, and comfortable.

[*What about all the color of the plants and trees? Anything in there that is a
metaphor for something here?*]

24. I think/like going back to little Helen BEING peaceful/to me this is a really PEACEFUL image/rather than/which I think is kind of LIKE/the result of COACHING

25. Like if we had a coaching SESSION/ and I was all/ wrapped up in whatever it might have been when we STARTED/ this painting is the end result of that SESSION/where little Helen would be still and kind of more in a peaceful PLACE

26. To me this painting is very PEACEFUL

27. I think the COLORS lend to that/it is WARM and it is comfortable

Stanza 8: Acting from peaceful place amidst chaos.

[*Tell me how this relates to your experience or your sense of impact to you and changing business for the good.*]

28. The painting or the coaching?

[*The painting represents peacefulness, warmth and comfort and how does that help you in your work in sustainable business?*]

29. I think/ going back to what we were saying about LEADERSHIP/leadership in/ not coming from a REACTIVE place

30. I think/ this PAINTING/ this space of this COMFORTABLE warmth/ to be able to find that comfortable PEACEFUL warm place/ amidst whatever CHAOS and discomfort/ is happening AROUND me

31. To be able to come to this place and make DECISIONS or/ act from this place rather than acting from the CHAOS

[Later in the interview she talks about the image again.]

Part 2.

Stanza 9: Light is the attention.

[*How would you describe attention?*]

32. I see it in a lot of DIFFERENT ways

33. I think like/ in the painting that EXPANSIVE place/ the LIGHT/that is the ATTENTION

34. I think of it as/ when I did exercises with you like closing my EYES and/ FOCUSING my energy around my belly button/I know you had a different name for it which I can't REMEMBER

35. And LOOKING into that/ space and shining the light into SOMETHING/or even out into the DISTANCE/and that/being the ATTENTION

Stanza 10: Attention from expansive place.

36. I also think attention is just/grounding and CENTERING is part of attention too

37. I think attention in the context of your/ coaching is MORE about just/getting outside of yourself and your EGO/ and looking from that BIGGER more expansive place

38. Whether that is inside you or around you or WHATEVER

39. I think attention is being able to shift FOCUS from/ kind of that minutia to something BIGGER

Stanza 11: Tree as a source of strength and shelter.

[*I'm looking at this picture again and you mentioned…the tree has a pretty prominent display in the painting. I was wondering any thoughts on that. What does the tree represent for you?*]

40. I guess in general I SEE/ trees as a source of STRENGTH

41. In the painting/I hadn't thought of this when I PICKED IT but looking at it now/ it looks kind of PROTECTIVE

42. Something is holding and cradling little HELEN right there and creating that safe space

43. She is SHELTERED/ in that painting.

Stanza 12: Attention can nurture.

[*It kind of comes down to that description of giving comfort, security for little Helen.*]

44. Yeah/like giving little Helen a different kind of ATTENTION

[*Like a safety attention. It is okay.*]

45. Yeah/it looks like a very NURTURING place

46. Like NURTURING/ DIFFERENT parts of little Helen rather than nurturing her fear

47. Maybe that is part of ATTENTION/attention is also being able to nurture the ego in a way WHERE/ the ego can work for you instead of AGAINST YOU

While the structural-visual analysis of Helen's art and her description of it resulted in reconfirming other themes beyond being calm/being at peace and

centering and grounding, the following discussion only focuses on those two themes.

When Helen mentions the little child as "little Helen," she is using code for that part of herself that instinctively reacts instead of thoughtfully responding to the complexity of life. This code was established during our time together in coaching sessions. The little child represents Helen's reacting ego (lines 2 & 3).

The water and the sky and everything in the background represent the "larger expanse" of Helen beyond her reacting ego (lines 4 and 7). This larger Helen brings comfort and peace to little Helen (line 4), and in general "has a lot of comfort" (line 16). This is probably why Helen can attend to the moment in a way that allows her to "better participate" instead of just "sitting there observing" (lines 19-23).

Helen felt the colors of the painting contributed to the warmth and comfort emanating from the painting (line 27). She refers to the painting in general as representing "this space of this comfortable warmth" (line 30), and says that leadership is about "not coming from a reactive place" (line 29) but coming from this place of "comfortable peaceful warm[th]" (line 30). Instead of attending in a way that results in a reactive response, a leader can attend in a way that results in making more reflective decisions and actions (line 31).

When I asked Helen to describe attention, she refers to the light coming from the expansive place in the painting as attention (line 33). (She again refers to attention coming "from that bigger more expansive place" in line 37.) In lines 34

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and 35, she refers to the practice of centering and grounding, although for the moment she "can't remember" the name of the practice, where she shines the light of her attention "into that space" around her "belly button" or "even out into the distance." Helen identifies centering and grounding as being "part of attention" (line 36—she now remembers the name of the practice). In another part of the interview, Helen says "grounding and centering is the tool I use most often" from what she learned in attention coaching. This may explain why Helen so easily associates attention and centering and grounding. In any case, Helen associates the light in the painting with her attention, a light which is in the exact center of the painting.

When I asked Helen about the tree in the painting, she referred to it as "holding and cradling little Helen right there and creating that safe space" (lines 42 and 43). Earlier in her description of the artwork, Helen refers to the "larger expanse" as taking care of little Helen so that little Helen is peaceful (line 4). Much like the larger Helen, the tree is able to create a peaceful place for little Helen. The tree gives little Helen a "different kind of attention" that nurtures "different parts of little Helen rather than nurturing her fear" (lines 44-46), which results in a calmer little Helen that "can work for you instead of against you" (line 47).

Interpretation. The purpose of this section is to provide interpretive insights about the potential significance of the data presented above for the category Acquiring Equanimity. I do this by discussing representative exemplar

data for the themes of being calm/being at peace and centering and grounding and, from that discussion, extracting succinct insights about these patterns.

With regards to the theme of being calm/being at peace, there are three insights about this theme that I have identified in the data. The first insight is best exemplified by Helen's description of the artwork she chose. Helen referred to the painting in general as representing "this space of this comfortable warmth," and she says that effective leadership is about "not coming from a reactive place," but coming from this place of "comfortable peaceful warm[th]" and making "decisions or act[ing] from this place rather than acting from chaos." The next two insights build on the first insight and are best exemplified by quotes from Janet and me. Without the internal chaos, in a challenging situation Janet says, "you are better able to listen" in order to better "understand what is going on." By way of example, when I was able to shift to a calm state of being after running into technical problems early on in a webinar I was conducting, I was able to effectively communicate with the IT department about the problems instead of projecting my anger onto them in an unproductive way. This suggests that, through the lessons of attention coaching, one can acquire a sense of internal calm so that one is less reactive during challenging situations and thus has more capacity to listen and to effectively communicate.

With regards to the theme of centering and grounding, there are four insights about this theme that I have identified in the data. The first two insights are best exemplified by quotes from Joe and Shawna. Joe refers to centering and

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grounding as evoking a state of being, one that allows him to slow down, get more present, and be more aware so that he can focus when the complexity that sustainability leaders face gets overwhelming. By way of example, Shawna experienced sustainability leaders in her department holding "huge grudges" that got in their way of influencing other people to make progress in implementing energy conservation programs. From her perspective, being grounded and centered is one way of being for a sustainability leader that would help them in getting past these grudges by not "letting that relationship history guide everything" so they can "come in fresh" into the moment. This suggests that, through the lessons of attention coaching, one can acquire a more centered and grounded state of being that allows one to be more in the present moment (e.g., not letting relationship history guide an important business decision) and to be less reactive to challenges.

The third insight is best exemplified in Helen's story. In Helen's experience of requesting money for a project at a strategic planning meeting, she felt that, had she not done the centering exercise, she would have interpreted receiving the "hard questions" from the executives at the meeting as a "personal attack" because it would mean she "didn't do a good job." Instead of feeling criticized for having received "a lot of hard questions," Helen recognized the members of the strategic planning group were "just doing [their] job," she "did the best [she] could" in presenting and in responding to questions, she was "at peace" with her performance, and there were things she could have done better

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and she would do that next time. This suggests that, through the lessons of attention coaching, Helen acquired a more centered and grounded state of being that allows her to be less self-critical after engaging in a challenging situation.

The fourth insight is best illustrated by a quote from Helen and her experience with an employee. According to Helen, sustainability changes within a business (ellipses indicate a pause) "require[ ] a shift in so many things . . .There is a lot of change. Change is hard for people and organizations." Perhaps the "change" that Helen refers to is identified earlier in the interview when she defines sustainability as "preserving culture, people, and our environment for future generations—the idea that over time things can improve rather than decline—so that things are even better for future generations rather than worse." The change could mean that, when making business decisions, leaders need to consider how to preserve or improve "culture, people, and our environment" for future generations. It appears that a level of complexity has been added in the decision-making process. According to Helen, a leader needs to be centered and grounded in order to "push" and "influence" people through complex changes without "totally turn[ing] people off."

Later in the interview, Helen talked about a difficult conversation she had with an employee about a lack of job performance. In this conversation, Helen felt "more grounded" than she had in past conversations. It would be interesting to consider that this grounded state of being allowed Helen to more effectively communicate in order to "push" and "influence" change in this employee with

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less of the usual reactive response from him or her. This suggests that, through the lessons of attention coaching, one can acquire a more centered and grounded state of being that allows one to better influence people through the process of complex change with less possibility of triggering a reactive response from them.

In summary, for the category of Acquiring Equanimity, my analysis of the significant themes suggests that, through attention coaching, during challenges times, one can:

1. be more in the present moment,

2. be less reactive,

3. have more capacity to listen,

4. have more capacity to effectively communicate,

5. be aware of what one can do better while not being overly self-critical, and

6. better influence people through the process of complex change with less possibility of provoking a reactive response from them.

Nonjudgmental Attention

Three significant themes emerged for the category of Nonjudgmental Attention:

- N1 Stepping back and/or gaining perspective

- N2 Gaining clarity

- N3 Not resisting what is happening

In this section, each of these significant themes is reported using exemplar excerpts and stories. Only one of the themes, N1, includes one piece of artwork and its description. The section concludes with an interpretation that offers insights about the potential significance of this data.

The exemplars chosen are representative of other participants who share the same similar abilities. Unlike the category of Acquiring Equanimity, some of the exemplars shared in this section are more personal in nature. The complex nature of sustainable business is such that I felt it is necessary to consider a leader in the sustainability movement from a more holistic perspective; that is, what we can learn from a leader's personal life experience is just as relevant as what we can learn from their professional experience. In support of this, leaders cultivating self-awareness and self-knowledge are required to reflect on both personal and professional life experiences (Axelrod, 2012; Bennis, 2009; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013). Hence, it is important to include data that reflects personal life experiences as well as professional life experiences in this research. Also, unlike the category of Acquiring Equanimity, there is not one artwork exemplar for Nonjudgmental Attention. Instead, only one of the themes has an artwork exemplar.

Theme N1: Stepping back and/or gaining perspective. This theme ranked as the highest (79%) within the category of Nonjudgmental Attention and showed up across six participants' data 23 times: 14 times across all interview texts, seven times across all narrative texts, and two times across all the artwork and associated descriptions (see Tables 1 and 2).

Excerpt exemplars. The quotes which follow were identified as exemplars of the theme of stepping back and/or gaining perspective. The order in which they are listed was chosen to assist in uncovering a deeper understanding of the theme.

With what she learned in attention coaching, Janet said that when in a difficult conversation with someone, "I'm better able to take a step back and wait and really think 'Do I really need to respond? Does this necessitate a response? How do I want to frame this?'" Instead of just reacting to a difficult situation, Janet was able to stop for a moment, step back, and pay attention to the situation from a more reflective perspective.

Similarly, Helen was able to shift a relationship she had with one of her employees as a result of a change in perspective.

> I felt a lot: I felt scared, I felt stressed out, I felt fearful, I felt manipulated, I felt reactive. Like something about her triggered me in the way my mom would trigger me. And that was hard to deal with. I remember being really afraid. I don't know if I have ever verbalized this or not: she is African American and I would question myself "is this some racial thing that I don't even understand that I'm doing like something bad like cross-cultural miscommunication. I don't know." Being really scared. I felt like I was in a place where I could have a really big impact on this woman's life in terms of employment. She was a single mom taking care of kids. I would think of that. And then I would think that day to day she was not getting her job done. And then thinking how did I contribute to that? It felt like a firestorm—just a big mess. A jumbled emotional mess. Probably for both of us.
>
> Through coaching, it helped. If it was a tangled knot of string, it helped unravel that a little bit. It helped. Even in this painting rather than standing in the flowers, if the flowers were that tangled ball of string, it was like sitting on the edge and being able to look and observe them. Take in the whole picture rather than being in the center of it. So take a step back.

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Prior to attention coaching, conversations with this employee felt for Helen like she was reacting from a place of "being in the center" of "a jumbled emotional mess." Helen did have some perspective on this employee's life ("she is African American," "a single mom taking care of kids") which only seemed to contribute to Helen's confusion about what do with this employee's work performance. With attention coaching she was able to "take a step back" and "take in the whole picture." Later in the interview she referred back to this situation and provided more detail on the stepping back process.

> You gave me some tools to help when actually having conversations with her. I still remember you telling me to put my hand out in front of me on the desk, that that would help. It did. There were some physical tools that would help in the moment that I could use when I was talking with her. And then there were also tools to help remove myself from the situation a little bit even though I felt deeply involved, and I was able to get a different perspective by stepping outside.

With attention coaching, Helen could stay "deeply involved" in the situation with her employee and yet have some space to pay attention from a different perspective, one that wasn't obvious to her prior to attention coaching.

The effect of this training was not confined just to having a difficult conversation with someone. Tanya expressed the value of attention coaching in other conversations that happen in business (ellipses indicate a pause):

> I feel like some of the power of attention coaching or attention work is that when you are making decisions about finances, business or HR, or any decisions about relationships or products, or services, . . . more often you can see them from different perspectives.

Later in the interview, Tanya said, "Even just like today in our meeting [with her team] it was so great to just bring in some of the bigger questions

instead of only talking about the little details." With the help of attention coaching, Tanya could pay attention to different and bigger perspectives, ones that are not so obvious.

Story exemplar: Somewhere out in the cosmos. The story below exemplifies the theme of stepping back and/or gaining perspective. Because the stories are complex and lengthy, analyzing them resulted in multiple themes per story. The discussion following the story will concentrate just on the theme of stepping back and/or gaining perspective. In this story, Tanya describes a coaching session in June 2012 in which she was able to gain perspective on a situation that allowed her to let go of some anger. (Words in brackets and italics are mine.)

Stanza 1: Experiencing wild, large space.

1. I still don't know what HAPPENED during that last meeting that we had/ but I definitely felt like we were out in the cosmos SOMEWHERE ELSE/

2. And then something shifted for me

3. That one was pretty WILD

4. I don't know what HAPPENED there

Stanza 2: Gaining perspective.

5. I was/ still trying to GET OVER/ the wilderness therapy POSITION and/ my anger with my old BOSS/ [company name] was CLOSING

6. We went OUT into the universe and looked at/ wilderness therapy as a WHOLE/ and how that is GOING and the arms

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7. It was so visual/ I don't REMEMBER

8. but it really SHIFTED/ how I was able to not be as angry/ at my BOSS/ for
   his/ decisions and his STUCK-NESS in the system

   Stanza 3: Resisting getting together.

[*You were able to see it from a larger context.*]

9. This was my coworker ACTUALLY OWNING/ I think he had just sent me an
   EMAIL actually owning that he/ had been really difficult and saying
   sometime

10. WE SHOULD/ MEET UP and/ CHAT

11. I had so much RESISTANCE/ to IT

12. Even though supposedly I had worked through it

    Stanza 4: Well wishing.

[*Did you eventually meet with him afterwards?]*

13. No, I haven't HEARD from him/ he basically told me I should reach out TO
    HIM/ when I'm DOWN THERE

14. Through the grapevine I hear he is STARTING UP his own business/ that is
    similar to [company name] but different

15. STILL I'm in the place of/ "Oh, I WISH HIM well"/ I still don't want to be on
    HIS SHIP

16. He is not someone who is good at holding SPACE

Table 5

Progression of Images in the Narrative "Somewhere Out in the Cosmos"

I was still trying to get over leaving the wilderness therapy position.

