“It’s all About U” Leadership Course: A Case Study

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Abstract
This paper explores the inspiration, design, delivery and evaluation of
the “Its All About U” leadership course held in Mataura, New Zealand in
2009. Leadership challenges within the Mataura Taskforce was one of
the inspirational forces behind the course development. The course
was designed within the trialectic theoretical framework of Appreciative
Inquiry, Theory U and Experiential Learning Theory. Its content came
from a combination of intuition and evidenced based materials. It was
delivered in an unconventional manner with no course content given to
the participants prior to delivery and a desire to provide a safe yet
challenging learning environment. Participants enrolled out of curiosity
and interest in the topic. Interviews with individual participants provided
the bulk of data. A case study design was used to evaluate the
formative and summative thematic aspects of content, process and
sustained learning.
Acknowledgements

A special thanks and appreciation to the women who participated in the course and its evaluation process and to Andrae Gold who co-developed the course and provided needed structure and leadership skills.

In addition my sincere thanks to my thesis supervisor, Pat Shannon, who managed to cope with my unconventional manner and support me throughout this process.

Finally, I want to express an appreciation to all those who explored and developed the theories that provided the framework for the course development.
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Preface
This case study explores the “It’s All About U Leadership Course”. The course was developed for members of the Mataura Taskforce, a volunteer community development organisation. It is the story of what inspired the course, how it was delivered and evaluated.

As a long time member of the Mataura Taskforce I began to notice limiting thoughts and behaviours that appeared to contribute to a contracting rather than expanding organisation. The Taskforce had an excellent track record of producing community events, however, other activities and strategies were left wanting, and leaders were elusive. Economic development, Maori/Pakeha relationships and leadership were seen through the worldview of a half empty glass. “Things will never change.” and “We have tried that before” were common statements. The course was one way to provide opportunities for the Taskforce members to learn to see and operate with glass half full eyes becoming authentic leaders.

“It’s All About U’s” primary goal was to contribute to positive personal change through adopting a different perspective in relationship to confident leadership. The course was developed using an interactive trialectic framework of Theory U, Appreciative Inquiry, and Experiential Learning Theory. My goal was to weave the concepts and values of the theories into a fabric that maximized learning that contributed to change.

Andrae Gold and myself developed the course. Andrae was involved with the Mataura Taskforce as an adjunct to her position with Public Health South as a Mental Health Promoter. Because of issues brought to light by the Mataura Health Needs Assessment Andrae’s brief included supporting Mataura to find solutions to the issues. My contribution was self-supported.

“To be a good leader you must know yourself.” Scharmer
Chapter 1 Background and Context

Mataura and the Inception of the Mataura Taskforce

Mataura is a small rural community 13 Km south of Gore in Southland. At one time it was a vibrant, industrial centre around paper production and food processing, meat (Alliance Freezing Works) fibreboard manufacturing, and cheese. These industries stood alongside sheep and dairy farms.

Mataura Township’s commercial structure has been in decline as a result of the changes in local industry. On 18 August 2000 the Mataura Paper Mill was mothballed. In 1993 there were 230 people working at the mill and most wageworkers lived within the township. (Williams, 2000) The cheese factory had long been closed. As a consequence of the closings Mataura suffered an economic downturn. Currently Main Street is mainly uninhabited business space in poor repair. An overseas investor owns the majority of town centre properties. The only remaining industrial sites are the Alliance Freezing Works and Dongwa fibreboard factories, although Solid Energy is planning to build a coal briquette factory in the near future.

Data from the 2006 Census gave Mataura a high negative rating on the “deprivation index”. “The “deprivation index”, which is a measure of several socio-economic factors, show that Mataura is one of the most deprived areas of New Zealand. On a scale of 1 to 10, where decile 1 represents the least deprived area of the country, and decile 10 represents the most deprived areas. Mataura as a whole is decile 8. However there are several small areas (mesh blocks) within the town that are decile 9 and 10, the most deprived. Just over one third of the Mataura population lives in these most deprived areas.” (McKerchar 2008, p 24) Mataura School has a decile one rating which is another indicator of high deprivation. (School decile ratings where number one is the most deprived are opposite to community decile ratings with ten being the most deprived.)
Multiple Non Government Organisations (NGO’s), individuals, Government agencies and service groups were concerned about Matura’s future. People began to openly discuss issues and search for possible solutions. Deprivation is known to be closely correlated with poor health status. One strategy was to request a needs assessment of health and social issues. Public Health South was commissioned to organize a community health needs assessment.

In April 2008 results of the assessment were released. Thirty-six people were interviewed; most were Mataura residents. The key issues that the respondents identified is that Mataura is a complex community with many strengths and issues. Some of the identified strengths include: a friendly, positive relationship between residents, and strong community involvement in some organisations.

The assessment also noted other strengths. The local marae caters to a diverse Maori group and there is an active Kohanga reo operating in Mataura. The primary school is held in high esteem and is becoming a hub for the community; resources are available for children including parks and sport fields, a swimming pool, and library. Local churches operate children and youth programmes. There are considerable employment opportunities. The elderly of Mataura are well catered for with multiple activities and an active senior centre. Housing is reasonably priced with cheap rentals.

Some of the less positive issues are that attendance at some community groups (service clubs, churches) is dwindling and leaders are hard to find. There are too few activities that Maori individuals and families want to attend. Parent support for school activities is limited. Many five-year-old children are not school ready. Some families of shearsers and those who work on dairy farms move often which reduces stable education opportunities for the children. As a result of shift work some children miss school. Some children are exposed to family violence. Poverty is an issue for some children. There is not much for
teenagers to do in Mataura; there are few jobs available to them. Alcohol is an issue for youth and adults. There has been a high level of suicide. Many people are depressed. Although housing rents are low, business space is often unaffordable. Local industry caters to a transient work force. Many elderly are moving away to be closer to shops and services. There is no public transport to or from Mataura. Houses are often damp and cold with absentee landlords. Strategies for dealing with all of these issues were outlined within the report. Even with these issues the people living in Mataura are interested in living in a vibrant community. (McKerchar 2008)

One response to the Health Needs Assessment report was the Community Trust of Southland invitation to Bliss Browne from Imagine Chicago to facilitate a daylong community-planning workshop in Mataura. Bliss Browne is a social constructionist who applies Appreciative Inquiry principles to her practice and believes that if communities’ focus on what they value most they can make positive progress towards creating the things that they value. Community development is building on the assets that the community already has.

The entire Mataura community was invited to the planning day. The activities of the day included a performance by the Mataura School Kapa Haka group, Bliss talked briefly about community vision development, small groups worked together and a creative project cemented the lesson. Four special interest groups were generated from the process. They included arts and crafts, town logo, early childhood and economic development groups. At the end of the day each group made their own arrangements to meet.

Simultaneously, the Mataura Taskforce was being formed with assistance from Hokonui Horizons, a community development-networking group based in Gore. Additional public meetings were held and interest in supporting community development was gauged to be substantial.
Months later a Taskforce core group, with a representative from each special interest group was formed to manage funding issues and other strategic planning processes. Currently groups have expanded to include: early childhood education, community events, healthy lifestyles, exercise, transport, community garden and skateboard park groups. Most members of the groups are community volunteers. There is NGO support from Public Health South, Play Centre, and Community Networking Trust. The Gore and Districts Council and the Mataura Community Board provide support as well.

However, from my observation, one unintended consequence of the planning day was a fracturing of the volunteer base. Even though some volunteers participated in more than one group there was very little communication between groups and that caused considerable frustration for the Taskforce core group. Distrust and competition between groups became evident but was denied and unresolved. At times the groups worked at cross-purposes. Some groups were left out of the process. Some group leaders were struggling and other groups were leaderless.

In seeking to respond to this I observed that there was substantial fixed, habitual thinking about the community from some Taskforce members. “It has always been this way.” “We tried that before and it didn’t work.” “They will never change.” These statements were often heard at Taskforce meetings. This is exactly the type of thinking which Appreciative Inquiry and Theory U seeks to challenge and I thought it would be helpful to devise a way to increase the possibility that these statements could be abandoned or transformed into new thinking and positive statements. This goal became the basis of the approach to the course.

My goal for the course was to provide an opportunity for Taskforce members to examine the way they think and behave in relationship to leadership. I was not interested directly in making systematic changes
in the structural problems of the Taskforce but I hoped that individual personal change would be one of the outcomes that might impact Taskforce leadership culture. The course was developed using an interactive trialectic framework of Theory U (mind), Appreciative Inquiry (heart), and Experiential Learning Theory (body). My goal was to weave concepts and values of these theories and models into a fabric that maximized learning that contributed to personal change.

Praxis refers to the integration or realization of theory or ideas into practice. Scharmer, the founder of Theory U writes, “All real learning is grounded in real-world praxis. There are three kinds of praxis: professional praxis – striving for performance excellence; personal praxis – striving for self-leadership; and relational praxis – striving to improve the quality of thinking, conversing and acting together.” (Scharmer, C. 2009 p 225)

Even though my interest was in supporting the Taskforce, in order to have a substantial number of participants, the course was offered to anyone living in or near Mataura who attended the Bliss Browne planning day. The invitation was unintentionally vague in that cited the name of the course, logistic information and who was taking the course. It never occurred to me to add anything about course content. None of the participants requested more information about the content prior to the first session.
Joan and Andrae Invite you to Attend the Leadership Course

IT’S ALL ABOUT U

Starting Wednesday 21 Oct For
Eight weeks From 7:30 to 9:30

Mataura Community Centre

Please RSVP on
932 7650 (local call) or
jmhuling@woosh.co.nz
Andrae.Gold@phosouth.co.nz

Space limited to 10

Figure 1.1 Invitation to attend the course sent to local participants of the Bliss Browne Mataura planning day.
Eight middle-aged women (mid forties to early sixties) consented to attend. No men expressed interest although, they would have been welcomed to attend. One of the women was not able to attend the first two sessions so Andrae and I decided it would be to disruptive to group process and cohesion to keep a space open for her. After the first session one participant asked if her sister could attend even though she wasn’t affiliated with the Taskforce nor was she from Mataura. Because there was space available and she had missed only one week we decided it was appropriate to let her participate. I met with her prior to the second session to give her a journal and go over the material already covered. In the end she was one of the participants who demonstrated significant change during and after the course as observed by her, other participants and myself.

The participants’ leadership skill level was diverse. One manages a regional retail outlet; one had experience as a Mataura Community Board member and was a Gore and Districts Councilor. She is currently an in-home caregiver. A further participant works for a government agency in Gore, while another manages a Gore business. Yet another was a business owner and is currently a caregiver for two of her grandchildren. One is a supervisor at two different companies and one works at Mataura School. All have been parents and manage their households. Four were active volunteers with the Taskforce.

To reiterate, Andrae and my goals for the course were to empower positive personal change and increasing the participants’ leadership confidence.

Although Mataura has a high deprivation index with many issues it also has many strengths. Its residents have the capacity and desire to build a strong vibrant community as evidenced by the commitment of many residents to the vast and vary social options within the township. Currently there are many groups, clubs and individuals successfully operating within and for Mataura. The Mataura Taskforce was an
initiative formed by members of the community. The Taskforce was charged with providing opportunities to strengthen the community. The “It’s All About U Leadership Course” was initiated in response to leadership gaps within the Taskforce.

Social Logics
The course was designed within a trialectic, holistic, social logic. Kelly and Sewell describe five types of social logics: heuristic (evocation), binary (choice), dialectic (dialogue), synthetic (transformation) and trialectic (wholeness). (Kelly & Sewell. 1988) All logic types have their own strengths and weaknesses.

Heuristic logic gives simplistic definition to concepts for a particular point in time. For example there is a common understanding in New Zealand of the words, “yeh right”. Other examples include, “peace”, “love” and “justice”. The danger in this logic is that definitions do change over time, and they can become jargon. Its power lies in its ability to evoke a common understanding of a concept. (Kelly & Sewell. 1988)

Binary logic provides an opportunity to make a choice between two options, however, it limits nuance. “It is the logic most used and over-used.” (Kelly & Sewell. 1988. p 14) “To have to choose helps us make distinctions which are sometimes crucial: I am with you, not against you. I will be here, not there. Such statements are sometimes necessary.” (Kelly & Sewell. 1988. p 14) It is a useful yet limiting logic. Examples of binary logic are: yes/no, rich/poor, guilty/not guilty.

Dialectic logic allows for more complexity. It goes beyond binary logic adding dialogue to uncover nuance that may help make binary logic decisions. It is a relational logic in that it requires more than one-person engagements. It is not limited to a particular point in time. “Whilst dialectic logic frees up fixed thinking, and challenges the assumption that social realities are as fixed as our thinking, it can also
immobilize capacities for judgment, risk and initiative.” (Kelly & Sewell. 1988. p 17) As an example Kelly and Sewell writes, “In dialectic logic we see that there is peace in war and war in peace, and that we can make peace to make war and make war to make peace.” (Kelly & Sewell. 1988. p 16)

“Synthetic logic frees up our view of reality more than is possible in the binary or the dialectic.” (Kelly & Sewell. 1988. p 18) It is a type of logic that in fact is often called “dialectic” in the sense of Hegelian or Marxist thought, as the key lies in the transformation of contradictory positions into a new synthetic solution. It allows for the synthesis of ideas beyond the compromise capacity of dialectic logic, providing a platform for forward movement to a totally new approach. The dialectical triad of thesis, antithesis and synthesis are characteristics of synthetic logic. (Kelly & Sewell. 1988) An example can be seen in the current financial system as the thesis. The antithesis is the rejection of the system by the Occupy Wall Street 99% demonstrators. The synthesis is the movement to a new cooperative based system.

In contrast, trialectic logic does not have any “answers” but focuses on the interrelationship between three or more incomplete concepts each needing the other to make a whole. The concepts may be in themselves valuable but in order to accomplish a specific goal all are needed. There are multiple trialectic logics held within the course including the overall theoretical framework with the logic contained within some of the framework theories. The combination of Andrae, the participants and myself is again another example. The course would not have existed as delivered without all three components. “The trialectic adds to and expands a context in which we make judgments. Rather than posing a problem to be solved, it can change the way the problem is perceived.” (Kelly & Sewell. 1988. p 23)
Course Theoretical Framework

A trialectic framework of Appreciative Inquiry, Theory U and Experiential Learning Theory was the avenue that I took to design this course. I chose them because I had experience with all three and found them supportive of personal change. They fit my philosophical nature and point of view. As with the diagram below the integrity of the whole triangle is dependent on the three smaller framework components that are wrapped around the center triangle. Without the theoretical framework components there would be no course.

Appreciative Inquiry provided the positive philosophy that guided the course development, delivery and evaluation. Theory U provided the fundamental task framework, what needed to be done, and Experiential Learning Theory was the tool we used to execute the tasks.

Figure 1.2 The trialectic framework of Appreciative Inquiry, Theory U and Experiential Learning Theory used in the development of It’s All About U Leadership Course.
Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a strengths approach to reality based upon the view that what you appreciate, pay attention to, grows. “Human systems grow in the direction of their deepest and most frequent inquiries.” (Cooperrider, D. & Whitney, D. 2005. p. 9) It is also about recognizing achievements and accomplishments, with the understanding that when something has been done well in the past it is possible to do the same or better in the future. It is a tool for reframing questions and attitudes. Although Appreciative Inquiry was developed as a model for enhancing and strengthening positive organizational change the underlying values are pertinent to individual change opportunities as well.

The 4-D Cycle moves from Discover (What gives life), to Dream (What might be), through Design (Ways to create the ideal), ending in Deliver (The ideal).

![Appreciative Inquiry “4-D” Cycle](image)

Figure 1.3 Appreciative Inquiry “4-D” Cycle image. (Cooperrider, D., Whitney, D. & Stavros, J. 2008. p34)

Theory U

Theory U was designed to impact upon organizational change. It is one of many strengths based, social constructionist, positivity theories that have been developed to help enhance leadership and promote change. It contains its own trialectic logic of wholeness: open mind, open heart
and open will. C. Otto Scharmer, the originator, suggests that it may be time to develop deeper leadership patterns, departing from habitual processes, judgments and untested assumptions, to experiencing a blank canvas. Once the canvas is blank new possibilities are ripe for discovery. Theory U provides an infrastructure to turn a currently saturated canvas into a blank canvas and back into the “highest future possibility” canvas. This process is referred to as “letting go” and “letting come”. (Scharmer, 2009)

Theory U provides architecture for awareness of personal and social complexity. Examining personal beliefs, long held assumptions, habitual way of thinking and being, is proposed as a potent path (“letting go”) leading to greater understanding and tolerance of diverse views, ideas and projects and sustainability (“letting come”). The exigency is to accommodate shifts in perspective and perception towards the goal of competent leadership.

This is not an easy process and has multiple barriers. Participants are asked to change their perceptions in an evolution from “I-in-me” (habits), to “I-in-it” (open mind and senses) and “I-in you” (from the heart) to “I-in-now” (acknowledging highest future possibility). The voices of judgment, cynicism and fear are influential blocks to progression down the U. (Scharmer, 2009) As noted above, old rigid patterns of thinking were identified in the Mataura taskforce and the assertions of this theory seemed to hold potential to change them.
In general and specifically for the course, the ideal Theory U model starts on the left side of the U. The decent begins with personal awareness of thoughts and behaviours; individuals begin the journey to a curious “open mind” by suspending assumptions, habits, and judgments in order to uncover an “open heart” which in turn promotes an “open will” and “letting go”. The bottom of the U is space for integrating change, acknowledgement of self, and how to participate in the world in order to accommodate the journey to discovering the best possible future. Travelling up the right side of the U is no longer an individual adventure but the task at hand. “Letting come” is the proposition for this side of the journey beginning with an “open will” intention and vision to the future. Next, “open heart” prototyping experiments with ideas in order to manifest the best possible contribution. Ending with an “open mind” practicality in producing the desired outcome; the best possible future. (Scharmer, 2009) Certainly groups or organisations can explore the whole of the U together, possibly discovering groupthink and other barriers to the product of their ventures as previously discussed.
Because my primary interest is in working with individuals I have borrowed only the essence, or core values of the Theory U and Appreciative inquiry to incorporate into the course design. I did not employ the details of organisational change process in their complexity. However, this focus did lead onto the necessity for an appropriate and complimentary theory of course delivery.

While I did not consciously focus on or incorporate the 4-D Cycle organizational model in the course design; however, the cycle is similar to Theory U with parallel concepts employing different nomenclature. The starting and ending places for individuals are similar. Theory U’s “Letting go” phase is parallel to the Appreciative Inquiry discovery phase. The dream phase equals the presencing phase at the bottom of the U. The “letting come” phase is similar to the design and destiny phases.

**Experiential Learning Theory**

Experiential Learning Theory, as developed by David Kolb, is a consolidation and refinement of the learning models of Lewin, Dewey and Piaget. According to Kolb, “The fact that learning is a continuous process grounded in experience has important education implications.” (Kolb, 1984, p 27) The Theory describes a cycle of four learning phases: concrete experiencing (CE), reflective observation (RO), abstract conceptualization (AC) and active experimentation. (AE) These are in turn are charted onto a four-quadrant learning style grid: Accommodating (doing-experiencing, CE + AE), Diverging (experiencing-reflecting, CE + RO), Assimilating (reflecting-thinking, RO + AC) and Converging (thinking-doing, AC + AE). (Kolb, 2007) Most individuals express a preference towards one style. Our challenge was to be mindful of all styles. Kolb’s Theory gave us impetuous to include experiential learning opportunities throughout the course design to incorporate different learning style preferences that created apprenticeship opportunities.
Kolb’s model is not without issues. Smith argues points of contention with the model: reflection is not fully defined, the four styles are limiting and do not consider all situations, cultural differences are ignored, stages of the cycle hold too much emphasis rather than acknowledging that stages flow in and out, between and on top of one another, too few studies supporting the model and the process of knowing is undervalued. However, he admits that the model does have some positive standing as a planning guide. (Smith. 2001)

**Authentic Leadership**

The view of leadership that underlies the whole triad of leadership is that of Northouse’s “authentic leadership” as this viewpoint of leadership fits well with the philosophical values of Appreciative Inquiry, Theory U and experiential Learning Theory.

Northouse admits that there is no solid definition of Authentic Leadership in its complexity; however, he shares three viewpoints/definitions of authentic leadership – “intrapersonal, developmental and interpersonal” (Northouse, 2010 p 206-8)

The Intrapersonal viewpoint focuses on the leader as a leader.
Four characteristics have been assigned to this type of leader:
“Authentic leaders exhibit genuine leadership, authentic leaders lead from conviction, authentic leaders are original, not copies and authentic leaders base their actions on their values.” (Northouse, 2010. p 207)

The developmental viewpoint postulates that leadership is learned and developed over time with nurturing. There are four leadership components: “self-awareness, internalizes moral perspective, balanced processing and relational transparency.” (Northouse. 2010. p 207) I had a strong desire to facilitate this viewpoint during the course, not only teaching it but also modeling it to the best of my abilities. I found it useful to recount stories from my life that illustrated points I was trying to illuminate. I hoped that participants would be able to find stories in their lives to call upon when needed. Empowering self-awareness was one of the basic foundational values of the course.

The interpersonal viewpoint implies that leadership is a relational process. It calls for the inclusion of other viewpoint components as well as recognizing that change is more likely to occur if there is a relationship between leader and follower with the leader adapting to followers values in order to promote change. This does not mean that leaders abandon or compromise their values but they can be enhanced with ideas and values articulated by followers. It creates a partnership between leader and follower. (Northouse. 2010)

I have seen many leadership course agendas, many of them bereft of a “heart” component. These are often targeted toward the corporate or governmental workers. Theory U influences the self-awareness exploration of habitual thinking and behaviour,
judgments and assumptions in the area of an “open heart”. They do not ask participants to explore concepts beyond the agenda of skill development alone. The “open heart” paradigm extends to the right side of the U as well as the left, assisting in the development of the best possible future. The agendas that do have an “open heart” component appear to be targeted towards those who are already interested in self-awareness. An “open heart” is critical for developing authentic leaders.

Like many relatively new emergent theories, Northouse suggests that Authentic Leadership is not without concern. For example, there has been inadequate/limited research on its effectiveness on approaches and outcomes. This does not mean that the theory should be dismissed but rather used judiciously. (Northouse. 2010)

**Course Development Framework**

As part of my literature review I discovered Graves’s framework for course design. Graves follows a systems approach utilizing the following components: “defining the context, articulating beliefs, conceptualizing content, formulating goals and objectives, assessing needs, organizing the course, developing materials, and designing an assessment plan.” (Graves. 2000. p3)

Even though our course design was unconventional many of Graves’s components were actuated. In hindsight I found Graves course design framework helpful in assessing what was effective and what could have been improved in the process of developing the "It’s All About U” course. Although Graves writes for educators her framework is relevant for other disciplines. While the “It’s All About U” leadership course design did not consciously incorporated Graves’s framework it is relevant to the discussion as it was a guiding template and some
aspects were utilized and are a useful way to describe the course design seeking to implement the above theoretical positions.

Again, it is not a rigid framework that requires following a particular sequence. Developers can jump around within the cycle depending on the style of the developer, and emergent participant needs. In this instance use of the course framework was built around the deliberate building interaction and tension of the three way interactions between the two different facilitators and the participants. At the conceptual level of logics this involved the interaction of process and structure (the two facilitators) and the role of participation (course members). All this can be usefully analysed in terms of Graves’ steps that serve to structure the following discussion.

**Defining the Context**
This entire chapter is devoted to defining the context behind the development of the course.

**Articulating beliefs**
Initially I started to design the course alone. On reflection I decided that it was better practice to share the experience in order to combine complementary skills and varied styles of thinking and operating. Because there was a large self-exploration component to the course it was important for me to have someone there to help monitor participants’ reactions and step in if support was needed. I was also unsure of my capacity to design the whole product.

I chose Andrae to join the course development process because she was a committed member of the Taskforce, she had demonstrated leadership skills and she had a congenial connection to Taskforce members. She often brought structure to Taskforce meetings. I observed her demonstrate a desire to be inclusive and positive. Andrae was detail oriented. It was obvious to me that she enjoyed researching and learning.
A tension in relationship to beliefs was apparent between my co-developer, the participants and myself. Some beliefs converged where others diverged or were not articulated, remained implicit.

Andrae and I spent very little time discussing our values and beliefs related to leadership and specific course content and process. One area of divergence between Andrae and myself was her lack of familiarity with the theoretical framework I proposed. Andrae had not been introduced to Theory U prior to her commitment to join the development process. She supported basic Appreciative Inquiry principles but was not familiar with the concept as a whole. She valued experiential exercises and was prepared to add them to her sessions.