We went out into the universe and looked at wilderness therapy as a whole.

I shifted and was able to not be as angry about my ex-boss' stuck-ness.

I had so much resistance to getting together with my ex-boss.

I wish him well.

Note. Table created by Author.

Based on information later in the interview, Tanya indicated that it took the first year of graduate school to realize things were not working out for her in her current company and she made the decision to leave. This was from September 2010 to June 2011. Almost a year later, Tanya received an email from her ex-boss acknowledging how he had been really difficult to work with during that time and that he was wanting to meet up with her to talk about it (lines 9-10). Tanya thought that she had worked through the anger she had had with him (line 12), but to her surprise, when she received the email she felt resistance to getting together to talk (lines 9-11).

In a coaching session that took place in June 2012, Tanya and I talked about her time at the company and about the email she received. In that coaching

session, Tanya experienced a large shift in perspective on the situation (stanza 1). To Tanya, it felt like "we went out into the universe" and paid attention to the situation from a larger perspective (line 6). The result of that perspective shift was her releasing some of the anger she still had with her ex-boss about his attitudes and behaviors at the time. At the time of the interview (February 2013—nine months after that coaching session), she appears to not be angry with her ex-boss and has chosen not to engage with him (lines 13-15).

  Artwork exemplar: **Morning Wave.** Janet's artwork and her comments on her chosen artwork exemplify the theme of stepping back and/or gaining perspective. What follows is my description of the artwork, the interview transcript of Janet's description of the painting in Gee's ethnopoetics form, and the discussion. I chose to take Janet's description and put it into Gee's ethnopoetics form in order to see the structure of what she was sharing. See Methods chapter for more information.

  Janet selected a digital online image called *Morning Wave* by Tim Lam (n.d.). This is an abstract oil painting of a horizon done in vibrant jewel-toned colors. The background of the painting is the sun rising over a deep blue sea and distant blue mountains. The sun is at the center of the painting. The top half of the painting is the sky filled with yellow, white, and orange altostratus clouds. Peeking through is the blue sky. The bottom half of the painting is the deep blue sea with a single wave, the width of the painting, breaking in the foreground and many other waves breaking behind it. (Words in brackets and italics are mine.)

Part 1.

Stanza 1: Impact out in the world.

[*Why did you choose this to metaphorically represent the relationship between what you learned in coaching and its impact in furthering sustainability?*]

1. I think for ME, I was looking at/ I was looking at WATER/ because there is this stillness and then there is this ripple EFFECT sometimes/ if like a little drop HAPPENS

2. And I felt like/ attention coaching and/ bringing that sense of calm but then ALSO/ having that ripple effect IMPACT out in the WORLD/ was what I was sort of looking for

3. What I liked about this is this/ center AREA/ it draws me the calm sense and then the RIPPLE out with the waves

4. That's what ATTRACTED me to this

Stanza 2: Letting consciousness shine through.

5. It is in the morning when things are at their most CALM

6. The whole attention piece is about calming the MIND/ and stilling everything and then letting the consciousness SHINE through.

Stanza 3: Surfacing issues and moving forward.

[*Tell me about that and about leaders in business. What does that do? What does that calm mind do?*]

7. You are better ABLE to/ listen and to really understand what is going ON

8. You are able to put other people at EASE/ and get to the root of the ISSUE

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9. One of the things I see so MUCH/ in business a lot of the PROBLEMS/ a lot of the reasons why things don't work OUT/ or projects fail or WHATEVER/ is because people aren't COMMUNICATING/ with each OTHER/ and listening to each OTHER/ and really/ being HONEST about the real issue is

10. As a leader/ in the business environment/ having that sense of calm you are able to bring things to the SURFACE/ deal with those issues and conflicts and MOVE FORWARD/ in a way that/ causes the least amount of DAMAGE

   [Later in the interview she talks about the image again.]

   Part 2.

   Stanza 4: Serene center.

[*How about this horizon, any of the colors, or this area? Anything there that reminds you about the relationship between attention and leadership and business?*]

11. That hadn't struck me as much/ it was more just like the CENTER/ bringing you in there

12. There is a beauty to it RIGHT?/ it is very SERENE/ and that in and of itself is CALMING

13. If you think about the human BODY you can look at it/ actually I don't know if that's/ but any way your mind being CALM and everything else sometimes/ rippling OUT

[*Your actions being reflected in the ripples?*]

14. Yeah

Stanza 5: Keep it all in perspective.

[*Anything about the colors, blue, white, yellow?*]

15. Blue in and of itself is very CALMING/ yellow is HAPPINESS/ a

    LIGHTNESS that/ I always like to

16. That is another thing I think I WAS/ really SERIOUS at work before/ and I

    think/ I'm better able to BRING/ the lightness and HUMOR to it

17. The more you think about/ what is going on in the world right now/ the stuff

    we do is IMPORTANT but/ you need to keep it all in PERSPECTIVE/ and

    happy people do better WORK

18. That's one thing I like about the yellow it reminds me of sitting in the

    sunshine which always makes me HAPPY

[Later in the interview she talks about the image a final time.]

   Part 3.

Stanza 6: Widening your vision.

[*I'm noticing...it is not a close shot. It is stepped back a little bit. Anything in

that? Does that signify anything?*]

19. That's interesting because when I was looking I was initially looking for ones

    that had like really close up with the DROP/ like a drop with RIPPLES

20. I don't know/ it gives you more perspective RIGHT

21. You can see more of what is HAPPENING

[*Did you experience that at all in attention coaching? Seeing more, being able to

get a different perspective?*]

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22. Absolutely/ it does widen your VISION/ your horizon so to SPEAK

Stanza 7: Seeing more of what is happening.

[*Say more about that.*]

23. When you're not being very present or you're not very FOCUSED/ there is a
    tendency/ especially because I would get ANXIOUS/ to just hone in/ it is
    really HARD to see outside/ of this STRESSFUL/ situation that you are into

24. It is almost like you have blinders on and you are just focused on this small
    THING

25. But when you are able to calm DOWN/ and come at it from a place of CALM/
    and PRESENCE/ and see the big picture it opens a little bit MORE

26. You can see what is HAPPENING/ and it allows you to make smarter
    DECISIONS/ have better relationships with PEOPLE/ really get to the bottom
    of the problem versus this perpetual cycle of SPINNING DOWN into your
    little world

While the structural-visual analysis of Janet's art and her description of it
resulted in reconfirming other themes beyond the theme of stepping back and/or
gaining perspective, the following discussion only focuses on that one theme.

Much of what Janet describes about the image relates to the theme of
being calm/being at peace (part 1 and portions of part 2). One of the main points
Janet made throughout her interview about attention coaching was that she has
learned to calm herself. But what stands out to me about this image is that it is a
depiction of a horizon. When I asked Janet about the point of view of the painting,

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she reported that she was initially looking for an image that was "really close up" (line 19), but then said that this image of a horizon represents giving "you more perspective" and that from that perspective "you can see more of what is happening" (line 20-21). Relating this to attention coaching, she indicates her experience of coaching is that "it does widen your vision" (line 22). When in stressful situations, Janet had a hard time paying attention from outside of the situation (line 23), and can instead place her attention "on this small thing" (line 24).[4] Through what she has learned in attention coaching, she can calm herself. As a result she can "see the big picture, it opens a little bit more" (line 25) and she can then pay attention to more of "what is happening" instead of just paying attention to her "little world" (line 26).

Theme N2: Gaining clarity. This theme ranked as the second highest (69%) within the category of Nonjudgmental Attention and showed up across six participants' data 21 times: 13 times across all interview texts, and eight times across all narrative texts (see Tables 1 and 2).

Excerpt exemplars. This section contains quotes that best exemplify the theme of gaining clarity. They are presented in a specific order with the intention of allowing a greater understanding of the theme to emerge.

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[4] In stanza 7, Tanya uses pronouns in the first and second person when describing an experience. Contacted post-interview regarding this usage, she indicated that even though she used the second person pronoun, she also meant it was true for herself.

According to Joe,

> In attention coaching you are talking about things that are pretty central to what is going on in your life. The emotional stuff that is happening. And at work you don't get a chance to deal with that, or at school, but it is still happening; it is still affecting you. It is taking a break from doing stuff and it's acknowledging how you are being.

During coaching sessions, Joe was able to gain clarity on what was going on for him by paying attention to "the emotional stuff" that was happening and affecting him in the moment, something he could not do in the normal flow of his life. It appears that this kind of clarity can be achieved during a team check-in, which Joe talks about next in the interview. According to Joe, a team check-in is a process that occurs in the beginning of a team meeting; each person has a moment to silently gain clarity on what is happening for themselves in the moment, and then they are encouraged "to say what they want to say" to the team about what is happening and to "release whatever has been going on." The intention is to help prevent whatever may be affecting the person in the moment from inadvertently or unconsciously getting "said later" in a way that unnecessarily affects the flow of the meeting. In an attention coaching session, by gaining clarity on what was going on for himself in the moment, Joe may be able to release what is affecting him so that his experiences after the session are less impacted.

For Janet, sometimes what was discussed during attention coaching was not always immediately clear:

> There were times that we got together and I thought "I don't know what I got out of that," but then afterwards I always felt better after we talked. Always. When I reflect on things I'm able to use the language or see

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things in the lens of the exercises we did or the way we talked about something which provides more clarity for me in general.

Janet said she "always" emotionally felt better after a session. And while what she learned during a session wasn't always clear, Janet was able to gain clarity by reflecting on (i.e., paying attention to) her experiences in a different way.

My own experience was somewhat different: in addition to using what was learned in attention coaching as a lens through which to reflect on experiences, I could apply what I learned in a moment of challenge:

> Another instance of my control issue coming up was when I had to give a 45-minute presentation on creating a personal purpose. This was January 2013. When I realized that I only had 45 minutes, I went into a mini-tirade about it—"They want me to do <u>what</u>??? How could anyone create a personal purpose statement in 45 minutes?" The tirade didn't last long. Just minutes. I was able to see that my control issue had reared its head and put me into that complaining space. When I was able to "see" it, I was able to see my way clear about what I should do with students during that 45-minute period. I decided to position the material as an entry point into gathering data for an initial cut of a personal purpose.

Angered by the short amount of time given to teaching students on how to create a personal purpose, I applied what I learned in attention coaching in the moment and paid attention to how my need for control was causing me to be in that "complaining space." This reduced the anger so that I could gain clarity on what could be done in 45 minutes with regards to creating a personal purpose.

When I asked Shawna about what she learned in attention coaching that helped her in her pursuit of furthering sustainability in business, she said she learned to gain clarity by paying attention to "the visible versus the invisible. So,

seeing what is going on on the surface and then being curious what's going on underneath." And what was going on "underneath" is sometimes "about assumptions, too, coming into a situation and not assuming just because you can see this top part that you really know the full picture." During coaching sessions, Shawna learned to pay attention to these "invisible" assumptions. In her current job as founder and lead facilitator of a mother support organization, she applied this ability in her support of new mothers:

> In reality, I feel it is all about attention coaching. And that is what I'm talking to them about the entire time. It totally is. It is about seeing. It is about taking whatever emotion they are feeling and helping them look into it and figure out what is underneath it. It's about checking those assumptions, figuring out which are valid and which ones are not.

Not only was Shawna able to gain clarity by paying attention to the underlying emotions and assumptions, she learned to help others to do the same.

Story exemplar: Boundaries with mom. The story below exemplifies the theme of gaining clarity. Because the stories are complex and lengthy, analyzing them resulted in multiple themes per story. The discussion following the story will concentrate on the theme of gaining clarity. Out of all the participants' stories, a story from Tanya was chosen because in her six stories, five of them made reference to gaining clarity. When asked about how the lessons she learned in attention coaching have affected her, Tanya shares a story about an experience with her mom. (Words in brackets and italics are mine.)

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Strophe 2: Relationship between mom and aunt.

Stanza 1: Aunt telling her mom what to do.

1. The other day this was a HUGE ONE actually/ she [Tanya's mom] was sick

2. She was not feeling well and WENT TO A/ more like a naturopathic DOCTOR/

3. And her sister really wanted her to go to see a REAL DOCTOR

4. She was COMPLAINING TO me about her sister or telling me/ how her SISTER won't stop/ telling her EVERY DAY/ that she should go see a REAL DOCTOR

Stanza 2: Mom lying to the aunt.

5. So she told ME/ "so I lied to her and said I'd go tomorrow if I DON'T FEEL WELL

6. If even I don't feel well I'll make an APPOINTMENT"

7. And I said "You KNOW MOM/ you could just tell her you know that/ you know that/ she loves you and saying this cause she LOVES YOU

8. But that you'll/ ask for HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT/ or you feel good about your choices right now and when you don't you'll LET HER KNOW"

Strophe 2: Relationship between Tanya and mom.

Stanza 3: Not enjoying receiving love that way.

9. And then I even ADDED/ because she was making/ she started getting DEFENSIVE

10. "Well mom that is part of why I only talk TO YOU/ when I've already made my DECISION

11. Because I don't enjoy receiving LOVE THAT WAY/ in the sense of being told WHAT TO DO"

12. I don't think she had too much to SAY TO THAT

Stanza 4: Saying it without maliciousness.

13. But it FELT REALLY NICE for me to be honest

14. And I didn't say it with MALICIOUSNESS

15. I think it was just like/ "the experience you are having I know you see that as love from YOUR SISTER/ and that is what you do TO ME

16. I don't receive it as LOVE"

Stanza 5: Being honest about boundaries.

[*So are you being more honest with your mom now?*]

17. Honest around BOUNDARIES/ as oppose to AUTOMATICALLY SHUTTING DOWN/ I still do sometimes

18. Yeah so that was just like/ a couple of WEEKS AGO/ that was exciting

19. I'm more CLEAR/ around what's OKAY/ and what doesn't FEEL GOOD for me

20. that in and of itself is a big deal

Stanza 6: Not feeling guilty.

21. I think in our family this idea of anything not feeling good or BEING PAINFUL/ is like I mean it's a sign of you're WEAK

22. So just to be aware that it WASN'T OKAY/ was a really big STEP

23. And then to be able TO SAY/ "It's not okay"/ and generally trying to say it in a LOVING WAY

24. But if not/ not feel TOO GUILTY/ about having BOUNDARIES/ and DISAPPOINTING/ someone else

Table 6

Progression of Images in the Narrative "Boundaries with Mom"

Mother complained about her sister telling her to go to a real doctor.

I give my mother words to handle unsolicited advice from her sister.

Mother got defensive and I demonstrated the use of boundaries.

I felt good about being honest and not malicious.

I'm more clear about what's okay and what's doesn't feel good.

I don't feel guilty about having boundaries and disappointing others.

Note. Table created by Author.

Tanya uses a conversation that her mom had with her aunt in order to demonstrate the use of boundaries (stanzas 1-2). The objective was to show her mom what it is like to receive unsolicited advice (stanzas 3-4). With the help of attention coaching, Tanya came to understand the familial mental model of "do not acknowledge the discomfort when someone does something that doesn't feel good or is painful because it is a sign of weakness" (adapted from Tanya's words on lines 21-22). When receiving unsolicited advice from her mom, instead of

"automatically shutting down" as a way to defend herself (line 17), Tanya was able to continue to pay attention to her mom despite the discomfort (stanzas 5-6). She was also able to exert a boundary with her mom: acknowledging the discomfort (lines 10-11), basically telling her "it's not okay" in a "loving way" (line 23), and not feeling "too guilty" about "disappointing someone" (line 24). Tanya shared two similar stories about encounters with a roommate and with a friend wherein her awareness of the familial mental model enabled her to avoid shutting down just to prevent conflict

Theme N3: Not resisting what is happening. This theme ranked the third highest (59%) within the category of Nonjudgmental Attention and showed up across five participants' data 13 times: eight times across all interview texts, and five times across all narrative texts (see Tables 1 and 2).

Excerpt exemplars. This section contains quotes from the participants that exemplify the theme of not resisting what is happening. They are listed in a sequence which supports a more nuanced understanding of the theme.

When asked about what he learned in attention coaching, Robert said he essentially learned to "pay attention to myself." He learned more about himself by paying attention to things that were

> sort of there in the back of my mind. I think through some of the coaching that "Yay, this is part of who I am." I started to think of little instances and little things I did and I'm like "Why would I do that?"