We differed in some other fundamental areas. Andrae designed from a micro point of view focusing on the details of leadership skills development, and I from a macro, focusing on the “big picture” essences of the theoretical framework. I disclosed personal stories to illustrate difficult concepts. Andrae did not. Her exercises were structured ones that shaped and directed participants to a greater extent than my open-ended ones.

Additionally, I was uncertain how to proceed with developing the second half, “letting come” phase of the course and needed help. I knew that I was strong in relationship development, intuiting frameworks, illustrations and exercises but I was weak in providing structure and detail. Andrae provided those areas of skill and knowledge.

**Conceptualising Content**

Graves proposes that recognizing participants’ needs and developers’ agendas are part of the process to provide an effective learning event. She suggests that by conceptualizing content flexibility in design can be incorporated. “Such a process can give you tools to manage and
adapt the syllabus as a resource rather than be governed by it.”
(Graves. 2000. p38)

Conceptualizing content provides a gateway to the subsequent components of Graves’s framework. It helps in the development of an organic, flexible course syllabus. The design of the “It's All About u” leadership course sought to avoid a mechanistic and “stage-ist” understanding. In all three models, Appreciative Inquiry, Theory U and Experiential Learning Theory, the journey through the cycles is flexible and often varied and out of order.

A theoretical framework was important to conceptualizing the course content. Appreciative Inquiry held the philosophic values behind the course: what you focus on grows. Theory U provided a structure to explore and enhance leadership values and skill development. The first half of Theory U comprises elements that support a more structured self-evaluation “letting go” process while the last half is more adept to emergent “letting come” process around creating new structures. In saying that, structure and emergent processes are appropriate for both sides of the U, however; in this case the former was more dominant. There was no question that we would be using experiential exercises to promote sustained learning of often-difficult concepts.

No other theories beyond Appreciative Inquiry, Theory U and Experiential Learning Theory were considered when planning the course syllabus. Initially, the theoretic framework came from my values and worldviews. Andrae accepted them as the framework and she conceptualised the second half of the course within the provided framework.
Needs Assessment

According to Graves, “Essentially, needs assessment is a systematic and ongoing process of gathering information about student’s needs and preferences, interpreting the information, and then making decisions based on the interpreting in order to meet the needs.” (Graves, 2000. p98)

There was an ongoing variance between Andrae and my approaches to a needs assessment partly based in the theories. Appreciative Inquiry values what participants' value and, in this connection Andrae advocated for a formal felt needs assessment either through a pre course survey or exploration of participants’ goals and objectives during the first and consequent sessions as needed. Andrae’s preferred assessment tool was the pre-designed Belbin Quiz which I was unfamiliar with. Andrae was interested in the individual needs of the participants. Expressed needs would be a way for her to reduce the vast pool of potential topics related to leadership.

The lack of a formal assessment caused considerable frustration for Andrae. She works professionally and is comfortable in a system where structure and evidence-based processes are the norm. Tried and true exercises were in her repertoire. In face of missing the opportunity to assess the needs she was able to adapt and plan according to emerging needs that she recognised arising from the process.

Andrae was reluctant to assertively advocate for a formal assessment process because she didn’t want to appear to be “taking over the course” and this was compatible with the shifting patterns of control and influence characteristic of a trialectic approach. Consequently she maintained a flexible syllabus often waiting to see what emerged before making plans for subsequent sessions.
My approach was to rely on my intuitive sense of potential universal needs and my belief in the power of Theory U to facilitate change. My syllabus was less flexible. Again, Theory U provided a path that I found beneficial for meeting universal needs around leadership as opposed to expressed needs. In the end we agreed to include time in the each session’s agenda for checking in (ongoing assessment) with participants to gather information on emerging needs.

Once again, as a Taskforce member, prior to the course I had not observed individuals’ engagement in “letting go” behaviours and some issues appeared “stuck”. These relationships, communication and belief issues got in the way of a better future for the Taskforce. They were concerned with practical matters possibly forgoing the best possible future by ignoring the barriers of unexplored individual’s assumptions, thoughts and behaviours that may have been getting in the way.

**Determining Goals and Objectives**

“Goals are a way of putting into words the main purpose and intended outcomes of your course.” (Graves. 2000. p75)

Because of my way of viewing life I rarely articulate goals and objectives; instead I feel them. Unfortunately, when working with a partner in developing a course this is not productive. More in line with Theory U I believed that the theoretic framework I chose would address any leadership skills development. I believed that there were universal skills in relation to becoming a conscious leader. These included an ability to acknowledge and examine limiting assumptions, habit and habitual thoughts, and reveal the quality of curiosity. I believed that any participant would be interested in exploring and developing their particular leadership qualities and discovering possible barriers to being an effective leader. Concrete skills development, i.e. communication, brainstorming, time management, etc., were important but secondary to providing the opportunity to examine personal beliefs, habits and
assumptions that either enhance or detract from leadership potential. It was also my observation that when participants were asked to express their needs they were often reluctant or unable to respond. This proved true throughout the course.

Graves advocates for a conscious, formal but flexible strategy for formulating goals and objectives. Goals being the “vision and priorities” and reflect future outputs and outcomes. She describes objectives as; “The objectives are the different points you pass through on the journey to the destination.” (Graves, 2000 p 75)

Consequently, the course was designed to disrupt participants’ continuity and predictability of habitual thought and behavior related to leadership in order to consider new possibilities. It was also designed to acknowledge current skills that may have been unrecognized and to challenge exploration and experimentation on less preferred preferences.

The Learning Styles Inventory, an offshoot of Experiential Learning Theory, can provide a glimpse into the way people learn and the lens through which they view the world. Once people are aware of their own style they can consider experimenting with other less preferential styles and possibly gain tolerance for others with different styles. To reinforce Smith’s above-mentioned critique the Inventory provides a sensitizing device rather than a rigid recipe.

Andrae contributed to goals and objectives by suggesting that we considering formalizing and articulating them. She did this through adding learning outcomes to each session. This suggestion shifted my thinking and helped add structure to the process. We further formalized our working agenda to include purpose, process and learning outcomes.
Developing Materials
The process of developing materials is to support the advancement of the goals and objectives of the course. As stated earlier, the overall structure of the course was that of “letting go” in the first half (with me as primary facilitator) and “letting come” (with Andrae as primary facilitator). Experiential exercises were the focal point of each session.

I intuitively designed all of the experiential activities in the first half of the course. They came from a combination of prior skills, knowledge, and knowing and were related to expanding personal awareness.

It was my intent to provide opportunities for participants to become mindful. “Mindfulness is a state which an individual: 1. Focuses in present and direct experience, 2. Is intentionally aware and attentive, 3. Accepts life as an emergent process of change.” (Yeganeh & Kolb, 2009, p14) Mindfulness assists people to traverse the learning styles to enhance usability. Mindfulness works in concert with experiential earning.

In the second half of the course, Andre chose materials and activities related to skill building and group dynamics that she had used before and were commonly recognized as being effective in teaching leadership skills.

We both found pertinent quotes related to each session’s lessons as well as supporting resource materials.

Designing an Assessment Plan
Again the theme of flexibility and revisiting items over time is evident in Graves discussion related to assessment. She provides a three pronged approach including assessing needs learning and evaluating the course. (Graves. 2000) Assessing needs has already been discussed.
Andrae was effective in her advocacy for a built in assessment process for each session. We put it in terms of “Evidence of Learning” as a way to articulate what we expected to be demonstratable learning.

We asked the participants to journal an evaluation after each session. We thought it would be helpful in reflecting immediate thoughts that may easily be lost over time.

Even though we met briefly after each session to debrief Andrae and I did not plan for a formal evaluation of the course. We did, however, informally built in tools to accomplish a recognition of outcomes.

**Consideration of resources and constraints**

Although not one of her components to course design, Graves does recognise the need to be aware of resources and constraints. We were fortunate to have few outside limitations or constraints on development. There was no one to be accountable to other than the participants. My time was donated and Andrae had the support of her employer during process and delivery phases. We were able to offer the course to the participants free of charge. Both Andrae and I donated our time, supplies and materials used during the sessions.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

The traditional literature in terms of a theoretical review as the underlying rationale for the construction and design of the course is reviewed in Chapter 1. This chapter reviews literature on leadership, as it was the overall focus to the task of the course.

There is agreement among scholars that the leadership models of the past are evolving and new ones are emerging in response to world crisis and changing demands, be it with governmental, business, or grass roots advocates.

Authentic leadership is a model that is being designed and molded to capture a new way out of the current leadership struggles and theoretical concepts have been borrowed to add value to the authentic leadership dialogue. “To develop a theory of authentic leadership, researchers drew from the fields of leadership, positive organizational scholarship, and ethics.” (Northouse. 2010. p217)

This review of authentic leadership literature will begin with the exploration of authenticity. Goldman et al writes, “In our view, authenticity can be defined generally as the unobstructed operation of one’s true or core self in one’s daily enterprise. More specifically, it involves the following components: awareness, unbiased processing, behaviour and relational orientation.” (Goldman, B. & Kernis, M. 2002. p3) They recognise that there are costs and benefits to each aspect. Authenticity is not always easy or possible. (Kernis & Goldman. 2004)

Awareness is the capacity for a person to acknowledge their whole self, including positive and negative attributes. The benefit of awareness, if open to receiving it, is a plethora of information, previously hidden, that a person can call upon to cope in life’s situations. Additionally, they are aware of and can cope with their lives, at times, being in contradiction of the four components even when operating authentically in one or more. (Kernis & Goldman. 2004)
Kernis & Goldman (2004) site four possible costs of awareness. First, a person might not like what they discover, for example acknowledging a lack of skill in an area of perceived importance or an inability to relate to others on one level or another. Second, awareness may bring about powerful emotions that are difficult to deal with. Third, powerful or difficult self-reflection can evoke unpleasant affect. And fourth, if a person’s self-concept has multiple strands it can cause confusion. (Kernis & Goldman. 2004)

Kernis and Goldman (2004) suggest that mindfulness is one of the tools that can be used to enhance the capacity for awareness. As previously stated in Chapter 1, one definition of mindfulness is, “Mindfulness is a state which an individual: 1. Focuses in present and direct experience, 2. Is intentionally aware and attentive, 3. Accepts life as an emergent process of change.” (Yeganeh & Kolb, 2009. p14)

Although their (Bishop, S., Lau, M., Shapiro, S., Carlson, L., Anderson, N., Carmody, J., Segal,Z., Abbey, S., Speca, M., Velting, D. & Devins, G. 2004.) paper is focused on the effects that meditative mindfulness (as opposed to concentration meditation) can have on troubled individuals and how to test the efficacy of their definition. “In summary, we see mindfulness as a process of regulating attention in order to bring a quality of nonelaborative awareness to current experiences and a quality of relating to one’s experience within an orientation of curiosity, experiential openness and acceptance.” (Bishop. et al. 2004. p234) They add that it is contingent on present experiences, being in the moment. They are clear to point out that being mindful is not a replacement for thinking, but rather an opportunity to be observant without making judgments. I found their definition to be helpful in addition to previously mentions Yaganeh and Kolb’s (2009).

“Empirical research conducted to-date supports the role of mindfulness in well-being.” (Brown, K., Ryan, R. & Creswell, J. 2007. p220) This statement supports considering mindfulness as a practice tool when
discussing authenticity since being authentic increases well-being. However, there are barriers to mindfulness include ruminations, multitasking and preoccupation with issues away from the moment, compulsiveness, a defense against unwanted thoughts. (Brown, K. & Ryan, R. 2003)

Mindfulness fits in well with Theory U concepts. The following quote reiterates some of Theory U’s agenda. Ryan & Brown write, “Mindfulness may be important in disengaging individuals from automatic thoughts, habits and unhealthy behaviours patterns and thus could play a key role in fostering informed and self-endorsed behavioral regulation, which has long been associated with well-being enhancement.” (Brown & Ryan 2003. p823) This statement is congruent with the Theory U concept of “letting go”.