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As a result of attention coaching, Robert stopped resisting thoughts in the back of his mind. By paying attention to these thoughts, he started noticing "little instances and little things" about himself that gave him self-knowledge.

Instead of paying more attention to her thoughts, Janet started paying attention to a part of herself she was ignoring.

> I had the tendency to try to think my way out of things. We had a really good conversation about that and you said, "Instead of trying to think your way out of it, focus on how it feels and what it looks like based on what it feels like. Pay attention to that feeling." I actually use that because it tends to be a problem I have a lot. I have this problem, this is what is happening right now, I'm really anxious about it, how do I make it better, what can I do. And then I will just try to shift and be "How am I feeling right now?" And just focus on where is it even. What does it look like? And that will calm me down quite a bit actually.

In a situation that would make Janet feel anxious, her habitual reaction was to "think my way out of things" in order to "make it better." While this is a useful skill, what Janet was resisting was feeling her emotions. With what she learned in attention coaching, when a situation occurs that makes her feel anxious, Janet will try to pay attention to her emotions and imagine what they look like. With the anxiety alleviated she can then decide an appropriate course of action.

For Tanya, resistance came in an interaction she was having with a friend (ellipses indicate a pause).

> [A] good friend of mine got really depressed there for a while. And it was just hard to . . . because I think I just wanted to fix her, or be supportive. And she was asking for help and support, but then she wasn't shifting and changing on her own. And after a year of having the same conversations [with my friend] it is like, because of our stuff, because [you and I] were talking [in attention coaching], [my friend and I] were able to have conversations like "This isn't working for me. We have some pattern going on that I feel like is probably from our families, and it is unhealthy,

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and I don't enjoy it." It made it kind of awkward, but it also made me feel like I wasn't hiding from her.

Over a year, Tanya's habitual reaction with her depressed friend during conversations was to offer advice in order to "fix her" and/or to offer supportive words. While these reactions were not negative in and of themselves, through attention coaching Tanya was able to pay attention to an unhealthy pattern that was playing out between her and her friend—her friend would come to Tanya to talk about her challenges, Tanya would offer advice and/or supportive words, and her friend would come back another time and have the "same conversation." As a result, Tanya was able to point out this pattern to her friend instead of continuing to engage in this habitual way. But what was Tanya resisting? Later in the story, Tanya said, "It is an interesting place to really just watch her struggle." This statement leads me to suggest that Tanya was resisting just paying attention to her friend's struggle without immediately responding. With attention coaching, Tanya developed the ability to do this.

Later in the interview, Tanya shared an experience in which she uses her new ability to pay attention longer with new clients.

> A lot of that stuff [I learned in attention coaching] I think has helped me in my new job as I keep going and meeting new clients. And a lot of them I don't know where they are going to be, and I meet them where they are at, and then we figure out what to do next.

When asked how she figures out what to do for her new clients, Tanya said, "I notice where things are, and [I] sit there for a little bit." In a professional

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setting, Tanya has learned to let go of her resistance to just paying attention to what is happening without immediately responding.

Story exemplar: An award acceptance speech. The story below from Helen best exemplifies the theme of not resisting what is happening. Because the stories are complex and lengthy, analyzing them resulted in multiple themes per story. The discussion following the story will concentrate on the theme of not resisting what is happening. When asked about how what she learned in attention coaching has affected her, Helen shares a story about receiving an award on behalf of her company. (Words in brackets and italics are mine.)

Strophe 1: The speech.

Stanza 1: Feeling uncomfortable.

1. YEAH/I think I told you about this/maybe via EMAIL

2. Last spring/I was asked to accept an AWARD/on behalf of [my company]

3. I was really UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT THAT

4. This was in front of/200 or 300 people/SOMETHING like that

Stanza 2: Intent = speaking from the heart.

5. What really struck me/was that I did use THAT TECHNIQUE/ and the word that I choose was "HEART"

6. I wanted to SPEAK from the heart

7. This was an organization called [organization name]/ and we were WINNING AN AWARD/for basically environmental work in connection with BREAST CANCER

8. I told a really PERSONAL STORY/ I got up there/ I also didn't want to CRY/ and I didn't cry/ my voice squeaked A LITTLE BIT/but that's OKAY

Stanza 3: Impact = heart-felt.

9. And I remember afterwards/like John [her husband] had said/something like, "Helen, do you REALIZE it was dessert/ everyone had just gotten their dessert/and no one was eating it/ they were all LISTENING TO YOU"

10. I just shrugged it OFF

11. As we were WALKING out/ someone said to ME/ "THANK YOU for bringing heart to this" or something like that/

12. They used that exact word/ and WHOA/ "Thanks"

Strophe 2: Reflection.

Stanza 4: Intent = impact = heart.

13. So that was a neat THING/ to go through that EXPERIENCE AND then to/ circle HEART on my little page/

14. and then some STRANGER come up to me/ and say something to me about/ my speaking and coming from THE HEART

15. Or whatever she said/ I don't remember/ but I remember the WORD HEART was there

16. WOW/ that is an INTERESTING coincidence/Or not

Stanza 5: Clarification.

[*That is great, Helen. How many years between the conference and then this last one?*]

17. Conference was 2008/2009/ and then this one was just LAST YEAR in 2012

Stanza 6: Not wanting to let boss down.

[*I think some of it was attention coaching but I also want to acknowledge all that presentation work you had to do in the MBA program*.]

18. YEAH/ that helped a lot too/but I think with this PARTICULAR/ thing it was LESS the presentation work at [graduate school]/ and much more the/ attention COACHING

19. I REMEMBER I left work early that day

20. I went home and did some centering, I did the grounding EXERCISE/ because I was really NERVOUS ABOUT THIS

21. It was ALSO a lot of like/ feeling that my boss had asked me to do this thing/ that I didn't think I was qualified TO DO/ and I didn't want to let her DOWN

Table 7

Progression of Images in the Narrative "An Award Acceptance Speech"

I was asked to accept an award on behalf of my company and I was uncomfortable.
I wanted to speak from the heart.
Someone thanked me for bringing heart.
I think that was an interesting coincidence.
I didn't want to let my boss down.

Note. Table created by Author.

I used one of Helen's stories about public speaking as an exemplar in the theme A3 being calm/being at peace. In that story, Helen used the same intention exercise as she talked about in this story (she refers to it as a "technique"). In the earlier story, Helen emphasized how nervous she was about the public speaking opportunity, why she was nervous, and how, even three to four years later, she is less nervous about speaking. In this story, while Helen used the same intention exercise, the emphasis was not on becoming calm, but more on the intention she chose for the speech. Helen doesn't identify all the intentions she wrote down, but based on what she said in the story, I suggest they included "to not look like a fool in front of 200-300 people" (lines 3-4), "to not cry" (line 8), "to not show my nervousness" (line 20), and "to not let my boss down" (line 21). In the end she chose to do the speech with the intention of "speaking from my heart" (line 6). At the end of her speech, one person thanked her for "coming from the heart" (line 14), which surprised Helen (line 16).

Interpretation. The purpose of this section is to provide interpretive insights about the potential significance of the data presented above for the category Nonjudgmental Attention. I do this by discussing representative exemplar data for the significant themes of stepping back and/or gaining perspective, gaining clarity, and not resisting what is happening and, from that discussion, extracting succinct insights about these patterns.

Instead of discussing the themes in the order they have been presented prior to this point, I have chosen to discuss them in an order which proceeds from

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the most simple insight to the most complex: not resisting what is happening, gaining clarity, and stepping back and/or gaining perspective.

With regards to the theme of not resisting what is happening, there are three insights about this theme that I have identified in the data. The first insight was best exemplified in one of Janet's quotes. In a situation that would make Janet feel anxious, her habitual reaction was to "think my way out of things" in order to "make it better." As a result of her coaching sessions, Janet reported that she learned to shift her attention to her feelings and found that refocusing in that way calmed her down. This suggests that, through the lessons of attention coaching, Janet learned to pay attention to her emotions where previously this was avoided.

The second insight was best exemplified in Helen's story about receiving an award on behalf of her company. Helen was "really nervous about this" public speaking engagement. Helen "didn't think I was qualified to do" the speech, and she "didn't want to let [her boss] down." By listing all the intentions that she was aware of for the speech, Helen was not resisting what emotions and thoughts were happening for her as she prepared—she was acknowledging the full spectrum of thoughts and feelings inside her. This suggests that, through the lessons of attention coaching, Helen learned to pay attention to a larger range of her emotions and thoughts when in challenging situations.

One of Tanya's experiences best exemplified the last insight about this theme of not resisting what is happening. In the story about her friend struggling

with depression, Tanya played out a cycle of listening to her friend, offering advice or supporting words, later having the "same conversation," over and over. Drawing on what she learned in attention coaching, Tanya was able to see this cycle as likely a familial pattern of behavior. Incorporating this insight, Tanya began to "really just watch her struggle"—pay longer attention to her friend's stories about her struggles with less need to immediately respond. With new business clients, Tanya has learned to "notice where things are, and [I] sit there for a little bit" before taking action. This suggest that, through the lessons of attention coaching, Tanya let go of her resistance to just paying attention to what is happening with her client and friend and thus to pay longer attention before taking action.

To summarize regarding the theme of not resisting what is happening: my analysis of the data suggests that, through attention coaching, one can learn to pay attention to one's emotions (where previously this was avoided), to pay attention to a larger range of one's emotions and thoughts, and to pay attention longer before taking action.

On the theme of gaining clarity, there was one insight about this theme identified in the data that was best exemplified in one of my quotes and in Tanya's story about a conversation with her mother. Angered by the short amount of time given to teaching students on how to create a personal purpose, I redeployed my attention from my colleagues to how my need for control "had reared its head and put me into that complaining space." Paying attention this way

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reduced the anger I had for my colleagues so that I was able to gain clarity on what could be done in the short time given.

In Tanya's case, she was able to gain clarity about a familial mental model that prevented her from effectively dealing with a dysfunctional communication pattern she had with her mother. With this clarity, Tanya learned to stay sufficiently present in conversation with her mom, to pay attention to what was going on for herself, and to navigate the situation more effectively instead of "automatically shutting down" her attention as an act of defensiveness.

All this suggests that, through the lessons of attention coaching, one can gain clarity on how to navigate a difficult situation by first paying attention to mental models and emotions that were present. Instead of separating mental models and emotions, I chose to think of this as one aspect of this theme of gaining clarity. More research would be required to delineate the subtle differences between the two.

On the theme of stepping back and/or gaining perspective, there are two insights about this theme identified in the data. The first insight is best exemplified in a quote by Helen and in the artwork chosen by Janet. In a situation with an employee who "was not getting her job done," Helen felt "scared," "stressed out," "fearful," "manipulated," and "reactive." Because of attention coaching, Helen was able to stay "deeply involved" in a difficult conversation with her employee about the lack of work performance and yet have some space

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to redeploy her attention and gain perspective on the situation, a perspective that was not obvious to her prior to attention coaching.

Similarly, the horizon view depicted in the digital image that Janet chose metaphorically represents a departure from her previous tendency, when in a "stressful situation," to focus "on this small thing." With the lessons learned from coaching, Janet could now step back and redeploy her attention in order "to see the big picture" and "what is happening" in it so that she could "make smarter decisions." This suggests that, through the lessons of attention coaching, one can step back during a difficult situation, redeploy one's attention, and gain perspective on the situation.

The second aspect of the theme of stepping back and/or gaining perspective is best exemplified by Tanya's story about her ex-boss. During a coaching session, Tanya described receiving from him "an email actually owning that he had been really difficult" at times during her employment. This was almost a year after she left the company. What surprised Tanya was her "resistance" to her ex-boss's suggestion in the email to getting together to talk—Tanya thought she had worked through getting over "the wilderness therapy position and my anger with my old boss." During the session, Tanya experienced a large shift in perspective on the situation. To her, it felt like "we went out into the universe" and paid attention to the situation from a larger perspective. The result of that perspective shift was her releasing some of the anger she still had with her ex-boss. This suggests that, through the lessons of attention coaching, when

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reflecting after the fact on a difficult situation, Tanya could step back, redeploy her attention, and gain perspective on the situation.

To summarize regarding the theme of stepping back and/or gaining perspective, my analysis of the data suggests that through attention coaching one can learn to step back, redeploy their attention, and gain perspective either while in a challenging situation or during reflection on a challenging situation.

In summary, for the category of Nonjudgmental Attention, my analysis of the significant themes suggests that through attention coaching one can:

1. pay attention to one's emotions where previously this was avoided,

2. pay attention to a larger range of one's emotions and thoughts,

3. pay attention longer before taking action,

4. gain clarity on how to navigate a difficult situation by *first paying attention* to mental models and emotions that are present, and

5. learn to step back, redeploy attention, and gain perspective while in a challenging situation and while reflecting on a challenging situation.

Letting Go

There are two significant themes in the category of Letting Go:

- L1 Being focused on things that really matter

- L2 Challenging mental models

In this section, each of these significant themes is reported using exemplar excerpts and stories. One piece of artwork and its description, an exemplar for the

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entire category, is then reported. The section concludes with an interpretation that offers insights about the potential significance of this data.

The exemplars chosen are representative of other participants who share the same or similar abilities. As in the category of Nonjudgmental Attention, some of the data shared in this section are more personal in nature.

Theme L1: Being focused on things that really matter. This theme ranked as the highest (68%) within the category of Letting Go and showed up across four participants' data 14 times: nine times across all interview texts, three times across all narrative texts, and two times across all artwork and associated descriptions (see Tables 1 and 2).

Excerpt exemplars. The quotes below were chosen as exemplars because they best describe the theme of being focused on things that really matter, and they are listed in specific order so that a more nuanced understanding of the theme unfolds.

After a coaching session, Joe would write down on yellow stickies some of the things he learned in our sessions and wanted to apply in his everyday life. He did this in order "to focus back on things [that] are really center or that really matter." I realized that he was not just telling me the reason for using yellow stickies, but that he was highlighting a very important point about attention cultivation. When Joe elaborated further on the benefit of attention coaching, he said (ellipses indicate a pause), "It is about self-realization . . . It is about getting

away from all the other distractions and other things that are pulling me." When asked to elaborate on self-realization, Joe said,

> Self-realization is about dialing in on what I really want to give my attention to instead of feeling pulled by outside influences in the directions they want to direct me. It is about distilling down to what really matters to me, for me. Being in the moment allows me to feel fully and is connected to self-realization because I can, with all my senses, feel whatever is going on and see how it affects me and not be pulled by the past or future away from realizing how the moment affects me and I affect it.

For Joe, a benefit of attention coaching is that it allows him to let go of distractions (outside influences, the past, the future) so that he can be more "in the moment" with "whatever is going on" and pay attention to things "that really matter." On a similar note, Janet describes an especially busy time in her life:

> Some of the stuff that we talked about [in attention coaching] in terms of setting your intention. There is always going to be things pulling at you in different directions. You pick something you put your intention towards at the time, and that is where your focus is. When my grandmother was sick, I put my intention into my family. Then she passed and the next year of school I put my intention into work. And now my intention is on my life outside of work. Work is still important to me but it is not everything. I think it gives me the language too. Some of our conversations gave me the language. And to be conscious of where I am putting my energy because it was exhausting me before and I needed a way to be able to remind myself about here is what the impacts are and here is what you are doing.

During this exhausting time, Janet found that a benefit of attention coaching was practices and information that helped her to let go of paying attention to all the different things that were going in her life, all of the time, and to put the focus of her attention on what matters most to her for a given period of time. Robert relates this important capacity to sustainable business.

> Paying attention to sort of what sustainability means to an individual. And what sustainability means to me is probably different from what it means

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to you or everyone here at [graduate school] or throughout the world. People here [at the graduate school] are looking at different industries and growing in what they consider is a sustainable manner. I would have very, very different opinions, and that is okay. Being able to define sustainability for yourself, I think, would help you define where you sort of go into business and industry, the direction.

According to Robert, sustainability means something different for everyone, and letting go of how others define sustainability (without denying these multiple perspectives) and attending to what "sustainability means to an individual," –that is, attending to what really matters to them with regards to sustainability—would help future leaders identify the direction of their pursuit "into business and industry."

Story exemplar: Overwhelmed with opportunities. The story below exemplifies the theme of being focused on what really matters. Because the stories are complex and lengthy, analyzing them resulted in multiple themes per story. The interpretation following the story will concentrate just on the theme of being focused on what really matters. A story from Joe was chosen because, out of all the participants, Joe referred most often during the interview process to being focused on what really matters. In this story, Joe describes a time when he felt overwhelmed with the many opportunities that were available to him. (Words in brackets and italics are mine.)

Strophe 1: Undergraduate and Washington DC.

Stanza 1: Choosing multidisciplinary undergraduate major.

[*How does attention coaching benefit you in relation to sustainable business?*]

1. The more you say the/ more COMPLEX you realize it is

2. And for me/ this was even PART of why I chose the major I had/ in undergrad

3. Because I didn't have to choose any ONE TOPIC

4. And for that time I felt it was appropriate

Stanza 2: Narrowing focus after undergraduate.

5. When I FINISHED my undergrad I felt like/ I needed to focus a little bit MORE

6. And we moved to DC it was like we were going to/ focus ON BEING LOCAL

7. That was what we felt like we were called TO DO/ then was just/ pay ATTENTION to the local

8. We live in this REALLY/ amazing city and has all this/ amazing other stuff, but our main purpose is to FOCUS ON/ being local, being in one PLACE

Strophe 2: Graduate school.

Stanza 3: Overwhelmed by choices.

9. And with sustainability/ I remember especially my first year HERE

10. Coming and being very open because I didn't know exactly what I wanted TO DO

11. The openness was very INTENTIONAL but also left me feeling like/ there was SO MUCH and I couldn't do it all

12. I felt a little bit overwhelmed by that SOMETIMES/ when it came to making a CHOICE

Stanza 4: Focusing on "good at" vs "essence."

13. I think with ATTENTION COACHING it helps me to be aware of/ what it is/
    I might be GOOD AT versus what it is that/ is really my ESSENCE

14. What it is I'm TALENTED AT

15. Because I can try REALLY HARD and/ LEARN things

16. But is the point to just learn a BUNCH OF THINGS/ or when is it appropriate
    to let go of that and really FOCUS IN on/ one just LITTLE THING

Stanza 5: Acting from central-self vs calculating-self.

17. So attention COACHING helps me be aware of/ if I'm FEELING/ the feelings
    I have around how much I'M DOING or/ how I'm INTERACTING/

18. And it is a barometer for is that/ AM I acting out of/ my CENTRAL-SELF
    versus my calculating-self?

19. Am I just doing this because it is really IMPORTANT and someone needs to
    do it/ or am I doing it because I/ really feel passionate about this is what I
    really FEEL CALLED TO?

20. Especially at intensive there are always/ more people that I need to talk to
    more things that I CAN DO

Strophe 3: Reflection on undergraduate and graduate school.

Stanza 6: Distracting integration.

[*You are pointing to something with regards to simplicity of attention and your
essential nature, your essence.*]

21. I think/ especially now my kata[5] project which is about managing my digital

    social life because there are SO MANY THINGS INTEGRATED and/ so

    many things that/ you go to look at one thing and you get DISTRACTED by

    another

22. It is all integrated and that is good in some ways and in other ways it is

    REALLY DISTRACTING/ and you don't have to pay attention to one thing

    at a time as much as YOU USED TO/ because it just/ the way we interact and

    even in the FLIPPED CLASSROOM/ the new CURRICULUM is/ weaving

    things together all the time

23. And this was my undergrad always about RELATING THESE/ different

    subjects like economics and communications and religion

24. No one USUALLY STUDIES ALL THOSE for the same major

Stanza 7: Re-centering to remind myself why.

25. There is a POINT where that is really valuable to me/ to make the

    CONNECTIONS and then

26. there is a point where it is OVERWHELMING or I'm/ I feel really

    UNFOCUSED

27. So attention coaching and OTHER/ disciplines help me to just RE-CENTER

28. Kind of remind myself WHY I'm/ doing it or if I'm doing it for the RIGHT

    REASONS

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[5] "Kata project" is a term adapted from the Toyota lean manufacturing techniques. It is
meant to indicate a continuous improvement project (Rother, 2009).

Table 8

Progression of Images in the Narrative "Overwhelmed with Opportunities"

I didn't choose any one topic in undergraduate school.

I focused more after undergraduate school.

I feel overwhelmed by choices in graduate school.

I become aware of my essence—what I'm talented at.

I can act from my central-self versus my calculating-self.

You can get distracted by the things that are integrated and related.

I re-center to remind myself why I'm doing what I'm doing.

Note. Table created by Author.

Unlike life after undergraduate school, during Joe's first year of the MBA program he got overwhelmed with all the choices presented—the many things to learn (line 16), people to talk to (line 20), things to do at the monthly weekend intensives (line 20), and potential career paths on which to focus (stanza 3). Through attention coaching, Joe was able to become more aware of what he is "talented at;" that is, his "essence" (lines 13-14). He explains this by describing his "central-self" versus his "calculating-self" (stanza 5). According to Zander and Zander (2002), the "calculating-self" (Chapter 6) is the part of ourselves that was formed and created as a result of engaging in the "measurement world," (p. 81) where life is about "surviving in a world of scarcity and peril" (p. 18). Joe's "calculating-self" makes choices because they are "really important and someone needs to do it" (line 19). Whereas Joe's "central-self" is less about reactive

choices and more about intentionally expressing his passion and/or doing what he "feels called to [do]" (line 19). Joe's "central-self" is synonymous with his "essence." Through attention coaching and other attention cultivation disciplines, instead of being unfocused due to the overwhelming choices presented in graduate school, Joe "re-center[s]" to "remind [him]self" (lines 27-28) to let go of trying to do everything that is "really important" just because "someone needs to do it" and to make sure to attend to things that are an expression of his "essence."

Theme L2: Challenging mental models. This theme ranked the second highest (56%) within the category of Letting Go and showed up across four participants' data 12 times: seven times across all interview texts, four times across all narrative texts, and one time across all artwork and associated descriptions (see Tables 1 and 2). Senge (1994) defined mental models as "deeply held internal images of how the world works, images that limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting" (p. 174). In the exemplars for the theme of challenging mental models, mental models include assumptions and beliefs.

Excerpt exemplars. The quotes below were chosen as exemplars because they best describe the theme challenging mental models, and they are listed in specific order so that a more nuanced understanding of the theme unfolds.

When I asked Shawna about what she learned in attention coaching that helped her in her pursuit of furthering sustainability in business, she said she learned to pay attention to "the visible versus the invisible. So, seeing what is going on on the surface and then being curious what's going on underneath." And

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what was going on "underneath" is sometimes "about assumptions, too, coming

into a situation and not assuming just because you can see this top part that you

really know the full picture." During coaching sessions, Shawna learned to pay

attention to these mental models—"invisible" assumptions about how, according

to her, the world works. In her current job as founder and lead facilitator of a

mother support organization, she applied this ability in her support of new

mothers:

> In reality, I feel it is all about attention coaching. And that is what I'm talking to them about the entire time. It totally is. It is about seeing. It is about taking whatever emotion they are feeling and helping them look into it and figure out what is underneath it. It's about checking those assumptions, figuring out which are valid and which ones are not.

> Shawna applied what she learned in attention coaching to help her clients

challenge their mental models. Similarly, Janet used what she learned from

attention coaching to also help others in challenging their mental models.

> For me, it helps me to understand how to support the team better when I can consider the big picture of what everyone is working on. People start to tell me about the things they are dealing with and I'll just sort of ask questions. I use a lot of the skills I used at [graduate school] and from coaching too in terms of helping them get out of that constricted space. Take a step back and question their assumptions about what other people are trying to do.

> By helping people to question their assumptions, Janet is helping them to

challenge the mental models they may have about how other people are behaving.

Story exemplar: Being feminine at work. The story below exemplifies the

theme of challenging mental models. Because the stories are complex and

lengthy, analyzing them resulted in multiple themes per story. The discussion

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following the story will concentrate on the theme of challenging mental models. When asked about how the lessons she learned in attention coaching have affected her, Janet shares a story about an experience of being more feminine in the work place. (Words in brackets and italics are mine.)

Strophe 1: Languaging.

Stanza 1: Acquiring self-knowledge.

1. It was NICE to have language for that too/the EXPANSION/I had never really ever thought about it LIKE THAT/and it makes so much SENSE

2. I'm one of those PEOPLE who really likes to/know about MYSELF/I don't know WHY/I like to do the PERSONALITY TESTS

3. It helps me FIGURE THINGS OUT/and so it was NICE TO THINK about like/"That's why I'm THAT WAY"/and "That's why I get BURNED OUT"/and "There is something I can DO ABOUT IT"

Stanza 2: Coda to strophe 1.

4. I think just having the LANGUAGE FOR IT/was very HELPFUL

Strophe 2: Masculine vs feminine.

Stanza 3: Putting energy into male side.

5. Also, the MASCULINE/and the FEMININE

6. That was kind of an EYE-OPENER for me too in that/women have small percentage of MALE/and large percentage of FEMALE

[L: *Those people that are heterosexual?*]

7. Right/putting so much of MY ENERGY into my male side/and it was also MAKING ME REALLY TIRED

8. I think TOO/that HELPED ME

Stanza 4: Being more feminine.

9. I had been sort of moving along THAT PATH in terms of/letting myself BE MORE FEMININE and/ allow myself be more vulnerable IN WORK

10. That, that particular conversation REALLY/sort of hit HOME/for ME like/it is OKAY to be/ a woman at WORK/it is OKAY to not have to like/try to be very like/FORWARD AND FORCEFUL whatever/to get things DONE/or what not/and that I can be MYSELF/or I can bring my VULNERABILITY into the work environment/and still be SUCCESSFUL

11. It is SOMETHING I still work on/but that was a really cool LEARNING FOR ME too

Stanza 5: Noticing aggression.

[*You are finding it is less energy-taking.*]

12. Yeah/I don't know if I consciously think ABOUT IT that much anymore/but when I look back ON IT/I can see the DIFFERENCE/and part of it TOO/was working in environments that are REALLY AGGRESSIVE

[*Like [past client] versus [current client]*]?]

13. Exactly/versus [current client] it is a little bit DIFFERENT/I have to take a step BACK/but AROUND that time/when I had gone from [past client] to THE [CURRENT CLIENT] /we were STILL TALKING

14. Right away I NOTICED/"WHOA, I'm being really aggressive right now"

15. That doesn't work in this ENVIRONMENT/I NEED TO take a step back/in some ways/being at the [current client] has really ALLOWED ME to bring that stuff back/because their culture is DIFFERENT.

Table 9

Progression of Images in the Narrative "Being Feminine at Work"

I like to know about myself.
I put energy into my male side and that was making me really tired.
I can be myself.
I can bring my vulnerability to work and still be successful.
I have to take step back and I notice my aggression.

Note. Table created by Author.

In this story, Janet talks about a shift from primarily taking action from her male side to taking action from more of her female side at work. Through attention coaching, Janet has acquired language to help her understand herself more (stanza 1). She found it beneficial to acquire language for understanding the masculine versus the feminine side of herself (strophe 2). She came to realize the possibility of how heterosexual "women have [a] small percentage of male and [a] large percentage of female" (line 6), and that by acting more from her male side it was "making me really tired" (line 7). In the previous company that she worked at, it was more acceptable to be "really aggressive" (line 12), but at her current

client she found that type of behavior "doesn't work in [that] environment" (line 15). Through attention coaching, she challenged her mental model of needing to be "forward and forceful to get things done" (line 10) at work which in turn allowed her to adopt another mental model of (ellipses indicate a pause) "it is okay to be a woman at work . . . And that I can be myself, or I can bring my vulnerability into the work environment and still be successful" (line 10).

Artwork exemplar: Photo of Joe. Joe's artwork and his comments on his chosen artwork exemplify the themes of being focused on things that really matter and challenging mental models. What follows is my description of the artwork, the interview transcript of Joe's description of the painting in Gee's ethnopoetics form, and the interpretation. I chose to take Joe's description and put it into Gee's ethnopoetics form in order to see the structure of what he was sharing.

Joe chose a photo of himself taken by Giles Clement using wet plate tintype photography (Clement, 2013). Clement used a camera built in 1905, and the image created is like a historical document from the early 20th century—color tones of black and white, no background, lack of expression, and an unfinished photo look (as if the chemical processing was not completed). It is a picture of Joe from his shoulders up. He doesn't have a shirt on, and he is gently gazing into the camera. The lighting is from the left, so the right side of his face and shoulder are mostly shaded. (Words in brackets and italics are mine. Ellipses indicate a pause.)

Stanza 1: I'm just kind of there.

1. I guess I feel when we were trying to figure out the type of picture TO TAKE/
   I didn't have any real/ unusual ideas of what kind of picture TO TAKE

2. I felt like I wanted a good head shot SOMETHING to capture/ just me at this
   point in TIME/ I tried to have a kind of/ nonexpressive LOOK

3. I guess the more I look at it/ it is kind of just like/ I don't feel like I have a
   blank EXPRESSION but it is also not/ any certain expression it is more/ I feel
   like it is CONTENTMENT

4. I'm just kind of THERE

   Stanza 2: I'm just paying attention.

5. I like the neutrality of IT/ but that neutrality MEANS that/ it is left more open
   for INTERPRETATION/ kind of like the Mona LISA

6. But what I guess I see/ in the picture of MYSELF/ it's me as attention it's like
   I'm/ paying ATTENTION/ I'm there but I'm not doing ANYTHING/ I'm just
   BEING

7. I felt that was a really good reminder of me of ATTENTION/ and CENTER
   ME back to just paying attention

8. It is just a simple PICTURE/ and not doing ANYTHING

   Stanza 3: Getting rid of a lot of stuff.

[*Simple. I like that choice of word. It is a simple picture. You are equating that to
paying attention. It is a simple thing.*]

9. Getting rid of a lot of other STUFF/ and just FOCUSING in on what/ you really want to PAY attention to

10. It is SIMPLE in terms of being centered

11. It is sort of like the ROOT/ and everything else is around IT

   Stanza 4: The most important thing.

[*Root. Simple and root and everything else is happening around it. So how do you think that simplicity, being centered, just paying attention, focus . . . how does that further your effort in sustainability in business?*]

12. One way it does that the more you study ANYTHING/ and sustainability since I've been at [graduate school] the more COMPLEX/ the more/ you know you could have some beliefs AROUND/ what is SUSTAINABLE/ and the more you look into it/ the more COMPLEX it is

13. And some of those beliefs start to be CHALLENGED or/ to not be true/ or you realize the nuance of them/ or the bias that you HAVE/ that is built into your view my view on SUSTAINABILITY

14. I feel that there is a TENSION with sustainability/ where many things in LIFE/ where it is you are managing between two EXTREMES/in LPD what was that called?/ POLARITY management/ so sustainability is simple and complex at the same TIME

15. The simplicity is a reminder to go BACK TO/ getting rid of all the filters and the BIASES/ and just go back to/ what is the most important THING/ or what is essential to SUSTAINABILITY

While the structural-visual analysis of Joe's art and his description of it resulted in reconfirming other themes beyond being focused on things that really matter and challenging mental models, the following interpretation only focuses on those themes.

Joe wanted a "good head shot" with a "nonexpressive look" (line 2). He does not have a blank expression—he describes it as one of "contentment" (line 3). He says it is a neutral picture that is left "open for interpretation" (line 5), but goes onto say "I'm paying attention" and "I'm not doing anything, I'm just being" (line 6). He reiterates this by stating this is a "simple picture" of him "not doing anything" (line 8). The colors—tones of black and white—the lack of clothing and blank background all contribute to the simplicity and neutrality of the photo. The photo is a metaphor representing "getting rid of a lot of other stuff and just focusing in on what you really want to pay attention to" (line 9); that is, letting go of unnecessary things so that one could focus on things that really matter to one's self.

Joe draws a relationship between this photo and sustainability by saying "sustainability is simple and complex at the same time" (line 14), and the simplicity, depicted in the photo, "is a reminder to go back to getting rid of all the filters and the biases" and simply pay attention "to the most important thing or what is essential to sustainability" (line 15); that is, to challenge one's own mental models in order to pay attention more effectively.