Unbiased processing refers; again, to recognising and accepting that there are negative and positive aspects to a person’s self-assessment of their life’s circumstances. Research suggests that there appears to be a correlation between autonomy, self-determination and a person’s ability to not distort their self-concept. People with reactive verses reflective personalities are more prone to distortions. The major benefit for unbiased processing is the ability to make life choices that are contemplated rather than reactionary. Kernis wrote, “People who possess fragile self-esteem (defensive, contingent or unstable self-esteem) might be particularly susceptible to a blockage of this authenticity component.” (Kernis & Goldman. 2004)

Behaviour authenticity is a difficult component. It may take courage to manifest because a person’s truth may not coincide with the environment they are relating to. This is a case where some authentic components may be operating while expressed authentic behaviour is missing due to any number of reasons. If the person is aware of this compromise then they are more likely to maintain a sense of well being, forging rumination or recrimination. Those who are overly concerned
about what others think of them may find it difficult to demonstrate behaviour authenticity. (Kernis & Goldman. 2004)

When a person has a secure, stable attachment style they are more able to have positive relational authenticity. They want strong, intimate, true relationships where they can be true to themselves and let others be true to them. Diener and Diener write, “Healthy personal relationships are a very strong predictor of happiness.” (Kernis & Goldman. 2004. p45) Without relational authenticity people may be defensive in their relationships, and miss the experience of intimacy. Success is strengthened when both persons in a relationship express relational authenticity. (Kernis & Goldman. 2004)

The journey towards authenticity may be difficult at times but worth the effort in that an enhanced sense of well-being is one of the rewards. Like most social constructionist models the definition of authentic leadership is emerging over time as new information, research and insights become available. Authentic Leadership is in its formative phase.

Authentic leadership is a process utilizing the components of authenticity addressed earlier. Avolio, B., Gardner, W., Walumbwa, F., Luthans, F & May, D. (2004) suggest that authentic leadership provides a foundation for as opposed to a style of leadership. Authentic leaders can lead from any number of styles. Northouse (2010) relays Walumbwa defines authentic leadership as “a pattern of leader behaviour that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and appositive ethical climate to foster greater self-awareness, an internalize moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development.” (Northouse. 2010. p216) The capacities of confidence, hope, optimism and resilience were noticeable behaviours that help define what could be expected in an authentic leader. (Northouse. 2010)
Apart from Walumbwa’s definition, not surprisingly, there appears to be no consistent definition of authentic leadership however there are components that researches agree upon. Northouse’s components are: “self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing and relational transparency.” (Northouse. 2010. p217)

“Authentic leaders demonstrate a passion for their purpose, practice their values consistently, and lead with their hearts. They establish long-term, meaningful relationships and have the self-discipline to get results. They know who they are.” (George, B., Sims, P., McLean, A & Mayer, D. 2007. p99) They also wrote, “There is no way you can adopt someone else’s purpose and still be an authentic leader.” (George. 2003. p101)


George et al. (2007) were interested in how people become authentic leaders. They interviewed a variety of leaders and discovered that, “Authentic leaders demonstrate a passion for their purpose, practice their values consistently, and lead with their hearts as well as their heads. They establish long term, meaningful relationships and have the self-discipline to get results. They know who they are.” (George et al. 2007. p99) Those interviewed were also more cognizant of how their life-stories had impacted their capacity to lead. “First and most important, they frame their life stories in ways that allow them to see themselves not as passive observers of their lives but rather as
individuals who can develop self-awareness from their experiences.” (George et al. 2007. p100)

Being authentic is being true to yourself from a social constructionist point of view. Cultures and societies define authenticity based on their perceptions of the truth that may or may not coincide with other cultures or societies. Being an authentic leader is a personal endeavor woven amongst relationships.

Positive self-awareness is a life long process that matures over time and as a result of life experiences. It is flexible (expanding/contracting) yet grounded in strong, clear moral values that are resilient to outside pressures. Balanced processing is tantamount to self-regulation. It is a willingness to explore the self in its entirety, positive and negative attributes with the potential for chance (if required and appropriate) when attributes are acknowledged. It is also the ability to analyse options and being open to contrasting ideas without abandoning moral values. Finally, leaders do not operate in a vacuum. There must be followers. Being able to display the whole of who you are to followers is critical. Even though he argues these points he also recognises that the research and evidence of effectiveness is too limited to be definitive. (Northouse. 2010)

Ilies, et al. (2005) reiterate that leadership skills arise out of life experiences and narrative is the vessel for exploring the meaning behind them. They also advocate for authentic leaders to build and nurture a strong support system to help maintain their commitment.

Sparrowe (2005), as well, writes that self-awareness and values are dynamic concepts encompassed within narrative. Sparrowe credits Ricoeur’s writings related to narrative for his assessment. “Narrative recounts how the values and purposes of a person changes through time and events, yet they remain the values and purposes of the same individual.” (Sparrowe, R. 2005) Again, authentic leadership does not
happen in a vacuum. It requires relationships with self and others in order to express. Leaders find new ways or nuances to their values and purposes through interaction, overt or covert with others. Leadership is not static yet basic values are consistent and recognisable to others.

A paradigm shift in required leadership skills and responsibilities is growing according to Clawson. (Clawson, J. 2009) His focus is on organisational change but his ideas not withstanding have value when speaking of leadership within any context. He does not identify authentic leadership as the paradigm of the future but he does share component values with writers who do espouse authentic leadership. He sees future leaders as systems thinkers who respect those following. Although not explicitly stated, transparency is one of the emerging components. He suggests that it behooves current and new leaders to pay attention to the changing paradigm if they want to succeed. (Clawson. 2009)

Despite not speaking specifically about authentic leadership, Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick remind us, “Although a sound model (leadership) is important, just like sound strategy is, it is how it is implemented that makes all the difference.” (Kirkpatrick, D. & Kirkpatrick, J. 2005. p32)

Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick focus on the potential sense of well being attributed to the relationship between leader and follower. Specific characteristic of authentic leadership can be identified and in doing so those who display said characteristics could be targeted for leadership roles within an organisation to enhance capacity for authentic leadership. (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick. 2005.) Ilies at al offers multiple propositions that may occur when authentic leaders lead. For example: modeling authentic leadership behaviour begets followers who are authentic, followers of authentic leaders have a stronger connection with the leader and organisation, authentic leaders have a more
accurate understanding of feedback and motivation is increased. (Ilies, et al. 2005) Authentic leadership is contagious.

Being an authentic leader is not easy. A clear, articulable sense of values with enough “wiggle” room to sustain followers is necessary. Allowing the self to be vulnerable to others can be difficult to sustain. It takes a commitment to and acceptance of the responsibility to become an authentic leader. Fortunately people can learn to become authentic leaders.

Although my literature search was not exhaustive, I did not find material related to how different cultures manifest authentic leadership, if they do at all. I am curious about how non-western, collective centered cultures fare with the promotion of self-awareness and other authentic leadership components. Is it a western society construct or universal? I wonder how Maori individuals, if brought up in a traditional Maori environment where the collective is paramount, respond to self-awareness concepts. Is authentic leadership congruent within all cultural contexts? Perhaps it is a question waiting to be researched.

Avolio and Gardner state, “We agree that authentic leadership development involves complex processes, and that it is unlikely to be achieved simply through a training program.” (Avolio & Garner. 2005. p 322) If that is the case why are leadership courses and training programs developed and presented? What is the purpose? Why do people attend? Whether it is a pragmatic desire, promoting professional advancement or altruistic, wanting a better world, people hunger for the opportunity to learn modern leadership skills for the modern world.
Chapter 3 Methods
The main goals of this study are the evaluation of course design and process efficacy as well as examine the theoretical framework. It is assessed through the holistic model of body, heart and mind.

I chose to use a qualitative, descriptive case study design method to assess the “It’s All About U” leadership course. “Qualitative analysis is conducted with data that are not easily represented by numbers. For example, anecdotal experiences, stories, observational data, and ethnographic data, to name a few, are best analyzed and presented in textual form, rather than attempting to reduce the observations to numerical data and subjecting them to statistical analysis.” (Paulen, C. & Dailey, 2002. p23)

The case study was an attempt to combine summative and formative evaluation as a holistic approach to the evaluation. Summative evaluation method attempts to measure change, determine if change happened and what factors contributed to the change. It is a way to assess the effectiveness of a process that is being evaluated. Although summative method is often used in quantitative research it does share processes with qualitative research by way of examining similar factors but in different ways. For example, results or story mapping as a summative evaluation is one strategy to evaluate anecdotal evidence in a qualitative process.

Formative evaluation focuses on process. It can be used to assess the delivery of a programme. Usually processes are considered throughout a project but in the case of this project the formal formative evaluation was conducted after the fact not during the process. However we were cognizant of processes that were or were not working well during course delivery and made accommodating changes.
Course Evaluation Process
Donald and James Kirkpatrick’s provision of four evaluation levels was a helpful guide for this evaluation. His four levels are: reaction (Level 1), learning (Level 2), behavior (Level 3) and results (Level 4), each with their own evaluation guidelines. “The four levels serve more than the obvious purpose of evaluating training after the fact; they are a great model for developing programs.” (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick. 2005, p 8) These levels can be used for both outcome and process evaluations. These levels alongside Kathleen Graves’s framework give rise to appropriate and increased probable positive design and subsequent evaluation.

Research Design
The first three Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick levels were assessed in relationship to the individual participants. We planned for participants to record their reactions (Level 1) of the weekly session in their journal. Evaluation time was given at the end of each session to accomplish this goal. Reviewing the journals was a component of the evaluation process. Reaction was also monitored by attendance. Learning (Level 2) was assessed through open-ended interviews. Behaviour (Level 3) was determined by self-evaluation peer evaluation and facilitator observation. This was accomplished mainly through the interview process and journal review. Results (Level 4) were explored as a whole, including the design and delivery of the course.

Data was gathered using the following methods: participant engagement planning, one to one interviews, reviewing journals, exploring Learning Style Inventories, and holding a focus group meeting.

Participant Engagement Sample
As previously stated, the sample was a group of seven women who responded to an invitation to attending the course. Most were from Mataura and some were members of the Mataura Taskforce. Initially I
intended to engage participants into the evaluation process through a Likert Scale Survey. Since the course ended almost two years ago one of the survey goals was to remind participants of concepts and learnings. It was also a mechanism to prioritize concepts for future course delivery and generate data on process. The scale was revised many times but upon reflection the survey morphed into a yes/no questionnaire. Eventually that too was abandoned altogether in favour of an invitation, in the form of a flyer, to participate in the evaluation process. This was in tune with the course ethos of informality and to provided an opportunity for one of the participants to engage in designing the invitation.

She used her journal entries to inspire the translation of concepts into a pictorial summation. In her design she inadvertently changed the “U” in “It’s All About U” to “You”. At first I asked her to change it back but upon reflection I decided that it was appropriate to retain the change because the evaluation was, after all, about participants’ perceptions about the course. One of the dilemmas that I encountered was a "perceived power" relationship with this woman. As she is professional graphic artist she found it difficult to divorce herself from the client-professional relationship. She wanted direction from me to design the product and I wanted her to develop it from her understanding and reaction to the course with little input from me. Looking back I can understand her reluctance due to mixed messages. On the one hand I asked her to replace the “you” and on the other hand I asked her to make it her design. As soon as I let go of my ambiguity and accepted the “you” she was able to produce the end product.

Even though both Andrae and I would have liked to have a more participatory evaluation design it was difficult to engage participants, as they were not easily available. Perhaps this was because of the long time lag between the end of the course and the busy lives of the participants. Ideally the evaluation would have taken place soon after the end of the course but with enough time for application and reflection
on learnings. Unfortunately both Andrae and I physically left the area for an extended period and we had not built time into our process for a formal evaluation.

Participatory evaluation is one of the tenants of an appreciative inquiry evaluation process. Through the evaluation process “…participants learn and grow together through asking questions, reflection and dialogue. Stakeholders’ engagement in the inquiry process allows them to co-construct new meanings, which in turn creates a greater level of understanding about themselves, each other, and the focus of the inquiry.” (Preskill & Catsambas. 2006. p45) It is democratic, respects storytelling as a form of data collection, and is a whole-systems approach. (Preskill & Catsambas. 2006)

**Interviews**

The interview questions focused on gathering data related to content, process and sustained learning. All four elements of Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick’s model: reaction, learning, behaviour, and results were expected to be uncovered. The interviews were informal open-ended and not scripted in detail but followed the interests of the participants. We wanted the participants to tell the story of what they thought and felt about the course.

**Journals**

Participants received a blank journal for their use during the course along with a short brief on journal writing. We anticipated that participants would use the journal to record impressions, new ideas and an evaluation of each session. It was one of the “parallel learning structures” of the course. (Scharmer. 2009. p 226)

Each week participants were given a light bulb graphic as an evaluation tool. The light bulb was a symbol to reflect the degree of light they had to shine that week. Inspiration to use the light bulb came from the Marianne Williamson quote. “Our deepest fear is not that we are
inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.” (Williamson. 1992. p190)

**Focus Group Planning**

Andrae and I had two focus group planning meetings. I wanted to give Andrae an opportunity to have a stronger voice in planning for the meeting without giving away my responsibility for the evaluation. During the first meeting she appeared reluctant to add much to the structure. She said she would like to make the evening light and fun for the participants. She suggested that we might do something with coloured hats to replicate a De Bono’s Six Learning Hat exercise she facilitated during the course. The focus group plan included time for check-in, pressing or lingering matters, expectations for the evening, questions or comments on the interview data report that was sent with details about the focus group meeting.

The second meeting was to finalize the agenda and assigned segments for the evening. After the check in process we would both recount a brief outline of the sessions that we facilitated and I would report on the findings from the collective Learning Style Inventory. Finally we would ask participants to discuss three questions: What is leadership? What aspects of leadership do you do well? What aspects of leadership do you want to learn more about?
I chose to use an inductively themed analysis process in order to establish links between the goals and outcomes of the course. “The primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, significant inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies.” (Thomas, D. 2003. p2) In the case of my project the analysis process was manipulated by the overall interview process. Even though the interview questions were not standard for each participant they did follow a predetermined thematic agenda which influenced the analysis.
Chapter 4 Weekly Course Session Content and Process

This chapter describes the session’s content and process week by week. Each week begins with some of the quotes that were provided to the participants for that session. I was the primary facilitator for the first four sessions and Andrae was the primary facilitator for the last four sessions. Again, the sessions were designed to follow the U down to “letting go” and up to “letting come”.

Developing a Course Culture

Early in the first session time was spent getting to know one another and starting the infusion of group culture norms. A standard yet flexible session structure was designed to accommodate a safe, informal learning environment and care was taken to provide a comfortable venue. This was essential in order to provide a starting point of the Theory U process of “letting go”. The participants drafted group process guidelines to be reviewed at the beginning of each session.

One tool for creating a sense of a cohesive weekly routine was to display relevant quotes each week. They were posted on the wall. Most participants appreciated them. Another process that we used to enhance group ownership and increase participation was to offer volunteer leadership opportunities for some sessions. Details of opportunities were provided prior to the facilitated session. The volunteer opportunities were: facilitating and scribing a brainstorm session, facilitating the group check-in at the beginning of a session, and planning a mid course “blank canvas” celebration.

Each participant was given a blank journal at the first session. They were free to use them in any way they found helpful. However, we asked them to use the last few minutes of each session to write an evaluation of the session in their journal. Most found this difficult because they were not sure of what to write.
Ethics, Consents and Data Storage

An application to the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee for Ethical Approval of a Research or Teaching Proposal involving Human Participants was approved for this project. The pertinent forms are provided in the appendix.

Consent forms were signed by each of the participants. The original forms as well as recoded interviews are archived within Otago University.
“A leader is best when people barely know he exists, not so good when people obey and acclaim him, worse when they despise him. But a good leader, who talks little, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.” Lao-Tzu

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.” John Quincy Adams

“Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it.” Dwight Eisenhower

“When leaders take back power, when they act as heroes and saviours, they end up exhausted, overwhelmed and deeply stressed.” Margaret J Wheatley
WEEK ONE
The focus for week one was participant introductions, introduction to Theory U, group culture development, and exploring the participants’ sense of self through a self-portrait as a leader.

We wanted to initiate a session structure that was flexible yet sturdy enough to inspire trust and confidence. We had an arranged sequence agenda that we planned to follow each session. We began with a brief check-in time where parked questions from previous sessions could be answered or concepts clarified. The middle of each session was composed of an experiential exercise and brief explanation and discussion of the focus concept. The session was reviewed after this was complete. Finally time was given to journal impressions and an evaluation of the session.

The benefits of journaling, and brainstorming process, uses and potential were introduced this session.

The exercise for the session was for participants to create a self-portrait, (Figure 4.1) as they believed that they are as a leader. Any medium could be used i.e. collage, drawing, poetry, doodles, stories etc. Supplies were provided.

Each session had an evidence of learning expectation. The expectation for this session was: At the conclusion of the course would participants change their self-portrait to reflect themselves as a leader?
Figure 4.1 Leadership self-portrait created by one of the course participants.
“If you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always gotten.” Anthony Robbins

“I did study the art of being a barber because I wanted to figure out what my routine would be. Do you start in the front or back? Top or bottom? Swivel the chair or walk around? What I did discover is there’s no such thing as the perfect haircut.” Sean Patrick Thomas

“To be curious about that which is not one’s concern while still ignorant of oneself is ridiculous.” Plato

“I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious.” Albert Einstein
WEEK TWO
Continuing down the U on the way to “letting go” this week’s focus was on habitual thinking, routine, curiosity and the reflective best self. Brainstorming was the demonstrated skill-building topic. Checking in, any questions or concerns followed last week’s ritual.

Like assumptions, habits can be either beneficial or limiting; conscious or unconscious. Habits helps up get through life with manageable effort. If we had to plan in advance every action nothing would get accomplished.

A brief on the benefits and difficulties with habit and routine was introduced. Curiosity was discussed and encouraged as a tool for forgoing habits that are counterproductive. Curiosity can pave the way for unconscious habits to become conscious, and curiosity can guide the search for new ways of being and thinking.

However, change is not easy. I used an onion to illustrate the complexity and difficulty awareness based change is. Once a layer is exposed and removed another replaces it. Often tears are associated with peeling the layers; in the end the effort is worth it. When one onion is peeled another full bag of unpeeled onions may appear.

The exercise for this session was meant to demonstrate how curiosity could lead to new understandings about themselves. Participants were asked to answer the following questions about someone they don’t know but admire:

1. What things do you imagine are most important to this person? List as many as you can think of.
2. What do you imagine this person thinks about?
3. How do you imagine this person feels about themselves?

After the questions were answered the participants were asked if their answers could reflect aspects of their personality. They were asked to circle the answers that they don’t believe fit their impression of
themselves. Participants shared their answers with each other and whether they believed they fit or not. Often the group confirmed the aspects of each other’s personality that individuals denied.

Evidence of learning from the exercise: Has the circled aspect become more believable over time?

Participants were introduced to the concept of reflective best self followed by a brief discussion and handout.

The leadership skill for the session was Brainstorming. Following on from the last week’s introduction two participants volunteered to facilitate the process. The question they brainstormed was: What are your beliefs about Mataura?

The volunteer leadership opportunity for next session was facilitating the check in process.

The session ended with journaling time and participant farewells.
Figure 4.2 Sample of how the light bulb was used by one participant.
“Begin challenging your own assumptions. Your assumptions are your window on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while, or the light won’t come in.” Alan Alda

“Most of our assumptions have outlived their uselessness.” Marshall McLuhan

“We simply assume that the way we see things is the way they really are or the way they should be. And our attitudes and behaviours grow out of these assumptions.” Stephen Covey

“The lease questioned assumptions are often the most questionable.” Paul Broca
WEEK THREE

One of the participants volunteered to facilitate the check in process. She came prepared with an agenda including a quote to add to the inventory, ”Treat every day as your masterpiece.”

In this session we defined and explored assumptions in order to broaden perspectives and enhance leadership capacity.

Hammond and Mayfield write, “Assumptions create a template through which we view the world.” (Hammond, S, & Mayfield, A. 2004.p 34) They have a similar “letting go” and “letting come” Theory U type philosophy. Successful organizations uncover assumptions in order to discover new and better ways of doing and creating things.

Assumptions can have a positive purpose in that they can help individuals and organizations maintain a common vision however, they can also keep us stuck in old patterns of belief; many remain untested. Often they are unconscious, unspoken and can be limiting and fixed. A goal of this session was to help participants identify assumptions and how to make them conscious. I believe that increased knowledge is one tool to become aware of assumptions. The exercise used during this session demonstrated this belief.

I used balls of various sizes and a chair to illustrate how increased knowledge can have an impact on unveiling assumptions, both positive and negative. A chair was the item to be explored by the balls. The smallest ball (Jaffa) was only able to perceive the chair as a chair. The next size ball defined the chair as big, brown chair. A bigger ball represented increased knowledge; a big, brown, comfortable chair; the biggest ball had increased capacity to recognise the environment beyond the chair; a big, brown, comfortable, that reminds me of my best friend who likes to sit in the sun. I chose to use a ball for a metaphor because it has a large surface area for exploration, knowledge and understanding, and it can be turned so different facets are visible. I
chose a chair because it was handy. (The participants enjoyed snacking on the Jaffa’s) A discussion connecting the demonstration with assumption concepts unfolded.

Items from last weeks brainstorming session were prioritized. The number one belief about Mataura was that there was a lack of connection and understanding between the Maori and Pakeha communities. We parked this topic until next week when it would be expanded and explored more deeply.

The leadership opportunity for the next session was to plan a celebration for last half the session. It was time to celebrate the transition from “letting go “ to “letting come” with a “bank canvas” theme. The two sisters volunteered to do the party planning and facilitating.
“We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned, so as to accept the life that is waiting for us.” Joseph Campbell

“Some think it’s holding on that makes one strong; sometimes it’s letting go” Sylvia Robinson

“All the art of living lies in a fine mingling of letting go and holding on.” Havelock Ellis

“As I start to picture trees in the storm, the answer begins to dawn on me. The trees in the storm don’t try to stand up straight and tall and erect. They allow themselves to bend and be blown with the wind. They understand the power of letting go. Those trees and those branches that try too hard to stand up strong and straight are the ones that break. Now is not the time for you to be strong, Julia, or you, too, will break.” Julia Butterfly Hill
WEEK FOUR:
The course venue for this session was overbooked and one of the participants volunteered her family’s home for the meeting. The move mirrored the topic of letting go and moving forward with minimal fuss and bother to a perfect outcome.

The first half of the session was spent on the usual ritual check in followed by a discussion, and learning some helpful hints and strategies for letting go. A brief explanation of Appreciative Inquiry values was next. Then we returned to the brainstorming topic of Maori/Pakeha relationships. We asked the participants to use the Appreciative Inquiry model (glass half full, not half empty) to recall a time when they felt that they were positively engaged with Maori/Pakeha. Looking at the entire experience recall a time when they felt most alive, most involved and most excited about their involvement. What made it an exciting experience? Who was involved? They were asked to describe the event in detail. What skills did they have to help with the engagement? What values? Finally, if they had three wishes that they could make to strengthen Maori/Pakeha relationships in Mataura what would they be?"

The second half of the session was devoted to celebrating the “letting go” phase of the course and transitioning to the “letting come” phase. Two participants were charged with planning the celebration. They brought wrapped gifts for each participant. Upon opening them we discovered that the gifts represented, reflected, some leadership aspect of the receiver. Each gift was delivered with honor and received with delight. A cake special made for the celebration was enjoyed along with congenial chatter and laughter.
“Don’t find fault, find a remedy.”  Henry Ford

“The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.”  Winston Churchill

“In every difficult situation is potential value. Believe this, then begin looking for it.”  Norman Vincent Peale

“It’s not what happens that counts – it’s how we respond to what happens that counts.”  Source unknown
WEEK FIVE

Andrae took over the main facilitator role for this session. She spent some time giving gifts from the prior session to the two participants who missed the celebration and for the two volunteer party planners. After which she facilitated the normal opening routine.

Andrae used the “Ladder of Inference” as a tool to consolidate the learning from previous sessions.

Last week the women were asked to prioritize the three wishes in relationship to Maori/Pakeha relationships. The wish with the highest priority was a longing for Maori and Pakeha to be united. The exercise used to deepen understanding about this longing was DeBono’s Six Thinking Hats. Each woman was given a coloured hat and was instructed to think about the wish from the hat’s point of view. A discussion followed. The participants were exposed to new ways of thinking through this exercise.

Theory U suggests that the way in which we attend to a situation determines how a situation unfolds: “I attend this way, therefore it emerges this way.” (Scharmer. 2009. p13) Group discussion was held regarding this statement combined with their hat experience.

We explored how different styles of communication have different results. Knowing how you communicate is as vital as what you communicate. They were asked, How can you be positive and constructive when you are communicating? What listening skills do you consider to be important? What is un-helpful?

One woman found the exercise helpful. She wrote in her journal, “The hat session was premo. It made you realise that there are a lot of ways to achieve the end results.”
Ball and bucket exercise

This exercise was developed to demonstrate the power of communication in its complexity.