Interpretation. The purpose of this section is to provide interpretive insights about the potential significance of the data presented above for the category Letting Go. I do this by discussing representative exemplar data for the significant themes of being focused on things that really matter and challenging mental models in order to identify insights about these patterns.

On the theme of being focused on things that really matter, there are two insights about this theme identified in the data. The first insight is best exemplified in quotes by Joe and Janet. Sustained attention is the ability to maintain a state of vigilance on a specific stimuli or set of stimuli over a period of time (Bishop et al., 2004, p. 232; Johnson & Proctor, 2004, pp. 257–259). What Joe learned in attention coaching, the ability to let go of being "pulled by the past or [the] future" and to let go of being "pulled by outside influences," appears to support his capacity of sustained attention on what matters most in the moment.

Similarly, Janet is able to let go of trying to pay attention, all of the time, to everything going on in her life and to focus on what matters most. What she has learned in attention coaching appears to support her capacity of sustained attention. This suggests that through the lessons of attention coaching, Joe and Janet could let go of distractions that would support their capacity for sustained attention on what matters most in the moment.

The second insight is best exemplified in a quote by Robert, in Joe's description of his artwork, and in Joe's story. According to Robert, a contribution of attention coaching in sustainable business is that one comes to recognize the

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definition of sustainability differs for each person—there is no one definition and "that is okay." Robert accepts that there are multiple perspectives on what sustainability is and that by "defin[ing] sustainability for yourself" it would help orient one towards furthering sustainability in business.

Similarly, my analysis of Joe's artwork suggests that with attention coaching Joe was able to let go of biases, filters, and other distractions in order to pay attention to things that really matter to him in his pursuit of furthering the cause of sustainability in business. In addition to and in support of finding one's direction or purpose, through what he learned in attention coaching Joe was able to let go of trying to do everything that is "really important" just because "someone needs to do it" and to make sure to attend to things that are an expression of his "essence." This suggests that through the lessons of attention coaching, Robert and Joe discovered the benefit of letting go of perspectives from others and/or of rational reasoning so that one can better focus on one's direction and/or expression of their essence.

To summarize regarding the theme of being focused on things that really matter, my analysis of the data suggests that through attention coaching one can learn to let go of distractions in a way that would support one's capacity for sustained attention on what matters most in the moment, and one can learn to let go of perspectives from others and/or of rational reasoning to better focus on one's direction and/or expression of their essence.

On the theme of challenging mental models, there are two insights about this theme identified in the data. The first insight is best exemplified in Janet's story. Through attention coaching, Janet came to realize the possibility of how heterosexual "women have [a] small percentage of male and [a] large percentage of female" (line 6), and that by acting more from her male side (including paying attention from this male part of her) it was "making me really tired." She challenged her mental model of needing to be "forward and forceful to get things done" at work, which allowed her to adopt another mental model of (ellipses indicate a pause) "it is okay to be a woman at work . . . And that I can be myself, or I can bring my vulnerability into the work environment and still be successful."

In a follow-up email, I asked Janet what has it been like to pay attention from this more feminine part of herself. She wrote, "There's a sense of compassion and curiosity; of truly wanting to understand people and where they are coming from. There's a forgiveness for flaws and awkwardness, seeing through the surface to the depth of an individual's true self." While Janet indicated she had been moving in the direction of "letting myself be more feminine" at work, what she learned in attention coaching supported her journey down a path that included being more in touch with aspects of herself that were hidden. This suggests that, through the lessons of attention coaching, Janet became aware of an underlying mental model and was able to develop a more complex understanding of herself.

The second insight is best exemplified in quotes by Shawna and Janet. In Shawna's current job as founder and leader facilitator of a mother support organization, she helped mothers to "figure out what is underneath" their challenging emotions in order to become aware of "those assumptions" and to "figure out which [ones] are valid and which ones are not." Similarly, Janet helped support a team by helping them to "question their assumptions about what other people are trying to do." This suggests that, through the lessons of attention coaching, Shawna and Janet were able to help others to become aware of their assumptions (mental models) and to challenge them.

To summarize regarding the theme of challenging mental models, my analysis of the data suggests that through attention coaching one can learn to become aware of underlying mental models and to develop a more complex understanding of oneself, and one can help others to be made aware of their mental models and to challenge them.

Thus, for the category of Letting Go, my analysis of the significant themes suggests that through attention coaching one can:

1. learn to let go of distractions that would support one's capacity for sustained attention on what matters most in the moment;

2. learn to let go of perspectives from others and/or of rational reasoning so that one can better focus on one's direction and/or expression of one's essence;

3. become aware of one's underlying mental models and develop a more complex understanding of oneself; and

4. help others to be aware of their mental models and to challenge them.

Summary

Three categories emerged from the analysis of the data: Acquiring Equanimity, Nonjudgmental Attention, and Letting Go.

For the category of Acquiring Equanimity, two significant themes emerged:

- A1 Being calm/being at peace

- A2 Centering and grounding

For this category, my analysis of the significant themes suggests that, through attention coaching, during challenging times one can:

1. be more in the present moment,

2. be less reactive,

3. have more capacity to listen,

4. have more capacity to effectively communicate,

5. be aware of what one can do better while not being overly self-critical, and

6. better influence people through the process of complex change with less possibility of provoking a reactive response from them.

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For the category of Nonjudgmental Attention three significant themes emerged:

- N1 Stepping back and/or gaining perspective

- N2 Gaining clarity

- N3 Not resisting what is happening.

For this category, my analysis of the significant themes suggests that, through attention coaching, one can:

1. pay attention to one's emotions where previously this was avoided;

2. pay attention to a larger range of one's emotions and thoughts;

3. pay attention longer before taking action;

4. gain clarity on how to navigate a difficult situation by first paying attention to mental models and emotions that are present; and

5. learn to step back, redeploy attention, and gain perspective while in a challenging situation and while reflecting on a challenging situation.

For the category of Letting Go two significant themes emerged:

- L1 Being focused on things that really matter

- L2 Challenging mental models

For this category, my analysis of the significant themes suggests that, through attention coaching, one can:

1. learn to let go of distractions that would detract from one's capacity for sustained attention on what matters most in the moment,

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2. learn to let go of perspectives from others and/or of rational reasoning so that one can better focus on one's direction and/or expression of one's essence,

3. become aware of one's underlying mental models and develop a more complex understanding of oneself, and

4. help others to be aware of their mental models and to challenge them.

How these abilities might contribute to furthering sustainability in business is discussed in the next chapter.

Personal Reflection

It has been an honor to interview the co-participants; listen over and over again to the interviews during the transcription process; re-visit my time with the co-participants through the analysis part of the many interviews, stories, and artwork; and most of all to open up and reflect, during the spaces in-between interviewing, listening, and re-visiting. I cherished these spaces in-between. This reminds me of what Bentz and Shaprio (1998) say about space during the research process:

> Each step of the process is mediated by an empty space on the spiral, indicating that you are moving through lived time and you are living through the meaning of this new aspect of becoming a mindful inquirer. These meditative openings in the spiral indicate that the mindful inquirer makes space and time for this reflection before and after each move forward on the endeavor. . . . With each turn of the spiral, you create a deeper and richer understanding both of the phenomenon, problem, or question and of yourself as a reflective, mindful inquirer. (p. 43)

In these spaces on the spiral, I feel like I was being changed. Maybe it is the change to becoming a more mindful inquirer, maybe it is something else that I cannot see right now. In any case, I believe the mystery contained within the space assisted me forward in this research endeavor. I honor the mystery.

CHAPTER 5: SYNTHESIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

In the Findings chapter, the underlying objective was to "split . . . apart and separate . . . pieces and chunks of data to tell the 'story of the research'" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 179). This chapter pulls everything together "to reconstruct a holistic understanding" (p. 179) by (a) taking the insights from each of the major findings and consolidating them into one list of abilities, and (b) situating these abilities (sometimes using representative examples) in the literature on mindfulness, leadership, constructive-developmental theory, and systems thinking in order to derive possible answers to the research questions.

What do Leaders Learn in Attention Coaching?

By consolidating the insights, an answer to this research question is suggested. I began the consolidation by gathering the insights from each of the categories in order to put them side-by-side. This positioning made it easier for me to go back and forth between the insights in order to eliminate redundant ones and to combine some where possible. When necessary, I went back to relevant, original data. My analysis of the data suggests that through attention coaching, during challenging times, one can:

1. learn to let go of distractions that would detract from one's capacity for sustained attention on the present moment before taking action;

2. be less reactive;

3. have more capacity to listen and to effectively communicate;

4.   better influence people through the process of complex change with less possibility of provoking a reactive response from them;

5.   be aware of what one can do better while not being overly self-critical;

6.   pay attention to one's underlying mental models, including emotions, resulting in a more complex understanding of oneself;

7.   pay attention to one's underlying mental models, including emotions, resulting in clarity on how to navigate a difficult situation;

8.   help others to be aware of their mental models and to challenge them;

9.   learn to step back, redeploy attention, and gain perspective while in a challenging situation and while reflecting on a challenging situation; and

10. learn to let go of perspectives from others and/or of rational reasoning so that one can better focus on one's direction and/or expression of one's essence.

For the purposes of this discussion, I will hereinafter refer to the above abilities as "Attentional Abilities." In response to the question "What do leaders learn in attention coaching?," it appears that these Attentional Abilities are what leaders learn in attention coaching.

How Do the Lessons of Attention Coaching Contribute to Furthering Sustainability Practices in Business?

In this section, I situate the Attentional Abilities in literature on mindfulness, leadership, constructive-developmental theory (CDT), and systems

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thinking (ST) in order to derive a possible answer to the overall research question. Instead of discussing the Attentional Abilities in the order listed, I discuss them as they relate to the various literature topics. As will become evident, some of the Attentional Abilities have a one-on-one correlation with a single literature topic, while some Attentional Abilities relate to multiple topics (shown in Table 10).

Table 10

Attentional Abilities Correlated to Relevant Literature Topics

	Attentional Ability	Literature Topic
1	Learn to let go of distractions that would detract from one's capacity for sustained attention on the present moment before taking action	Mindfulness, Leadership, CDT, ST
2	Be less reactive	Mindfulness, Leadership
3	Have more capacity to listen and to effectively communicate	Leadership, CDT
4	Better influence people through the process of change with less possibility of provoking a reactive response from them	Leadership, CDT
5	Be aware of what one can do better while not being overly self-critical	Leadership, CDT
6	Pay attention to one's underlying mental models, including emotions, resulting in a more complex understanding of oneself	CDT
7	Pay attention to one's underlying mental models, including emotions, resulting in clarity on how to navigate a difficult situation	ST
8	Help others to be aware of their mental models and to challenge them	CDT
9	Learn to step back, redeploy attention, and gain perspective while in a challenging situation and while reflecting on a challenging situation	ST
10	Learn to let go of perspectives from others and/or of rational reasoning so that one can better focus on one's direction and/or expression of one's essence	Leadership, CDT

Note. CDT = constructive-developmental theory; ST = systems thinking. Table created by Author.

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Mindfulness and Leadership

Bishop et al (2004) defined mindfulness in such a way as to provide distinguishable and empirical characteristics for psychological research purposes (see definition stated earlier). In a study by Sauer and Kohls (2011) on the potential benefits of mindfulness in leadership, a more scaled-down version of mindfulness was defined as "keeping one's attention on what is happening at the moment without cognitively evaluating it" (p. 293). One of the objectives of mindfulness is to stop a habit of reacting to specific stimuli, including cognitively processing it, and to observe more consciously what is going on in that moment (p. 296). Boyatzis and McKee (2005) define mindfulness as the capacity to be fully aware of what is happening inside and around us (p. 112) and that "developing mindfulness means developing [a leader's] emotional intelligence" (p. 136). Studies show that emotional intelligence has a positive impact on leadership effectiveness (J. M. George, 2000; Goleman, 2005). Hence, Goleman (2005) suggest that "mindfulness is not just a nice-to-have—it makes a difference in [leadership] performance" (p. 137). It seems plausible that Attentional Ability 1 and Attentional Ability 2 contribute to a leader's capacity for mindfulness.

The role of mindfulness in sustainability is mentioned in Lamberton's (2005) work in which he describes sustainable sufficiency as achieving economic objectives that are consistent with "the preservation of the natural environment and the welfare of each individual and society-at-large" (p. 61). Sustainable sufficiency is based on a Buddhist perspective of economics; this perspective, in

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turn, springs from the Buddhist idea of mindfulness, more specifically focusing attention "on the present moment" (p. 60). In Helen's chosen artwork (discussed in Chapter 4 in the section on Acquiring Equanimity), which metaphorically represents how the lessons of attention coaching contributed or could contribute to her efforts in sustainable business, she associates the light in the image, which is in the exact center of the painting, with her attention. It would be interesting to consider the central representation of attention in Helen's chosen artwork along with Attentional Ability 1 as corroborating Lamberton's idea that the *central* teaching of mindfulness is the "possible bridge for transformation" (p. 60) for leaders to further sustainable sufficiency through their organizations.

The relationship between mindfulness and sustainability is also suggested in a study by McGaw (2005). The objective of her research was to identify characteristics of leaders who could effectively "manage at the intersection of financial, social and environmental objectives" (p. 32). Data was analyzed drawing on conversations with leading thinkers in leadership development from organizations (academic and business) throughout the world. The results showed mindfulness as one of the four characteristics that contribute to a leader's capacity for "consciousness, awareness and presence" (p. 32). Mindfulness in McGaw's study is defined more broadly as keeping in "mind the needs and expectations of community members, other employees, [and] the planet" and in "taking the time to pause" and reflect (N. McGaw, personal communication, March 10, 2014).

Johansen's (2012) "active attention" ("[t]he ability to filter out noise and distraction, combined with a strong ability to stay centered—even when overwhelmed with stimuli" (p. 21)) is similar to some of the mindfulness definitions described above. Active attention is one of Johansen's enduring leadership capacities which influence the ten new leadership skills he has identified in his work at the Institute of the Future. According to Johansen, this ability will help a leader to have "bio-empathy," the ability to see patterns that emerge from nature that could inform how leaders behave (p. 96); and to see things from "nature's point of view," which includes seeing with a long-term view what is needed for life to continue for generations to come (p. 98). It seems plausible that Attentional Abilities 1 and 2 contribute to a leader's capacity for active attention.

In summary, I suggest that Attentional Abilities 1 and 2 contribute to a leader's capacity for mindfulness and active attention, which have been suggested in the literature as capacities that contribute to furthering sustainability in business by facilitating an awareness that is more global and ecological in perspective.

Leadership and Constructive-Developmental Theory

In the adaptive leadership model Heifetz and Laurie (1997) assert, "Often the toughest task for leaders in effecting change is mobilizing people through the organization to do adaptive work" (p. 124). There are two reasons that adaptive challenges are so difficult: (a) leaders must let go of taking responsibility of being the problem solver and look for solutions to problems "in the collective

intelligence of employees at all levels" (p. 124), and (b) they must help navigate

people through an adaptive change even though this process is most likely going

to be distressing for all involved (p. 124).

 In dealing with the first difficulty, leaders have to be willing to listen to

employees about what the employees feel are the reasons and possible solutions

for the problems (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009, Chapter 5); and leaders have

to be willing to communicate in collaboration with employees, peers, and

employers on designing effective changes (Chapter 9). This type of listening and

communication requires that a leader has the "emotional capacity to tolerate

uncertainty, frustration, and pain" (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997, p. 128) in themselves

and others. This emotional capacity determines the leader's ability "to hold

steady" (p. 128) during difficult conversations; that is, to not be reactive in their

communications with others. It seems plausible that Attentional Ability 2 and

Attentional Ability 3 contribute to a leader being more effective in working with

all people involved in identifying and designing solutions to adaptive challenges

because leaders with these abilities are less reactive and are prepared to listen to

ideas other than their own.

 With regard to the second difficulty of helping navigate people through an

adaptive change even though this process is most likely going to be distressing for

all involved, a leader "must strike a delicate balance between having people feel

the need for change and having them feel overwhelmed by change" (Heifetz &

Laurie, 1997, p. 127). In Attentional Ability 4, the reactive response could include

resisting change in various ways and becoming too overwhelmed by change. It

seems likely that Attentional Ability 4 contributes to a leader helping people

navigate a difficult adaptive change.