- Find yourself a partner; decide who is number one and who is number two.
- Number one sits on the chair with the bucket behind her. Number two stands in front of the person on the chair. Number one to try and throw the ball into the bucket without any input from number two. How did it feel for both people? Overlooked, disregarded, powerless, intimidated, etc.? What did that feel like, what could have made it easier/ a better experience?
- Second attempt: Number one has balls, number two provides directions for number one to throw the ball over her head into the bucket. How was it? How could it have been improved?
- Third attempt: Number one tries again with positive encouragement and enthusiasm from number two. How did that feel for the thrower? How did it feel for the director? Hard/easy, did you have to think about it more? Why use this as an example?
- Talk about how as a facilitator you can see where you are going but if you take the lead without building other’s capacity what happens? How does not always doing the easy option feel for everyone?
“A sense of humor is part of the art of leadership, getting along with people, of getting things done.” Dwight D Eisenhower

“In every organization, leadership is the process that guides others. Leadership involves skills and abilities that can be learned, and professional and personal development for leaders is the process of developing the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations”. Kouzes and Posner

“A leader leads by example, whether they intend to or not.” Source Unknown

“Good ideas are not adopted automatically. They must be driven into practice with courageous patience.” Hyman Rickover
WEEK SIX
The focus of this week’s session was leadership styles. The following Pins and Straws Tower Leadership Styles exercise was used to demonstrate three different styles. The purpose for this exercise was for the women to experience different leadership styles, gain an understanding of the merits of each style and when it was appropriate to apply differing styles.

1. Resources: three tins of dressmaking pins, three packets of drinking straws, tables or suitable floor space for groups, Depending on group numbers you can have three groups of people for each style or all participants with different leaders for each style.
2. Instructions for volunteer group leader: three volunteers taken out of earshot of other participants, given a copy of the descriptor for their designated style. They can refer to this if needed but it is important to keep it from other team members. Check that they understand expectations, giving coaching encouragement if required and then return to the group to start the session.
3. Five minutes per style with a nominated timekeeper. Teams are instructed that they are to work together to build a tall tower and they are to follow the leader.
4. Laissez Faire Leadership (Leave it to be/Lad Back) For the purpose of this role-play you will tell your group - “We have to build a tall tower with these things.” If they ask you how to do it, ask them, “well what do you think/you decide?” You as a leader are out to enjoy yourself, you are quite happy to let the group sort it all out, let them get on with it.
5. Democratic Leadership (or Participative Leadership) for the purpose of this role play you will tell the group: “We are building a tall tower with the straws and pins. Any ides on how to go about it? Ask for everybody’s ideas. Let everyone’s ideas be valued. It is important that everyone feels that what they have to say is important.
6. Autocratic Leadership: For the purpose of this role play you will tell the group: “I am going to get you to build a tower and this is how
I want you to do it.” Be in charge. Do not let anyone express their own opinions. You know best, you are the BOSS attitude.

7. Discussion regarding outcome of the exercise, acknowledging that there are other leadership styles but for the purpose of this exercise they have been limited.
“Deep listening is miraculous for both listener and speaker. When someone receives us with open-hearted, non-judging, intensely interested listening, our spirits expand.” Sue Patton Thoele

“We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.” Epictetus, Greek Philosopher

“One of the basic causes for all the trouble in the world today is that people talk too much and think too little. They act impulsively without thinking. I always try to think before I talk.” Margaret Chase Smith

“Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools, because they have to say something.” Plato
WEEK SEVEN
The purpose of this session was to understand communication in general and to increase awareness of individual communication styles, strengths and weaknesses. Clear communication was introduced as one way to manage personal issues. Time management and SMART goal setting process (specific, measurable, attainable, resourced, timebound) were also introduced.

Participants were asked to write about a time when communication was an issue. The women then gathered in pairs to share their issues and then shared with the whole group.

In the second half of the session Andrae demonstrated how planning is key to time management by using a bucket, big rocks, small stones, sand and water demonstration.

She asked the participants if the bucket was full after she put big rocks to the top of the bucket. It looked like it was until she added the small stones which nestled in between the large rocks. Again, is it full? Not so sure now. Then Andrae poured sand around the big rocks and small stones. Full yet? Maybe. Looks like it. Then she added water. Is it full now? Yes.

The point is: unless you put the big rocks in first you won’t get all of the items in the bucket. In other words, plan time slots for your big issues before anything else or the inevitable sand and water issues will fill up your days and you won’t fit the big issues in (a big issue doesn’t necessarily have to be a work task. It could be your child’s sports day or a holiday.)
“Most communication resembles a Ping-Pong game in which people are merely preparing to slam their next point across; but pausing to understand differing points of view and associated feelings can turn apparent opponents into true members of the same team.” Cliff Durfee

“Don’t knock the weather; nine-tenths of the people couldn’t start a conversation if it didn’t change once in a while.” Ken Hubbard

“To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others.” Anthony Robbins

“Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing.” Rollo May
WEEK EIGHT

This session was the most intriguing for me. The previous session were building upon the desire to enhance relationships between Mataura Maori and Pakeha. I expected this to continue but was surprised when the focus changed.

One of the women, who had missed the few sessions where the process began, changed the process. During Taskforce meetings she often reiterated her belief that it was impossible to change the Maori/Pakeha relationship. She said it had been tried many times before and has always failed.

Instead of continuing with Maori/Pakeha relationship exploration the group, encouraged by the woman mentioned above, decided to hold a community picnic as a way to encourage connections among the residents. Even though Maori families are residents of the community the concentrated focus on them was lost.

Andrae expanded on the SMART test as a tool to help guide the process. The women decided the picnic would be low key, no budget event. Summer games and races for the kids and either pot luck or bring your own meal. The women were quite excited by the end of the evening. They arranged a time to meet and assigned preliminary roles.

It was intriguing because the change in focus happened so fast and seamless that there was little time to respond. Both Andrae and I found it a lost teaching opportunity because we did not advocate for the continuation of the initial process. In saying that, however, we did appreciate the emergent nature of the course. In this case what emerged was unexpected and to some of the women and the two of us it was a disappointment. In fact by allowing, by default, the change to happen the women followed the leader.
In the end a picnic could have been a bridge between Maori and Pakeha families but that was not the focus and plans on how to be inclusive were not forthcoming.

One woman said,

“I came away from the whole thing with a sense of sadness that it’s still an issue that needs attention. Nothing positive came out about that issue. And that’s a shame. Even now there is so much division in that community between Maori and Pakeha and if someone doesn’t start to do something – it’s never going to end.”

Another woman had this to say,

“I think, because people didn’t want to ruffle anybody’s feathers. And I honestly think that could have turned into a very big social issue. And as you just said, everyone was too polite and wanted to avoid any ill feeling that may have come cos I could have probably erupted into a bit of a thing with everyone with their own personal ideas.”

Both Andrae and I left Southland for an extended period soon after the end of the course so we were not available to provide continued support. The picnic group met as planned but things began to fall apart. One of the women thought it should be more intense with a bouncy castle and paid entertainment and she volunteered to chair the group. She put considerable effort into organizing and researching options. She did not, however, have the support of the rest of the group. They wanted the picnic to remain low key without any fund raising. Some of the women felt that their efforts were not valued or supported. At the second meeting the chair was confronted with a disappointed group. She did not come to subsequent meetings. At that point the process fell apart and was abandoned.

She was the only participant that scored in the Assimilating section of the Learning Styles Inventory. Her relationships with people in general
were difficult, however, she was a keen learner who was curious about all aspects of the course. She did find it difficult to translate learning into action when personalities were involved. This is an example of how difficult authentic leadership can be in all of its complexity.

Another made this comment,

“I liked our picnic idea but then it got too big. Our basic picnic idea was to have something cheap that families could go to where they didn’t have to keep digging into their pockets and just make it a family day, and then it got too big with the – how much it was going to cost our group. We had no budget so it was how to grab what resources we could for nothing. Some things we did cos people just wanted to help cos they thought it was a good idea. But other things we just had no money for. Nobody won cos it didn’t eventuate. We did have a couple of meetings after that and – costing just started piling up meeting after meeting and it just got unrealistic in the end.”

Another reflected,

“At the start we were all on the same page but as the weeks went by the pages were turning and we had different ideas. One week we said, ‘Oh hold on, that’s not what we wanted.’ And then it just snowballed. We did say, ‘This is getting out of hand now’, we then said, ‘we need to get back to what we had’.”

Recourse consideration was on one woman’s mind,

“At our meeting it came out – I think we were too small – if I can remember correctly ‘we think too small’ – but we said it’s not that we think too small but we have to use the resources. But if I remember off hand I’m sure that’s what we were told. That we think too small. Actually it was a big thought to bring the community together – that’s not too small”

Old time family fun was considered by one woman,
“And all we wanted were games you don’t have to pay with – like sack games and egg and spoon races and things like that, that the kids could have fun without having to pay.”

One woman gave her thoughts about the process.

“I’m not sure if it was cos there were too many cooks in the kitchen, or just a lack of motivation on the part of some people. There were about seven – when we had meetings at the end we were lucky if we had three people turn up to meetings. It was disappointing cos you sort of feel that people don’t want to continue that momentum on. So that fell apart and there wasn’t a lot of clear direction as to who was giving the direction – or we realised at that point that, if you want to run an event, you really need to have a structure – a person who delegates, another person who does this and another that does that – there has to be a kind of hierarchy. And I don’t think that happened and consequently it all just came undone. And I thought that was a bit disappointing really.”

She continued with,

“There wasn’t any sense of unity any more – it all kind of dissolved. The whole picnic organisation group was a revelation as to how one person can have a vision for the town and believes that everyone else has to toe the line and yet not lead the group. It was a bit of a shame really.”

This demonstrates how difficult it can be to change behaviour. The chair of the picnic group was used to being in control and she recognised this throughout the course but found it difficult in the end to “let go”. As a consequence the Taskforce lost a dynamic, creative leader.

This failure does not guarantee future failures. This particular group will most likely never regenerate but as individuals they stand a chance to bring quality leadership to future ventures.
Figure 4.3 Invitation to attend the focus group meeting.
Unfortunately there is no such thing as a perfect leader, however it is possible to learn how to be a skilled yet flawed authentic leader.

The literature that I reviewed were in agreement that personal awareness is paramount to authentic leadership. This course endeavored to expose the participants to the opportunity to explore becoming an authentic leader through personal awareness.

Frameworks, theoretical and design, are important when developing a course. Equally as important is naivety and intuition. Combined they open the process to an expanded, holistic approach to development.

The following are things that Andrae and I learned through this evaluation process.

There are many ways to define leadership. In the case of this course leadership was not sufficiently defined in order to satisfy all participants. Most participants did not initially understand the connection between personal awareness and leadership. When difficult concepts are under defined unhelpful assumptions intrude possibly leading to disappointment. Clearly articulated definitions promote increased understanding with fewer assumptions.

Consistent processing of the sessions is important. Due to time and energy constraints we only briefly discussed each session at their conclusions. We did not talk between sessions. We both agreed that it would have been helpful to schedule time to talk about the session a few days after the session, as both of us need time to process our thought and reactions.

We learned about the impact of disappointment. I was disappointed when Andrae appeared to be procrastinating during the early stage of our partnership. She was disappointed that she didn't have permission to proceed as she saw best. Over time the impact of disappointment
can be a catalyst for change. After repeated attempts by Andrae to advocate for her ideas I finally listened and let go of my need to hold tight to developing the course along a rigid Theory U framework. I was no longer disappointed and Andrae was able to get on with the task.

Additional conditions led to disappointment. When only two women attended the focus group meeting Andrae became paralyzed and distracted by her disappointment. She was not able to concentrate and facilitate her assigned segments. I was distracted by her distraction. As a result there was little enthusiasm and limited participation during the meeting. The two women who attended were disappointed that they weren’t able to catch up with people they hadn’t seen in quite some time. They did not fully engage in the process. I learned that it is important to acknowledge that there may be areas of disappointment and to consider strategies for mitigating its influence. One strategy might be to formalize discussions about disappointment by adding it to a process agenda. Disappointment can, however, be a catalyst for realizing change opportunities.

I learned about the power of naivety. For this particular course with this particular group of women it worked to have the course designed naively, without a conscious development framework and vagueness about content. Many participants appreciated the surprise element of not having an agenda for each session. One woman said she would not consider attending if she knew that there would be a large self-exploration component. In the end she was able to embrace what she learned and gained considerable confidence. In saying that I believe that following a standard yet flexible process framework will benefit future courses. My goals for the course were realised, in part, by the process as it happened. The seeds of authentic leadership were sown.

We discovered that we missed some teaching opportunities because we were cautious about embarrassing participants. This could have been avoided if we had built strategies into the group culture to deal
with difficult situations in anticipation of them happening. One strategy
would be to acknowledge upfront that there may be embarrassing
situations and they would be acknowledged and used as a learning
tool. Another strategy would be to include regular process reviews,
formal and informal, between facilitators and with participants.

The power of working as a team to develop and facilitate the course
was confirmed. Even though we struggled and were frustrated from
time to time the course benefited from our complementary styles, skills
and talents.

I was reminded of the power of beliefs. I believed that the course would
be helpful in changing the way the women thought and behaved. Every
one of them had a change, either slight or significant.
Chapter 5 Data
The primary research question: “Was the course effective in facilitating sustainable change?” was assessed in addition to what worked well and what needed change or improvement? The specific interview topics used to discover the answers were: course content, process, and sustained learning.

Because of the considerable time lag between the end of the course (The course was held in late 2009, evaluation interviews commenced in 2011) and this process much of the data has been lost. Flip chart material is missing and memories are marginal in relation to specific content detail. Most of the journals were minimally utilized with infrequent reflective musings. However, most of the women were able to relate satisfaction with the overall course but had a difficulty remembering some of the content. They seemed to remember the content that had the most impact on their lives.

This chapter gives voice to the women who participated in the course. The following quotes capture the women’s impressions of content, process, sustained learning, course satisfaction, and reflections on their journal gleaned from the interviews.

Interviews: Responses Regarding Content
Most of the women were satisfied with the content.

“What I found about the course that I liked was that it was nice and simple and not basic but it was very simple to use. You didn’t get confused a lot of the time because it was very simple. You followed it up with something so we could actually understand how to use it and I thought that it was all really, really practical and useful material.”

Another said,

“There was plenty of information given out during the course and the content was always explained well.”
However, one woman had unmet expectations.

“From my perspective I think that the course you did had great content in it but for me it was kind of like the cart before the horse, like I felt what was in here could have been in a leadership enhancement course rather than somebody thinking ‘oh, I want to be a leader, I’ll go to this course.’ I didn’t think it gave them the tools to be a leader.”

The same woman said,

“There was nothing about governance and management. Which is really important if you’re going to be a leader – you’ve got to know the difference between those, which I already know but it wasn’t in the course. So yeah, a leadership role to me, is knowing about drawing people in and working with people or listening to them which part of that was in there. Delegation which that wasn’t in there. Governance and management; the difference between – and kind of just recognizing “have I got these qualities to do that? Am I a leadership person or am I someone that would rather be helping the leader.”

As noted in the previous chapter both Andrae and I provided supporting resources (handouts) related to the each sessions’ topics and we strove to explain concepts well. Each week relevant quotes were posted.

One woman said,

“Yeah they were helpful – definitely really helpful. Cos I just think that sometimes you can be told all the information but you don’t have time to absorb the information unless you can go back and read about each thing as you go. I just think that the information that we were given was awesome. Handouts that we could actually use, that were practical.”
Another woman added,

“We liked how the handouts and everything we got were real practical hands on things that we could use.”

One woman said,

“I did like was all the things you used to put up like from the philosophers – all those little sayings you had on the walls for us – I liked a lot of those.”

She continued with,

“The most impressionable things I found were the quotes and sayings that were round the wall, and the meanings of them – I have been to quite a few leadership courses and courses by the Canterbury Institute and things like that – but never have I encountered quotes and things – the effort that you and Andrae went to – and they were always pertinent to what we were doing over that night.”

Another commented,

“And it was good having all the wee sayings on the wall the whole time – I wrote all them down. That’s how I’ve got so much out of the course – with all those wee sayings, and me writing them down, and then going back over my book, and as I’ve been typing them up – and you’re thinking “oh, that’s so true.”

However, one woman had a different point of view.

“Did not have much interest in the some of the content or resources. Like the sayings and quotes were not really of interest to me, once we have the vision just need to get on with the work then not spend time talking or dreaming about things.”

One woman would have appreciated a copy of the quotes because she found herself distracted from the course while she took time to write the quotes in her journal.
Responses Regarding Process
Participants were asked to share their thought on course process.

One participant reported,

“As I said, it would take you out on a limb and I said “well, where’s this heading?” and then a session would bring the whole thing back together and you could see that before that, every step that we’d taken all culminated into that one thing that you were trying to achieve.”

Another added,

“The Way the sessions were structured was useful because they were in a set pattern and you were able to follow what you were doing each week.”

One woman said,

“And one of the things I really enjoyed about that course was that it wasn’t like that – it wasn’t clinical or sterile like that. It wasn’t run to a bureaucratic system – it had flow – it had warmth and I really appreciated that, I really loved that about it.”

Some of the women appreciated not having a syllabus to consult.

One said,

“You didn’t know what was going to happen next – I think that was probably the most exciting thing about the course too – that people did not know what was going to happen next. So every week was a fresh start. I don’t think I’ve ever been to a course where it’s always been a fresh start”

Another commented,

“That’s why I found this course was a lot more refreshing – it was always new every week so you didn’t know what was going to happen and I think other trainers could have taken lessons from your own… from the course that you ran. And I think in this day and age you don’t get any surprises. Everything’s handed out to
you ahead of time, so there is no surprises, there are, you've got nothing to look forward to, they've gone and ruined it all for you by giving it to you now. And that’s what I find about all the other courses, they just… they give you all the information, and here it is here… it’s almost like what is the point of having the course – if they're going to get you to look at it and study it all now – what do you need somebody to tell you.”

Another woman responded,

“I’ve attended lots and lots of courses, like you would have done, and they actually give you the lay out – they actually give it to you, so you take it home and you read it and you think “I like this one, and I like that one, and I don’t like that one” You actually sit there and pull apart the course before you even got there. That was one of the processes that I thought was really awesome, that we didn’t.”

Even though we wanted to provide a safe environment for learning we also wanted to challenge the participants. Some of them said they were pulled out of their comfort zone.

One commented,

“Right from the beginning I thought “oh my gosh” it makes you feel uncomfortable cos it’s not familiar. You don’t know the end result because you don’t know how this is going to pan out. (But you stuck with it?) I did. I like learning new things though. I just think you never learn enough.”

Another said,

“I think it’s good to be ripped out of your comfort zone to be honest. It’s scary. No one wants to get out of it. And look at different ways of doing something else. You just do the same old same old.”
From the next statements it is obvious that Andrae and I succeeded in providing a safe place to learn while in the same time challenging the women.

One reported,

“It was really good to get you out of your comfort zone and look at doing something that was a bit scary but you don’t get hurt out of it. I never run away from things that are hard or make me feel uncomfortable. I just think well, no I’m meant to learn something.”

Another said,

“Because on the very first session I wrote “help me to recognize how I viewed myself on a personal level.” I felt, to me it was really scary. Took me out of my comfort zone. The exercise was really helpful by making me – take in a good look at myself, personal review is not something I do at all. I enjoyed the experience.”

**Sustained Learning Observations**

As sustained learning was one of the courses’ objectives it was satisfying to hear some of the changes participants made.

One woman noticed,

“You could see how people had grown during the course. A lot of people had become quite confident, I thought.”

One of the women reflected on her personal change,

“Well for me, it was, being able to relate better to people and from looking at it from their point of view. Because I have one person that I find really difficult to work with and there was one part of the course where we dealt with conflict that actually helped me to be able to put myself in that persons shoes and changed the whole, my impressions of how to deal with that person. And so the way to do that was to change it round and, look at it from their point of view and, actually gave me a better insight into how to be more efficient
and effective, efficient and effective leader. Imagine that person, the kind of things, of the kind of things that they are thinking about, and why they come up with the, with their, not problems but the way the look at things. It’s to try and think what it would be like for them. I don’t think that we ever look at the other person’s perspective that way. We don’t actually get into somebody else’s head and think ‘well, what makes that person think like that, and tick and, and why are they always at, why are they always butting heads with everybody.’ And it wasn’t until I actually did the exercise, I actually sat down and thought about that person, and when I was sitting in the meeting that I actually put myself in that person’s seat, that I could actually see where this person was coming from and because of that the meetings were no longer a volatile thing, they were always so volatile. I changed myself. To the point now that this person is so malleable now. Not because they will do what you say but I am able to sit down with this person and talk one on one and come up with some really good suggestions and ideas and strategies and it’s not head butting and trying to run for the hills. And I kept thinking we would have to change the person but it wasn’t the person, I had to change where I was at and think of the other person and that made all the difference. And I learnt that from the course.”

She went on to say,

“And everyone else that has to deal with this person in meetings they can’t believe the difference in the person. They said they’d been trying to change her for so long, and I said that was the problem – you can’t change somebody, you’re the only one that can change.”

Another woman discovered,

“I found out – I overthink things. And I like things “just so”. When I’m at meetings and that I’m a writer – I take notes so I know when I get home and go through them again that “oh yeah, that’s what
happened”. And then I found I could let little things go instead of dwelling on them and making them out to be bigger than what they really are.”

Another woman shared her learning.

“Yea, I learnt I don’t really like taking direction if I think it’s wrong. If I think it’s wrong I won’t do it.”

This woman discovered something new about herself as well,

“Yes it was because I recognize that I’m not a habitual thinker.”

The woman who made an obvious change said,

“I have to stick up for myself and when I know it is right, and I need to stick up for things. I hate conflict and would usually ignore it but now I’m learning to face it head on so it has probably been you know. Been huge? Really amazing. I can stand up for myself and if they don’t like it – well that’s not the way you go about things. I am a different person, more aware, more going to stand up, more thinking I can do this, if I can do this course, I can believe in myself and be more positive.”

She continued with,

“I think I’ve become more aware of the fact that I need to let certain things go. And I’ve been working towards doing that and sometimes I win and sometimes I lose but for me I think – the past year or so has been a journey – learning how to let go of things and that has been quite difficult I must say so it’s something I’m still working on. It’s been really good. And I do feel more confident in myself having done the course – in my abilities in that sense. And I think over time I’ve actually come to see that I do have some skills in leadership – and that surprises me because I’ve never thought of myself of being a leader.”
Course Satisfaction

Most of the women were satisfied with the course to one degree or another. This is a sample of what they said.

One said,

“I enjoyed it, I did, I thoroughly enjoyed it. There were parts of the course that we’re all familiar with if you work in an organization where you need to be the leader or there are times when you need to stand up and be the leader, that were really helpful. I felt it could have gone longer. We didn’t want it to finish. We wished it could have gone on for a bit longer.”

A positive remark from another,

“I actually found that course really good. I found it good and I liked going to it.”

And another woman said,

“It was a really good course – I really enjoyed it. It was good to meet different people and just do something – get out of your comfort zone. That’s what these things make you do.”

One gave her thoughts,

“The whole course was brilliant – I would recommend it to anybody. It’s good learning about yourself. About knowing your strengths, your weaknesses.”

However, one woman was unhappy with the content.
She said,

“(Was the course worth it?) Well, for me frankly, no. But then I think probably that’s because I’ve been involved in all kinds of leadership since being on the first community board so I’ve been on so many different courses and training through that with going to Community Board conference and going to the local government,
that I kind of know what leadership is all about. So no, for me personally, I probably didn’t get anything out of it.

She continued with,

“I did not really want to take part in any of this, I only attended to make up numbers and to support the venture not because I felt I needed to learn anything more.”

However she also said,

“The highlight for me was the fellowship, the sharing of ideas.”

**Journal**

Five participants allowed me to view their journal. They used them as a reflective tool to varied degrees. Some did a considerable amount of reflective writing while others did little. One used the journal to store all materials related to the course where others used the provided supplemental binder. She added items that she found important including family photos.

The journals began with participants’ leadership self-portraits. All were able to represent aspects of themselves that they identified as being leadership qualities. All five used the light bulb as a reflective evaluation tool of how they were feeling about themselves each week.

There were no session evaluations as Andrae and I had requested. One participant wrote the word “evaluation” but nothing else to reflect what her understanding or feelings were.