In summary, I suggest that Attentional Abilities 2, 3, and 4 contribute to a

leader's capacity to effectively identify, design, and navigate adaptive challenges

as characterized in the adaptive leadership model.

Walumbwa et al. (2007) define authentic leadership as

*a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive
psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater
self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of
information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working
with followers, fostering positive self-development* [italics in original]. (p.
94)

Authentic leaders have "both greater self-awareness and self-regulated

positive behaviors" (Luthans & Avolio, 2003, p. 243). One of the self-regulated

positive behaviors is resiliency, which includes "the ability or capacity to rebound

or bounce back from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, [and] failure" (p. 255). By

being less reactive to a challenge, there is less residual effect from which to

rebound. Hence, Attentional Ability 2 may contribute to the positive attribute of

resiliency a characteristic of authentic leadership as defined by Luthans and

Avolio (2003).

Another one of the self-regulated positive behaviors is optimism, which

includes "persever[ing] in the face of obstacles and difficulties; analyz[ing]

personal failures and setbacks as temporary, if not learning experiences, versus

being the result of personal inadequacy" (Luthans & Avolio, 2003, p. 254). It

seems plausible that Attentional Ability 5 contributes to the positive energy of optimism characterized by authentic leadership as defined by Luthans and Avolio (2003).

In summary, I suggest that Attentional Abilities 2 and 5 contribute to a leader's capacity for both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors such as the energies of resiliency and optimism as characterized in the authentic leadership model.

How might the capacities to effectively identify, design, and navigate adaptive challenges and to have self-awareness and positive energies such as resiliency and optimism contribute to furthering sustainability in business? One possible answer lies in constructive-developmental theory.

In Cook-Grueter's (2005) constructive-developmental model, based on the work of Torbert et al. (2004), there are at least three categories of mental complexity. The one of interest for this study is the postconventional category. Within this category of mental complexity are several stages, each one building upon the capacity for mental complexity in the previous stage. The characteristic behaviors of adaptive and authentic leaders—adaptation, high self-awareness and utilization of positive energy—are indicative of people occupying the postconventional stages of mental complexity (Cook-Greuter, 2005, pp. 12–21).

In Berger's (2012) constructive-developmental model, based on Robert Kegan's (1998) theory of adult development, the equivalent stages to Cook-Greuter's (2005) postconventional stages are self-transforming and later self-

authoring stages (T. O'Fallon, personal communication, December 3, 2013). At

the self-authoring and self-transforming stages:

> Leaders will be able to look to both shareholder value and also quality of life issues, will hold onto the seeming paradoxes of maximizing profits and also protecting workers and the environment, and will enlarge the scope of leadership beyond the having and creating of a powerful vision. (Berger, 2012, Chapter 2, Section 4, para. 8)

Similarly for the post-heroic stages, the equivalent stages to Cooke-

Greuter's (2005) postconventional stages, Joiner and Josephs (2007) write,

"leaders [at these stages] are more likely than they were at previous levels to be

attuned to the health of the natural environment and the well-being of the larger

society" (p. 113). Finally, for the postconventional stages, Schmidt and McEwen

(2007) write, "a critical mass of capacity generated from later-stage

[postconventional and beyond] leader development is needed to attain complex

sustainability outcomes" (p. 36). The literature on constructive-developmental

theory suggests that, at a minimum, the postconventional, and self-transforming

and self-authoring equivalent developmental stages are the level of mental

complexity that leaders need in order to shift businesses in a more sustainable

economic direction.

Based on this discussion on mental complexity, it seems plausible that the

capacities to effectively identify, design, and navigate adaptive challenges, and to

have self-awareness and positive energies such as resiliency and optimism

contribute to the type of mental complexity a leader needs to further sustainability

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in business. Hence, I suggest that Attentional Abilities 2, 3, 4 and 5 contribute to the type of mental complexity a leader needs to further sustainability in business.

Additionally, there are other Attentional Abilities which support capacities identified in models of constructive-developmental theory. At the postconventional stages, leaders with this level of mental complexity "replace the focus on causality (past) and goals (future) . . . with a fascination with the immediate present" (Cook-Greuter, 2005, p. 23). Similar to the focus of attention of leaders at Cook-Greuter's postconventional stages, a person at the post-heroic stages begins by attending "directly but momentarily to their ongoing experience," then "a bit longer to the flow of their ongoing experience," and finally to "an alert and relaxed present-centered awareness that flows from one moment into the next" (Joiner & Josephs, 2007, p. 179). It is interesting to consider that Attentional Ability 1 also contributes to the present-moment attentional ability of leaders with postconventional levels of mental complexity.

Leaders at the post-heroic stages "realize that [their] actions are governed by assumptions, feelings, and priorities of which [they are] often unaware" (Joiner & Josephs, 2007, p. 112), and as a result they are "more likely to question the assumptions [they] and others make when framing problems and developing solutions" (p. 95). Similarly, leaders at the postconventional stage "lay bare underlying assumptions and frameworks" (Cook-Greuter, 2005, p. 21) and they challenge these assumptions and frameworks in order to make more effective changes in their lives and organizations. It seems likely that Attentional Ability 6

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and Attentional Ability 8 contribute to the capacity for recognizing and challenging assumptions in a leader with postconventional mental complexity.

Leaders at the postconventional stages "often withdraw to some degree from external affairs or the daily workings of their companies. Instead, they turn inward in search of their unique gifts or pursuing their own burning questions" (Cook-Greuter, 2005, p. 22). At the postconventional stages, it is less about pleasing or not pleasing others and more about self-actualization and self-fulfillment. In support of the importance of self-actualization and self-fulfillment for leaders, Boyatzis and McKee (2005) write,

> The worst thing about this kind of lock-step life [which includes mostly living up to others' expectations] is that we can begin to lose touch with ourselves and our understanding of what truly matters. Our noble purpose disappears and we wake up one day to find that we have little to ground and guide us. (p. 133)

It is interesting to consider that Attentional Ability 10 contributes to the self-actualization and self-fulfillment focus of a leader with postconventional mental complexity.

Based on this further discussion of models in constructive-developmental theory, it seems plausible that Attentional Abilities 1, 6, 8, and 10 contribute to the type of mental complexity a leader needs to further sustainability in business.

Systems Thinking

The literature suggests that to further sustainability efforts in business, a systems thinking perspective is required (Goleman, 2013; Meadows, 2008; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013; Senge et al., 2010). A systems thinking capacity

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includes seeing patterns at play (instead of just static snapshots) that possibly require transformation. According to Senge et al. (2010), to transform the patterns, the mental models involved must first be recognized (pp. 172–177). Mental models are deeply held internal images, assumptions, stories, or beliefs a person or a group of people hold that determine how they make sense of the world and that influence how they act. Some emotions can be thought of as the feeling tone of a mental model (Senge, 1994, Chapter 10). A leader who acknowledges and overcomes tacit mental models and as a result changes patterns is exhibiting characteristics of systems thinking (Senge et al., 2010, pp. 172–177). It seems plausible that Attentional Ability 7 contributes to a leader's systems thinking capacity, which will in turn help to further sustainability in business.

A systems thinking capacity includes seeing aspects of a situation as interrelated parts instead of as separate entities (Goleman, 2013; Meadows, 2008; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013; Senge et al., 2010). Being able to see the whole in this way is probably similar to Heifetz and Linsky's (2002) adaptive leadership concept of "get on the balcony" (Chapter 3). By leaving the dance floor and getting on the balcony, one can look below to see which people are dancing and who is not, who is dancing fast and who is not, the relationship between how people are dancing and the tempo of the music, etc. In the adaptive leadership model, leaders get on the balcony to gain perspective on a situation in order to not "misperceive the situation and make the wrong diagnosis, leading [them] to misguided decisions about whether and how to intervene;" (Heifetz & Linsky,

2002, p. 53) and to do this in such a way as to quickly switch between being on the balcony and being on the dance floor (pp. 53–54). To get on the balcony, one does not need to physically distance one's self from the challenging situation; it can be done in the mind (p. 53). Attentional Ability 9 should thus be considered as contributing to one seeing the interconnected aspects of a situation rather than just the individual parts. A leader who is able to see more of the whole in this way is exhibiting characteristics of systems thinking (Goleman, 2013; Meadows, 2008; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013; Senge et al., 2010). It seems plausible that Attentional Ability 9 contributes to a leader's systems thinking capacity of seeing more of the whole situation, contributing to the development of sustainability in business.

A systems thinking capacity includes being able to observe a situation for a period of time instead of immediately reacting to it (Goleman, 2013; Meadows, 2008; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013; Senge et al., 2010). Sharmer and Kaufer (2013) argue that, to further sustainability in business, one must engage in a deep process of presencing—"to sense and operate from the presence of an emerging future field" (p. 29). The first step in the presencing process is to: "Observe, observe, observe. Stop downloading and totally immerse yourself in the places of most potential, in the places that matter most to the situation you are dealing with" (p. 21). (Downloading is listening to information in such a way as to confirm what the listener already knows (p. 147).) Similarly, Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) write, "Sorting through an adaptive challenge takes time and reflection. Resist the pressure to do something, and spend more time diagnosing the problem,

even if taking that much time feels excruciatingly uncomfortable" (p. 44). Instead of just downloading information from a situation or immediately taking action, Scharmer and Kaufer (2013), and Heifetz et al. (2009) recommend taking the time to observe and diagnose. I suggest that a sustained attention is required to do this observing and diagnosing because sustained attention is the ability to maintain a state of vigilance on a specific stimuli or set of stimuli over a period of time (Bishop et al., 2004, p. 232; Johnson & Proctor, 2004, pp. 257–259). It seems likely that Attentional Ability 1 and Attentional Ability 2 contribute to a leader's systems thinking capacity of taking the time to observe a situation before reacting, which will in turn help further sustainability in business.

In summary, I suggest that Attentional Abilities 1, 2, 7, and 9 contribute to a leader's systems thinking capacity, which has been described in the literature as a capacity that contributes to furthering sustainability in business.

Summary

The objectives of this chapter were to (a) take the insights from each of the major findings and consolidate them into one list of abilities, and (b) situate these abilities (sometimes using representative exemplars) in the literature on mindfulness, leadership, constructive-developmental theory, and systems thinking in order to derive a possible answer to the research questions. My analysis of the data suggests that, through attention coaching, during challenging times one can acquire Attentional Abilities as identified in Table 10. In response to the question

"What do leaders learn in attention coaching?" it appears that these abilities are what leaders learn in attention coaching.

In response to the research question "How do the lessons of attention coaching contribute to furthering sustainability practices in business?" it appears that the Attentional Abilities may support a leader's capacities for mindfulness, adaptive and authentic leadership, postconventional stages of mental complexity, and systems thinking, which all have been suggested in the literature as capacities that contribute to furthering sustainability practices in business.

What Are the Perceptions and Insights of Leaders Concerning how Attention Cultivation Relates to More Innovative and Sustainable Business Solutions?

The third research question was not answered in my analysis of the data. However, I address this question in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first identifies conclusions and recommendations gleaned from this inquiry. The second identifies recommendations for future research. Finally, this chapter concludes with my reflections on this study, including the impact of this research on myself.

Conclusions

This research confirmed my assumptions and contributed to new insights. One of my assumptions was that the cultivation of attention will improve a leader's quality of life and positively impact a leader's actions in business. The experiences of the participants confirmed that the cultivation of attention supports a leader's capacity for mindfulness and the capacity for adaptive and authentic leadership. Another assumption was that attention cultivation supports the development of mental complexity, thus allowing a more empowered navigation of the complexity of sustainable business challenges. This was confirmed by findings indicating that some of the Attentional Abilities which were developed and/or enhanced by participation in attention coaching support the development of mental complexity.

What I had not assumed and is now clear is that attention cultivation supports a leader's capacity for systems thinking, which in turn contributes to furthering sustainability in business. This was demonstrated through the observation that some of the Attentional Abilities also support systems thinking. It is not a surprise that abilities that support systems thinking were revealed because,

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according to Cook-Greuter (2005), as one evolves through the developmental stages, one's comprehension of "multiple interconnected systems of relationships and processes" (p. 24) expands; that is, mental complexity and systems thinking are related, although this connection has not yet been made explicit in the literature I read on systems thinking.

In summary, my analysis of the data suggests that the Attentional Abilities may support a leader's capacities for mindfulness, adaptive and authentic leadership, postconventional stages of mental complexity, and systems thinking, which all have been suggested in the literature as capacities that contribute to furthering sustainability in business. A deeper view of this perspective is suggested by scholars in psychology, consciousness studies, and leadership. James (1890/2007) writes, "*my experience is what I agree to attend to*" (italics in original, p. 402). Similarly, Nelson (1997) considers "the *deployment of attention* [italics in original] (and attentional resources) as the *sine qua non* [italics in original] of experience's constructional operations" (p. 221). The deployment of attention is a primal, essential motion that determines one's experience. In relation to leadership, Heifetz and Laurie (1997) consider "disciplined attention [as] the currency of leadership" (p. 129), while Goleman (2013) describes three types of attention (inner, outer, and other) crucial to leadership:

> For leaders to get results they need all three kinds of focus [of attention]. Inner focus attunes us to our intuitions, guiding values, and better decisions. Other focus smooths our connections to the people in our lives. And outer focus lets us navigate in the larger world. A leader tuned out of his internal world will be rudderless; one blind to the world of others will be clueless; those indifferent to the larger systems within which they

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operate will be blindsided. . . . Each of the three varieties of attention can help us find a balance where we can be both happy and productive. (p. 4)

In the complex world of helping to further sustainability in business, how a leader deploys his or her attention will determine that leader's ability to effect change in the leader and in the world: the primal faculty of the deployment of attention is foundational in a leader's capacity for movement that furthers sustainability in business.

This study did not answer the research question "What are the perceptions and insights of leaders concerning how attention cultivation relates to more innovative and sustainable business solutions?" But the deeper view stated above suggests an answer. Goleman (2013) wrote, "Open awareness creates a mental platform for creative break-through and unexpected insights. In open awareness we have no devil's advocate, no cynicism or judgment—just utter receptivity to whatever floats into the mind" (p. 42). Goleman does not define "open awareness," but from what he has written, a nonjudgmental attention appears to be a component of this state of being. Attention cultivation may support the type of open awareness that leaders need for accessing their most creative "out-of-the-box" ideas for sustainability.

Google Inc. provides meditation classes for employees (Essig, 2012). They do this for the benefit of the employees and the company. In several research studies, a cultivated attention has been suggested as important in furthering sustainability in business (Johansen, 2012; Lamberton, 2005; McGaw, 2005). I recommend that programs that train leaders in sustainable business (both

academic institutions and organizations) include attention cultivation practices as part of their curriculum and make explicit how what is taught in the practices can be applied to a leader's work in furthering sustainability in business. These practices could be attention coaching, mindfulness disciplines (like meditation), or any other practices that explicitly cultivate attention (e.g., Qigong and Tai Chi).

Also, I recommend that leaders interested in furthering sustainability in business begin or continue their attention cultivation practice(s) and actively apply what they learn in that practice to their work in sustainability. As part of attention cultivation training, the curriculum should include the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of attention cultivation. This multi-faceted approach to attention cultivation (experiential, philosophical, and theoretical) would facilitate the consciousness shift needed by a leader to support the paradigm shift of sustainable business.

It would be naïve to assume that this recommendation would be adopted without resistance, despite the results of this study. Even some of the participants, who ultimately conceded the benefits of this practice, had their own misgivings during our coaching relationship. Tanya sometimes wondered "I don't know what I got out of that [session]," and Joe admitted that (ellipses indicate a pause) "in the beginning I really wasn't sure where attention [coaching] would go. Like . . . where that would lead to?" Helen spoke to the difficulty of widely disseminating these practices. In Helen's words, "a lot of people don't yet see the value of something like this. I think it would be really easy to turn it into a joke." Helen

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also spoke of the importance of maintaining the discipline to do attention

cultivation practices, including yoga and meditation. She said,

> I think the more you do it, it evolves into something. It continues to evolve
> and change and how it impacts you probably evolves and changes as well.
> If you just stop doing those things, you are only going to get the benefit of
> them to that point. It is probably going to fade a little bit over time.

What Helen shared appears to support one of the findings in the research

conducted by Marques and Dhiman (2009) on Vipassana meditation: "Vipasana

[*sic*] requires a high level of discipline, in that it needs to be practiced on a regular

basis in order to keep the senses awakened" (p. 82).

This primal faculty of the deployment of attention is subtle and the

cultivation of it can be confusing because benefits are not always immediately

apparent. But prolonged exposure to the discipline of cultivating one's attention

will pay off. My co-participants discovered for themselves what William James

(1890/2007)—considered by many to be the father of American psychology—

described over one hundred years ago:

> But, whether the attention come by grace of genius or by dint of will, the
> longer one does attend to a topic the more mastery of it one has. And the
> faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over
> again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will. No one is *compos
> sui* [italics in original] if he have it not. An education which should
> improve this faculty would be *the* [italics in original] education *par
> excellence* [italics in original]. (p. 424)

Along the lines of an "education *par excellence,*" consulting companies

and academic institutions providing services to organizations to help design and

implement sustainability plans should consider including attention cultivation

practices for their employees and possibly for their clients. I am in collaboration

with other colleagues to create and deliver training along these lines. The training we plan to provide is currently being designed, and it will include attention cultivation practices.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although the results of this study are based on interviews with participants in my attention coaching practice and there is research identifying the beneficial role of mindfulness in sustainability, more research needs to be done on other attention cultivation practices (e.g., Qigong and Tai Chi) and their role in furthering sustainability in business. It could be that the results of these studies would reveal additional findings.

All participants in this study were current MBA students or recently graduated MBA students from a sustainability business program. Not all participants directly tied the benefits they received in attention coaching to explicit examples of furthering sustainability in business. A study with participants working at least a couple of years, simultaneously furthering sustainability in business and engaging in an attention cultivation practice, may reveal additional findings. Also, a study with senior executive leaders (including those in the chief-level positions) may reveal additional findings.

The benefits of attention cultivation need not be limited to the domain of furthering sustainability in business. For example, looked at from one perspective, sustainable business can be seen as a subset of the larger holistic movement. In much the same way that sustainable business seeks to conduct commerce in a way

that does not jeopardize the basic needs of present and future generations by unnecessarily sacrificing our environmental, social and economic resources (Doppelt, 2003, Chapter 3; Willard, 2012, Chapter Introduction), so holism seeks to "to unite what others separated and bring together what others treated separately: mind, body, and spirit; individuals and community; human beings and nature; nature and technology; science and religion; the material world and the sacred" (Wood, 2012, p. 6). The results of my study suggest that attention cultivation supports a leader's capacity for systems thinking. Systems thinking is an integral part of the holistic movement. The systems thinking model based on general systems theory by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1969) is an appropriation of holism that has been applied to a variety of disciplines (Wood, 2012, p. 14). Thus, it seems plausible that attention cultivation may be of benefit to leaders in any holistic endeavor. Further study may well reveal the advantages of attention cultivation in different domains dependent upon broader applications of systems thinking.

While this study focused on the impact of attention cultivation in sustainable business, it seems plausible that attention cultivation may be of benefit to leaders in traditional Western business as well. In fact, theoretical research suggests the benefits of mindfulness to workplaces in general (Dane, 2011) and to the traditional marketplace (Khisty, 2010). Additionally, empirical research suggests the benefits of meditation on the preservation of intellectual capital

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(Sahrawat, 2009)—the "experienced, productive, high-performing staff" (p. 33)—and on the building of capacity for organizational leaders (Trahan, 2010).

These are just examples of the research available on the benefits of attention cultivation for traditional Western business. What appears to be missing is a study on the long-term effects of attention cultivation on Western business leaders. What happens over the long-term for a traditional Western business leader with an attention cultivation practice? How might the focus of Western business leaders to maximize short-term financial profit be affected? What other traditional Western business practices may be affected and how? The research of Marques and Dhiman (2009) on the impact of Vipassana meditation on management practices suggests some advantages and disadvantages. Further study seeking more detailed answers to these questions may identify additional benefits and drawbacks of the impact of long-term attention cultivation practices on traditional Western business leaders.

My Reflections

The results of this research have benefited my attention practice and my work. Although this study was not about the efficacy of my leadership attention coaching practice, this research has given me a perspective on the foundations of my practice, philosophically and theoretically. Also, documenting the impact of my leadership attention coaching practice allows me to use the findings to refine and expand my work. Similarly, throughout this study as I read literature on leadership, sustainable business, and other related disciplines, I found that my

ability to teach a leadership development course in a sustainability business MBA program has benefitted. I was able to share insights about my data analysis and relevant literature with my students and colleagues, thus informing and inspiring our actions in helping to further sustainability in business. I also had opportunities to speak to groups of people (in sustainable business and traditional business) and share my work.

I have employed attention cultivation practices since 1999. What I had not expected was that completing this dissertation would be an opportunity for me to further hone my own attentional abilities. At times I found it relatively easy to sustain my attention on the research, and at other times I found it quite challenging. To do research on the benefits of attention cultivation while cultivating my attention to stay focused on completing this research certainly helped.

To paraphrase one of my mentors, it is not what we pay attention to that changes us, but what pays attention to us. His experience with attention corroborates the words of the Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thích Nhất Hạnh (2007): "When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers" ("I Am There for You," para. 1). Earlier, I described mindfulness as a quality of engaged awareness that can occur if attention is cultivated and deployed in a certain way. To me, it has been this mindful quality of the mentors' attention on me that has helped me to "bloom like flowers."

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In the course of the research, it appears that my attention on my clients has helped them. While my intent was to study the role of attention cultivation in leaders who are furthering sustainability in business, I do believe in the power of attention for purposes beyond that. And the impact of this research on me has strengthened my belief in the power of our primal faculty of the deployment of attention and its role for leaders who are furthering sustainability in business.

We are harming the planet and its inhabitants by continuing to allow business to be conducted with the single-minded focus of making a financial profit. By helping to redirect the business force via the explicit cultivation of attention of business leaders, we increase the chances of making the changes necessary that will help to ensure environmental and social sustainability. Unleashing the beauty and power of our subtle faculty of attention can help more flowers to bloom for all.

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APPENDIX A: EMAIL SOLICITING PARTICIPANTS

Dear XXX,

I hope you are doing well. I am emailing you to ask if you would be interested in participating in the research study for my PhD work at California Institute of Integral Studies. The question I am exploring in my work is: What do the stories of leaders who applied the lessons of attention coaching tell us about the role of attention cultivation in sustainable business?

Because of the research method (qualitative narrative inquiry), there will only be seven to ten participants in the research study. This will allow me the time and attention to go in depth into the stories each participant shares about his or her experience. I am asking your participation because I believe you have a story to tell related to my area of study.

For more information about this study, please read the attached forms. If you are interested, please let me know by XXXX. I would like to schedule a time to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Lisa Capa, PhD Candidate
California Institute of Integral Studies
Transformative Inquiry Department

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Title: The Role of Attention Cultivation in Leadership Development for Sustainable Business

Researcher Name and Contact Information: Lisa Capa, lisa.capa@comcast.net, (206) 612-3527
Dissertation Chair and Contact Information: Joanne Gozawa, jgozawa@ciis.edu, (415) 575-6100
Human Research and Review Committee (HRRC) Coordinator: Emi Kojima, ekojima2@ciis.edu

Purpose of the Study

I am a PhD Candidate in the Transformative Studies program at California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS). I am at the phase in my PhD work where I am exclusively focusing on conducting research that will be documented in my dissertation. I am working closely with my dissertation chair, Joanne Gozawa, to explore the following question: *What do the stories of leaders who applied the lessons of attention coaching tell us about the role of attention cultivation in sustainable business?* I would like to know if you would be willing to participate in my research study. In my review of current research literature, what I have found missing are stories from leaders who have applied the lessons learned from attention coaching, and their experience and perspective on the role of attention cultivation in pursuit of sustainable business practices. In the quest for more sustainability in business, we need to hear the stories of leaders, such as yourself, who are cultivating their attention and how this practice impacts their work. My study will be a narrative analysis of leadership stories that will contribute to addressing this need.

Procedures

Prior to our interview, please find a piece of visual art that metaphorically represents the relationship between what you have learned in attention coaching and its impact on your goal of greater sustainability in business. Below are some suggestions of places online that you can look. Feel free to use other resources. I will need a photo of the artwork.

1. Google Art Project, www.googleartproject.com
   You can view fine art from museums from all over the world.
2. Paintings from Alex Grey, www.alexgrey.com
3. http://www.originalartonline.com/buyers/index/content/browseart
4. http://www.gallery-worldwide.com/cmCategory.jsp

I will conduct an interview with you either via Skype or in person. I will use mostly open-ended questions during the interview in order to prompt you to share with me your story of attention coaching and its impact on your life beyond our coaching sessions together. Our interviews will be recorded.

Prior to the interview, email a photo of your visual art to me at lisa.capa@comcast.net.

The total time commitment on your part will be no more than four hours throughout the research process. This will include the completion of a short Personal History Form (see attached), searching for the artwork, a 1.5 to 2-hour interview, a short follow-up call, and validation of whether the accounts of the experiences you shared during the interview have been accurately captured.

As part of my preparation for the interview with you, I will refer back to the coaching notes I took during our sessions. These notes will not be used to

assess the efficacy of the attention coaching session, nor will I share details of our coaching session together in this research study. I will refer back to them solely in order to craft questions that will prompt you to share your story of how attention cultivation impacts your work in the pursuit of greater sustainability within business.

Confidentiality

All the information you provide will be strictly confidential, and your name will not appear on the transcription of our interview sessions. Instead, I will use an identification method that is known only by me. All data will be securely stored, and will be used for educational purposes in professional presentations and/or educational publications, but at no time will responses be attributed to an identified person. All audio tapes and transcriptions will be destroyed within three months of approval of the dissertation.

The coaching session notes will not be used to share details of our coaching sessions in this research study.

Risks and Benefits

There is no expected physical risk in your participation. However, in rare circumstances when reflecting on interview questions, you may feel uncomfortable because you would have touched on areas that are either unconscious or have been repressed. If you feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview you can choose to terminate the session or use what you have learned in attention training to observe the uncomfortable feeling in order to move

through it. If you choose to terminate the session, there will be no consequences to you.

One possible benefit to you as a participant is the gaining of insights about yourself due to reflection on the interview questions.

Note About Voluntary Nature of Participation and Statement About Compensation

Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question, as well as to discontinue your participation at any time during the process. There will be no consequences to you as a result. While I cannot compensate you for your time, your participation in this study will be invaluable in helping to understand the role of attention cultivation in leadership development for sustainable business.

How the Results Will Be Used

This research study is to be submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Transformative Studies at the California Institute of Integral Studies. The results of this study will be published as a dissertation. In addition, information may be used for educational purposes in professional presentations and/or educational publications, but at no time will responses be attributed to an identified person.

Information and Ethical Concerns About This Study

You will have the opportunity to ask, and to have answered, all your questions about this research by emailing or calling me. Contact information is listed above. All inquiries are confidential.

If you wish to receive a copy of the findings of this study, I will be happy to share them with you once my dissertation is completed.

If at any time you have any ethical concerns about the research or your participation, you can email or call me, or email my dissertation chair.

In addition, if you have any concerns or are dissatisfied at any time with any part of the study, you may report your concerns (anonymously, if you wish) to the Coordinator of the Human Research Review Committee, California Institute of Integral Studies, 1453 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, or via email to ekojima2@ciis.edu.

Participant's Agreement

If you agree to participate in my study, I would appreciate you signing your name and date to this form and sending it, along with the Personal History Form, to Lisa Capa in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope within one week of your receipt of this letter.

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I have read and I agree to the information provided above. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study and to allow the information gathered from it to

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be published in the researcher's dissertation and used in professional educational

settings given that my anonymity is protected.

_____   _____

(Name)   Date

      As soon as I receive your informed consent letter and personal history

form, I will email you to schedule an interview time.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

_____   _____

Lisa Capa, PhD Candidate   Date
California Institute of Integral Studies
Transformative Inquiry Department

_____   _____

Joanne Gozawa, PhD   Date
California Institute of Integral Studies
Transformative Inquiry Department

APPENDIX C: PERSONAL HISTORY FORM

Title: The Role of Attention Cultivation in Leadership Development for Sustainable Business

Researcher Name and Contact Information: Lisa Capa, lisa.capa@comcast.net, 206.612.3527

Name: _____ Gender: M   F (Circle one)

Preferred email address: _____

Phone: _____

Age: _____   Country of Birth: _____

Educational degrees received: _____

Occupation now: _____

Occupation at time of coaching: _____

Other attention cultivation practices you have participated in:

_____
(e.g., yoga, meditation, shamanic drumming, etc.; please indicate specific type of practice if possible)

APPENDIX D: BILL OF RIGHTS FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

You have the right to...

1. be treated with dignity and respect;

2. be given a clear description of the purpose of the study and what is expected of you as a participant;

3. be told of any benefits or risks to you that can be expected from participating in the study;

4. know the researcher's training and experience;

5. ask any questions you may have about the study;

6. decide to participate or not without any pressure from the researcher or his or her assistants;

7. have your privacy protected within the limits of the law;

8. refuse to answer any research question, refuse to participate in any part of the study, or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative effects to you;

9. be given a description of the overall results of the study upon request;

10. and discuss any concerns or file a complaint about the study with the Human Research Review Committee, California Institute of Integral Studies, 1453 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA, 94103.

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE

The questions below are divided into two sections. The intent of the broad prompts/questions is to allow freedom and flow to occur in the interview. The intent of the specific questions is to help in re-focusing should the participant stray too far from the topic and to obtain more specific information related to the subject of the inquiry.

General opening line: "As we discussed, I am interested to hear your experience of using what you have learned in our attention coaching practice and how that impacts your work in the pursuit of greater sustainability within business."

Mitigating risk: "Because of our past/present relationship, it would be natural for you to want to respond to the interview questions in a way that you feel would please me. Please do not do this. It would be best for you to respond to the questions with as much honesty as possible regardless of whether you feel it would please me or not."

Broad Prompts

- Tell me the real story (not just the logical one) about how you eventually came to enter into the MBA in Sustainable Business program at [graduate school].
- Tell me the story behind your choice of artwork. Tell me about the metaphor. (Artwork was chosen to metaphorically represent the relationship between what they have learned in attention coaching and its impact on their goal of furthering sustainable business and sustainable practices in business.)
- Tell me your story about how attention cultivation has impacted you (positively and/or negatively).
- Tell me about a significant attention coaching session. Reflect on the "before" and immediate "after" arising from the session. If this session has taken place 3 months or more prior to this interview, tell me how this has played out in your work.

Specific Questions

- When you hear the word "leadership," what comes up for you?
- What about "sustainability" and "sustainable business"?
- What interested you in attention coaching?
- What has the leadership attention coaching experience been like for you?
- How would you describe attention?

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- What other attention cultivation practices have you participated in (e.g., yoga, meditation, tai chi, qigong)? What interested you about these practices?

STEPPING BACK FROM ENTANGLEMENT

Strophe 1: Entangled

Stanza 1: Getting Triggered

1. I think/her name was GUINEVERE/

2. With Guinevere I FELT/I felt A LOT/I felt SCARED/I felt STRESSED OUT/I felt FEARFUL/I felt MANIPULATED/I felt REACTIVE

3. Like something about HER TRIGGERED ME/in the way my MOM might trigger me

4. And that was hard to deal WITH and then

Stanza 2: Questioning Myself

5. I remember being really AFRAID

6. I don't know if I have ever verbalized THIS OR NOT but/ she is African American/and I would QUESTION MYSELF like/"is this some/RACIAL THING that I don't even understand that I'm doing/like something BAD like/cross cultural MISCOMMUNICATION"

7. I don't KNOW/being really SCARED/I didn't want to be

8. I felt like I was in a place where I could have a really big IMPACT on this woman's life/in terms of like/her employment/and she was a SINGLE MOM/like taking care of KIDS

Stanza 3: Entangled in the Emotional Firestorm

9. I would think of that/and then I would think that day to day she was not

    getting her JOB DONE and/then thinking how DID I contribute to that?

10. It felt like a FIRESTORM

11. Just a big MESS/a jumbled EMOTIONAL mess

12. Probably for both of US

<div align="center">Strophe 2: New Perspective</div>

Stanza 4: Observing Emotional Mess

13. Through coaching it helped/I guess/if there was THIS MESS/it was a tangled

    knot of STRING or something/it helped unravel that a LITTLE BIT

14. It helped/rather than/even in this painting/ rather than STANDING in those

    flowers/if the flowers were that TANGLED BALL of string/it be like sitting

    on the EDGE and being able to look/and observe THEM

15. Take in the whole PICTURE rather than/being in the CENTER of it

16. Kind of take a STEP BACK

Stanza 5: Getting Different Perspective

17. I know/one of the most/one of the things I REMEMBER the most is/you gave

    me some tools to HELP when/actually having conversations WITH HER

18. I still remember you telling me/to put my HAND OUT in front of me/on the

    desk/that that would help/and IT DID

19. There were some like/PHYSICAL TOOLS that kind of helped/in the moment

    that I could use/when I was talking WITH HER/and then there were also/tools

to help remove myself from the situation A LITTLE BIT/even though I felt

DEEPLY involved in the situation/and I WAS/but to be able to get a different

PERSPECTIVE by/stepping OUTSIDE

[L: *Stepping in a calm more comfortable place*.]

20. Yay/despite it being a very UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION

Stanza 6: Staying Rooted

21. Maybe it was helping with some BOUNDARIES or something like that

22. I remember feeling a LITTLE/more grounded in that CONVERSATION and

grounded in/ grounded in my point of VIEW/ and my PERSPECTIVE

23. And a little less/going over to her point of view and her perspective so

EASILY/rather than/ being more ROOTED IN/I guess if you had to say it

with sides/a little more rooted in MY SIDE of the story

24. Whereas/ I can be pretty easily persuaded over to someone else's side of the

story PRETTY QUICKLY

Table F1

Progression of Images in the Narrative "Stepping Back From Entanglement"

I felt triggered by employee who was not getting her work done
I'm entangled in the emotional mess
I step back and observe the tangled ball
I stay deeply involved in conversation with her
I'm more grounded in my perspective of the situation

Note. Table created by Author.

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First Interpretation

In this story, Helen describes being entangled with her employee in a difficult situation and how she is able to untangle herself in order to get a different perspective on the situation. This story has two parts. In the first part, Helen describes how entangled she was in a challenging boss-employee situation. In the second part, Helen describes how she was able to disentangle herself a bit from this situation.

In stanza 1, Helen describes an employee who would trigger her much like how her mom might trigger her. The resulting emotions were many and were hard to deal with.

In stanza 2, Helen describes how afraid she was because she questioned whether she was not being culturally sensitive enough—the employee was African-American and a single mom. Helen expressed being scared about the power dynamic of being this woman's boss and that firing her would have a negative impact on this woman's life, especially since this woman was a single mom.

In stanza 3, Helen describes this woman as not getting her job done, and wonders what she did to contribute to the situation. Helen acknowledges this situation with this employee was an emotional mess for both parties involved. But it seems that, in the first part of the story, Helen was entangled in a manner that did not allow her to navigate the situation in an empowered way.

The title of strophe 1, entangled, comes from the metaphor of the tangled knot of string/ball of string that Helen refers to in strophe 2 (lines 13 and 14). It is an appropriate title because this strophe describes how entangling this situation felt with this employee.

In stanza 4, Helen describes how, through attention coaching, she was able to take a step back and observe a bigger picture, thus feeling less entangled in the situation. Helen refers to the artwork she chose to make her point. The patch of flowers in the painting represents a tangled ball of emotions. Instead of being in the center of that ball of emotion, that patch of flowers, she could be on the edge and take in the whole picture.

In stanza 5, Helen recalls what she learned in attention coaching for such a situation and how she applied it in the moment with the employee during a difficult conversation. As a result, Helen could stay involved in the situation, get more into a calm internal space, and step back enough to get a different perspective rather than stay in an entangled place based on being triggered by hard, uncomfortable emotions.

In stanza 6, Helen describes feeling more grounded in that conversation with the employee than in the past. She indicates that she was grounded more in her perspective of the situation, whereas before she would more easily take someone else's point of view, or possibly (as indicated in stanza 5) she would stay entangled with her emotions.

Coding the Excerpt

Stanza 4, Lines 14-15: N1; Stanza 5, Line 19: N1: Stanza 5, Line 20: A1; Stanza 6, Lines 22-23: A2

Second Interpretation

Main point: Helen applies what she learned in attention coaching in a conversation with an employee who was not getting her work done and, as a result, Helen is able to stay more grounded in her perspective (that is less emotion-based) instead of agreeing too quickly to the employee's point of view.

Guinevere wasn't getting her work done (stanza 3), and Helen felt that there was possibly some miscommunication occurring on Helen's part that was racially-influenced (stanza 6). Also, Helen felt the implications of this situation could really affect this single mom's life (stanza 6). In conversations with Guinevere, Helen felt manipulated and triggered (stanza 1). It was a big emotional mess (stanza 3). Through coaching, Helen was able to remove herself from the situation, step back (stanza 5) (N1) and observe the whole picture instead of being entangled in the center of this emotional mess (stanza 4) (A1).

APPENDIX G: STRUCTURAL-VISUAL ANALYSIS EXAMPLE

Janet's artwork and her comments on her chosen artwork exemplify the theme of stepping back and/or gaining perspective. Janet chose a digital online image called "Morning Wave" (Lam, n.d.). This is an abstract oil painting of a horizon done in vibrant jewel-toned colors. The background of the painting is the sun rising over a deep blue sea and distant blue mountains. The sun is at the center of the painting. The top half of the painting is the sky filled with yellow, white, and orange altostratus clouds. Peeking through is the blue sky. The bottom half of the painting is the deep blue sea with a single wave, the width of the painting, breaking in the foreground and many other waves breaking behind it. (Words in brackets and italics are mine.)

Morning Wave Part 1

Stanza 1: Impact Out in the World

[*Why did you choose this to metaphorically represent the relationship between what you learned in coaching and its impact in furthering sustainability?*]

1. I think for ME, I was looking at/ I was looking at WATER/ because there is this stillness and then there is this ripple EFFECT sometimes/ if like a little drop HAPPENS

2. And I felt like/ attention coaching and/ bringing that sense of calm but then ALSO/ having that ripple effect IMPACT out in the WORLD/ was what I was sort of looking for

3. What I liked about this is this/ center AREA/ it draws me the calm sense and then the RIPPLE out with the waves

4. That's what ATTRACTED me to this

Stanza 2: Letting Consciousness Shine Through

5. It is in the morning when things are at their most CALM

6. The whole attention piece is about calming the MIND/ and stilling everything and then letting the consciousness SHINE through.

Stanza 3: Surfacing Issues and Moving Forward

[*Tell me about that and about leaders in business. What does that do? What does that calm mind do?*]

7. You are better ABLE to/ listen and to really understand what is going ON

8. You are able to put other people at EASE/ and get to the root of the ISSUE

9. One of the things I see so MUCH/ in business a lot of the PROBLEMS/ a lot of the reasons why things don't work OUT/ or projects fail or WHATEVER/ is because people aren't COMMUNICATING/ with each OTHER/ and listening to each OTHER/ and really/ being HONEST about the real issue is

10. As a leader/ in the business environment/ having that sense of calm you are able to bring things to the SURFACE/ deal with those issues and conflicts and MOVE FORWARD/ in a way that/ causes the least amount of DAMAGE

[Later in the interview she talks about the image again.]

Morning Wave Part 2

Stanza 4: Serene Center

[*How about this horizon, any of the colors, or this area? Anything there that reminds you about the relationship between attention and leadership and business?*]

11. That hadn't struck me as much/ it was more just like the CENTER/ bringing you in there

12. There is a beauty to it RIGHT?/ it is very SERENE/ and that in and of itself is CALMING

13. If you think about the human BODY you can look at it/ actually I don't know if that's/ but any way your mind being CALM and everything else sometimes/ rippling OUT

[*Your actions being reflected in the ripples?*]

14. Yeah

Stanza 5: Keep It All in Perspective

[*Anything about the colors, blue, white, yellow?*]

15. Blue in and of itself is very CALMING/ yellow is HAPPINESS/ a LIGHTNESS that/ I always like to

16. That is another thing I think I WAS/ really SERIOUS at work before/ and I think/ I'm better able to BRING/ the lightness and HUMOR to it

17. The more you think about/ what is going on in the world right now/ the stuff

    we do is IMPORTANT but/ you need to keep it all in PERSPECTIVE/ and

    happy people do better WORK

18. That's one thing I like about the yellow it reminds me of sitting in the

    sunshine which always makes me HAPPY

[Later in the interview she talks about the image a final time.]

Morning Wave Part 3

Stanza 6: Widening your Vision

[*I'm noticing…it is not a close shot. It is stepped back a little bit. Anything in*

that? Does that signify anything?]

19. That's interesting because when I was looking I was initially looking for ones

    that had like really close up with the DROP/ like a drop with RIPPLES

20. I don't know/ it gives you more perspective RIGHT

21. You can see more of what is HAPPENING

[Did you experience that at all in attention coaching? Seeing more, being able to

get a different perspective?]

22. Absolutely/ it does widen your VISION/ your horizon so to SPEAK

Stanza 7: Seeing More of What is Happening

[*Say more about that.*]

23. When you're not being very present or you're not very FOCUSED/ there is a

    tendency/ especially because I would get ANXIOUS/ to just hone in/ it is

    really HARD to see outside/ of this STRESSFUL/ situation that you are into

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24. It is almost like you have blinders on and you are just focused on this small THING

25. But when you are able to calm DOWN/ and come at it from a place of CALM/ and PRESENCE/ and see the big picture it opens a little bit MORE

26. You can see what is HAPPENING/ and it allows you to make smarter DECISIONS/ have better relationships with PEOPLE/ really get to the bottom of the problem versus this perpetual cycle of SPINNING DOWN into your little world

Interpretation

1. What is the name of the painting?

The Morning Wave

2. What are the "elements" in the image that stand out? (Gee, 2010, p. 188) (Elements could be color, shapes, objects, etc.)

Janet mentions the water and the waves (stanza 1).

Janet does not mention explicitly the sun, although in line 6 she refers to "letting consciousness shine through."

I asked her about the colors and she mentions blue and yellow (stanza 5).

I asked her about the point of view. She talks about this in stanza 6.

Janet does not mention the sky and the yellow clouds (although she does mention the color yellow).

To me, the blue water through the center of the image, the sun, and the colors stand out.

3. Tool #23, situated meaning (Gee, 2010, pp. 151–155) (Gee, 2010, p. 188): For a given element, based on what the participant said, what situated meaning does this element have in the context in which the image is being "read"? Context being the request: please find a piece of visual art that metaphorically

represents the relationship between what you have learned in attention coaching and its impact on your goal of greater sustainability in business.

Responses to questions 3-7 were done simultaneously. See after question 7 for the response.

4. Tool #2, fill in (Gee, 2010, pp. 11–17): What situated meanings are not being said overtly, but are still assumed to be known or inferable?

5. Tool #14, significance building (Gee, 2010, pp. 92–96): What is the foreground of the artwork? What is the background? What does the participant mention as most significant, foreground or background of the artwork?

6. Tool #24, social language (Gee, 2010, pp. 156–165) (Gee, 2010, p. 188): What style is created by how the elements are put together (pattern)? For example, beach style, medieval fantasy style. What identities and activities are associated with this style? Are any of these identities and activities mentioned by the participant?

7. Tool #26, figured worlds (aka mental models) (Gee, 2010, pp. 168–176): What mental models are evoked by the pattern of elements? What mental models are mentioned by the participants?

Initially, Janet was looking for a picture of a drop falling into water causing ripples to occur (stanza 6); instead, she chose this one. She mentions she was looking at water because it can be still (serene) and "then there is this ripple effect" (line 1). The water in this painting starts in the background as "serene" and then comes to the foreground as waves. The waves in the picture represent the ripple effect (line 3).

In page 8 of Janet's transcribed interview, Janet refers to the waves in the painting again. In a discussion about modeling behaviors by a leader Janet said,

> People think to tend of leaders as those really high level folks in an organization and [in] many cases they are. But, there are leaders all across the levels. My client is a great example. She is a manager for an analyst team (MBI). She has such an incredible influence across the organization.

It is really kind of fascinating. She is really good at getting people to think it is their idea or slowly pushing them in a direction. I think that is super important.

       I think that when you are around people like that you tend to pick up on that behavior and see the benefit of that behavior. It is almost like you are, like in that picture, you are sending out those waves out into the business environment. Those folks who have the propensity for that type of influence pick up on it. So you are not going to get a hit with every person, but every now and again you will find someone who will be able to mirror or model that behavior.

The waves represent "impact out in the world" and this impact could be behaviors that are modeled/mirrored by others.

The sun is in the center of the painting. Janet does not mention explicitly the sun, although in line 6 she refers to "letting consciousness shine through." Also, when asked about the horizon she indicated it didn't draw her, and then refers to the center as beautiful, serene, and calm (lines 11-12).

Janet does not explicitly mention the sky, which is also part of the center of the painting.

When asked about colors, she does mention the color yellow which is the color of the sun and many of the clouds that are reflecting the sun light. Yellow reminds her of happiness and lightness (line 15) and "sitting in the sunshine which always makes me happy" (line 18). The lightness made her think about how "serious at work" she used to be and that now she brings more "lightness and humor" (line 16)—there is this realization that there are serious things "going on in the world right now" and what "we do is important but you need to keep it all in perspective" (line 17). Interesting to note here that when I asked later about the point of view of the painting she was initially looking for something "really close

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up" (line 19), but this painting "gives you more perspective" and "you can see more of what is happening" (line 20-21). This getting/having more perspective is important to Janet.

Blue is a calming color (line 15). The name of the painting is called The Morning Wave. Janet mentions that morning is "when things are at their most calm" (line 5). She then observes that attention coaching is "about calming the mind and stilling everything" (line 6). I assume "everything" includes one's body—Janet briefly mentions the human body (line 13) in relation to "calming" but cuts that thought off. Janet relates attention coaching to morning to the color blue—the main thread being the word "calm."

The "style" of this painting is a serene and beautiful morning sunrise. According to Janet this time is "when things are at their most calm." Stanza 7 best describes what Janet feels about attention coaching and its contributions to leaders in sustainable business: "When you're not being very present or you're not very focused," one can get anxious and it is hard to get perspective during a stressful situation. When you "calm down and come at [the situation] from a place of calm and presence," your perspective "opens a little bit more" and "you can see what is happening," thus allowing you to "make smarter decisions, have better relationships with people, [and] really get to the bottom of the problem versus this perpetual cycle of spinning down into your little world."

8. For each story from a participant, how does this analysis supplement the second interpretation? What subcodes/themes are corroborated stand out here?

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Further Reflection on Story One From Janet

In this story, Janet describes how something she has learned in attention coaching helps her to calm down when she gets anxious, and by calming down she is able to gain perspective. The structural-visual analysis corroborates the themes of calming down (A1), and gaining perspective (N1).

Further Reflection on Story Two From Janet

The structural-visual analysis corroborates the themes of being calm (A1) and of gaining perspective (N1).

In the artwork narrative, Janet mentions having better relationships with people (line 26) as a result of calming down and having a bigger perspective. Story Two is about Janet getting in touch with her more feminine side at work. She notices that coming from the more feminine side of herself results in better communication with other people. According to her, better communication includes having more patience (being calm) with people and being genuinely curious about another person's perspective. While she doesn't explicitly state that another person's perspective expands her own, being "genuinely" curious about another person's perspective may potentially imply she is not stuck in her own.

Further Reflection on Story Three From Janet

The structural-visual analysis corroborates the theme of being more present (N4).

In further reflection on Story Three, the story is more about effective communications with another person. In the artwork narrative, she mentions that

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by calming down your perspective opens up and you can better see what is happening. Maybe this is a type of "receiving" which she talks about in the story. In the story, Janet relates being more present as being able to receive more effectively from the other person what it is they are trying to communicate.

9.   What theme(s) does this artwork and response best represent?

Based on above the artwork appears to be an exemplar for themes being calm (A1) and gaining perspective (N1).