One session’s exercise left a record that can be used at a later date for reflection on Maori/Pakeha relationships. Participants were asked to think of a positive Pakeha/Maori relationship that impacted their lives. These writings may be a catalyst for reflection at a later date if they are reviewed.
Learning Styles Inventory

Since experiential learning was a major component of the course I wanted a way to determine if the course was on track in providing elements for each learning preference and style. Five participants, as well as Andrae and myself, completed Kolb’s Learning Style Inventory. I understand that inventory results were only one indicator of possibilities and could be changeable depending on time and called upon learning situation.

Of the seven women who completed the inventory four fell within the Divergent Style. Two scored Assimilating and one scored Accommodating. It is not surprising that Divergent Style was highly represented as people with this style often gravitate to situations where they are in service to people and their community.

Figure 5.1 Individual participant scores of the Learning Style Inventory on group diagram. (Kolb, D. 2007. p3)
Focus Group
Unfortunately very little data related to the course was gained from the focus group. Only two participants attended the meeting with Andrae and myself mainly because circumstances precluded having the meeting in a timely manner. It was scheduled months after the initial interviews were held. Participants had conflicting commitments and it was difficult to choose a time when the majority could attend. There also appeared to be a lack of interest. One participant had forgotten about it even though she had noted it in her diary and received a reminder call. One had a routine sporting event, one was out of town and the others did not respond to the invitation. The participants, Andrae and I were disappointed by the lack of interest. The significant data that came from the meeting was the effect that disappointment can have on facilitators and participants. The energy from both the facilitators and the participants was flat which made it difficult to initiate and sustain dialogue. One person volunteered to scribe but she found it difficult to attend to the task. Granted, she was tired which helped exacerbate her disappointment and ability to manage.

Evaluation Report to Participants
The following report was sent to each participant along with an invitation to attend the focus group meeting. The report was intentionally short to help assure that it would be read. I also anticipated that the report might initiate dialogue related to the course.

“ 'It’s All About U’ Leadership Course was developed to enhance awareness, understanding and growth in your leadership confidence and skills. You were a diverse group with different types of leadership experience. Each of you has been a leader to one degree or another.

Since you all learn in different ways we wanted to create opportunities to support each learning style. We did this by providing handouts, wall quotes, exercises, journals, lectures, and leadership opportunities.
The course was not conventional. We attempted to model what we were teaching. One of you said that she found it refreshing that the course was simple, not basic, but simple to use. You didn’t seem to mind that there was no weekly outline of the upcoming session. Many of you appreciated the surprise element of not knowing what to expect from week to week. When you found the room set up differently each week we were able to adapt. A party in the middle of the course was not the norm for a course but was appreciated.

Many of you said that you were challenged by the self-exploration exercises; it was new for you to spend time thinking about yourself. Some of you didn’t understand where we were going after the first week. What does this have to do with leadership you asked? It began to make sense as we carried on and built understanding week by week. There was some disagreement that it was in fact a leadership course. Some thought it was a self-help or leadership enhancement course.

The exercises that were of most value to you were the straw and pins, coloured hats, rock and sand, and balls in the bucket. One of you suggested that it would have been good to be taught more skills that connected the exercises with real life issues.

Some of the exercises were helpful in changing your thoughts and the way you behave. One was able to relate to a difficult person in a new way by putting herself in their shoes. She changed the way she thought rather than expecting the person to change; because she changed, the person did as well.

Another gained enough self-confidence to give a speech. She is now a stronger advocate for her granddaughters. This has been a gradual change for her which attending the course helped develop.

One learned that she didn’t like to take directions if she thought they were wrong. Gaining confidence to let go of certain things benefited
another. Another was surprised that she had some leadership skills because she had never thought of herself as a leader.

One thought that at times there was a barrier between her and others. Another was disappointed that additional leaders for the Taskforce didn’t come forward after the course. However, fellowship and the sharing of ideas were valued.

Most of you appreciated having the journal and time to write in it. You were often unsure of what to write consequently you didn’t write a great deal. Most of you not use your journal between sessions, however a few of you did. Since the end of the course few of you have returned to the journal for review or reflection. Likewise the handouts were appreciated at the time but few were looked at subsequent to the end of the course.

You suggested improvements for future courses. One was that the previous week’s session could have been better recapped to see it there were any questions or concepts not quite grasped. Some concepts needed more time to explore. Bringing in actual leaders from the community for specific topics was another suggestion. Some would have appreciated pre registration information about the course and its content. Some of you thought that the course could have been longer. All of you said that you enjoyed the course and some of you would recommend it to others.

Both Andrae and I appreciate your cooperation with this evaluation process.”
Chapter 6 Analysis

My research evaluation goals were to assess if the course was effective in contributing to sustainable change in authentic leadership capacity among the participants and if the theoretical framework of Appreciative Inquiry, Theory U and Experiential learning Theory, was useful in developing a leadership course.

It is not possible to generalize learning from this evaluation because of the small number of participants. In addition, there were no formal pre tests to guide extent and validity of learning, however, I believe the interview and journal data are to some degree valid for this specific group of women and do illustrate the deeper processes which are at least suggestive of the dynamics around this type of learning. There was some demonstrated, observable, tangible evidence of leadership capacity growth (sustained change) within some of the participants. For example: the enhanced viewpoint of putting yourself in others shoes in order to calm conflict or intervene in personal relationship difficulties was a new strategy for one of the participants. Increased confidence leading to the ability to give a public speech was another. One participant discovered that she wasn’t a habitual person, she had never thought about it before. Others gained clarity over their style of leadership and all of the participants commented on the increased confidence others displayed. This does provide some initial face validity for the approach here and details how such things might be achieved.

One contradiction between the interview data and journal data occurred when one participant said during an interview that she did not find value in the course. However, her journal notes indicate that she did find value with some of the sessions. She wrote, “Very full session. Reflective. Quite challenging. Self worth evaluation thought provoking.” “Very useful exercise” (straws and pins). “Tonight has been of real benefit.” “Given a lot of valuable information on ways to deal with and cope with difficult situations.” I believe that the incongruence
may be related to her disappointment that it was not a normally constructed leadership course with less self-exploration and more tangible skill building lessons. Perhaps she could not get beyond her expectations of what a leadership course should be and her disappointment with the course for not producing more active “leaders” as she defined it for the Taskforce.

It was also obvious that in some cases there appeared to be little or no integration of learning. In some cases limiting, fixed ideas language continued to be prevalent. “Things will never change.” “We tried that before.” and “It will never happen.” are still heard at Taskforce meeting subsequent to the end of the course. However, just as a seed may take time to germinate, reflective learning may take time to become apparent in part because of paucity of opportunities to practice what was learned and because some concepts take longer to integrate. Some participants appeared to be more open to change than others; some more reflective than others.

**Course Content**

The course content was designed to support increased self-awareness related to leadership. As said previously, there was no mention of content prior to the beginning of the course. In hindsight, it may have been preferable to give perspective participant content information. With an understanding of what the course entailed they may have been more prepared and made a more conscious choice to participate because of specific interest instead of curiosity and overall interest in leadership. The uncertainty of where the course was going, unresolved until week four for some, might have not been an issue with prior knowledge. Perhaps participants would have gone deeper in their exploration if they knew what was planned. Perhaps some who attended would not have.

The question of whether to disclose content or not is in tension with the concept of “letting go”. Nondisclosure can be and was in this a case a
tool for promoting the concept of “letting go” (change), however, would additional lasting change occur if participants were prepared and willing to explore opportunities as a pre confirmed matter of course? It is hard to argue that “letting go” did not happen for some if not all of the participants in some way or another, thus the tension. Perhaps embracing the four guiding principles of Open Space Technology are appropriate to lessening the tension: “Whomever comes is the right people, whatever happens is the only thing that could have, whenever it starts is the right time, and when it is over it is over.” (Owen, H. 1997. p11)

For each session Andrae and I devised a corresponding learning objective. For example, we planned to ask the participants to review their self-portrait at the end of the course to see if they would make any changes based on what they learned about themselves. Unfortunately, due to time constraints we did not revisit this or other objectives to see if they had been met. At the time the course was developed and delivered there was no plan to formalize an evaluation so it was a low priority to assure a timely review of objectives.

On the other hand, participants enjoyed the expectancy and surprise element for each session. They found it refreshing to come to each session fresh, not knowing what to expect. One said that she might have excused herself from some sessions that she was not interested in if she had the content information beforehand. As it was all seven participants completed the course with a few missing occasional sessions for legitimate reasons unrelated to the course.

The exercise most often cited as helpful was the straw and pins exercise. Its intent was to illustrate three specific types of leadership: autocratic, laissez-faire, and democratic. Other exercises were well received, DeBono’s hats, bucket and stones, but recognized to a lesser degree by the participants.
The course content provided another example of the trialectic logic relationship at work between knowledge, surprise and excitement. The three components worked together to create the environment and tension that promoted learning.

**Course Process**

The process of presenting the course was unconventional. Although we wanted to create a safe learning environment Andrae and I endeavored to maintain some degree of tension in order to expedite potential learning. Each week we rearranged the seating configuration to help participants “let go” of the habit of sitting in the same place next to the same person. However, many processes were predictable, in order to maintain a level of safety and comfort. A process routine was followed each week and the participants grew to expect weekly wall quote and handouts. Fortunately, the participants displayed a high tolerance for uncertainty.

Half way through the course we had a celebration to commemorate the shift from “letting go” to “letting come”. Although this was unusual it was appreciated plus it provided the opportunity for two participants to practice a leadership role by planning and facilitating the event. It also provided a transition from myself as main facilitator to Andrae as main facilitator.

Supplying a journal was Andrae and my way to encourage reflective thinking and writing. All of the women used their journal differently to process learning. The majority of them did not use them as a reflective tool between sessions. However, one woman enhanced hers with family photos and other items of interest to her.

One regretted not writing more in her journal. She went on to say that she appreciated the fact that Andrae and I did not place expectations on how to use of the journal. She thought she might write things that
we wanted to hear rather what she felt or though if expectations were present. Another revisited her journal after the course was finished.

The process of segregating the sessions between Andrae and myself, as well as asking Andrae to join the development and delivery process worked well. Even though there was a main facilitator we both built in opportunities for the other to be engaged in the session in addition to a supporting role. We were cognizant of modeling the behaviours we hoped to teach. Our skills and predilections complimented each other. Even though Andrae was reluctant to advocate for her needs, not wanting to “take over”, she was successful in promoting positive design changes and additions.

It wasn’t evident to the participants but Andrae and I traversed many mini Theory U cycles during the planning and facilitation process. Both of us “let go” of rigid framework convictions and “let come” new positive ways of processing and working together.

**Sustained Learning**

It is difficult to argue for the level of sustained learning as some of it may yet to be manifested. Since this evaluation happened over a year since the end of the course it can be argued that the self-reported learning was sustainable over that amount of time. However, routine habits and old ways of being were also evident during the interview process denoting paucity of change.

The participants faltered with the opportunity to “let come” with a shared venture. Their plan for a community picnic (Week 8 activity) went astray when leadership was fractured and undefined. They were not able to translate learning into action. The overall commitment to the project was strong at first but weakened over time as different opinions were expressed on what the event should look like. One person did take a leadership role but she was unable to hear what the other participants wanted. Instead of a low-key picnic she envisioned
something more substantial which needed a considerable budget. She was unable to get buy in from the rest of the group. Eventually fewer and fewer attended the planning meetings until the project was dropped.

Does this mean that they did not gain leadership skills from the course? I think it means that leadership is a process that may take more than one course, a lifetime, to develop.

**Was it a Leadership Course?**

Leadership is a complex concept with many definitions. For the purpose of this course my definition of leadership was very broad and thought and behavior oriented. Again, it was “Authentic Leadership” that I was striving for. I believe that leadership is a mindset that can be molded by awareness.

All of the women were involved in leadership in one form or another in their daily lives, be it a housewife, community leader, or business manager however they wanted to learn more about leadership. Many of the women thought that the course’s focus was on personal development rather than leadership. Some wanted more tangible skills development. One was interested in topics like governance vs. management. One said she would have liked to have leaders from the community speak on topics related to leadership.

I believe that it was a leadership course based on Northouse’s definition of “Authentic Leadership”. It was, however, unconventional and the term “leadership” was poorly defined for the participants. Attendance was not distracted by angst over whether it was a leadership course or not. All seven women completed the course with a few participants missing one or two sessions for legitimate reasons. They all wished the course were longer, be it for the fellowship, or for the learning, or for both.
Theoretical Framework

There are a multitude of options to use as a theoretic framework for a leadership course. However, “It’s All About U” leadership course would not have been developed were it not for my fascination and appreciation for the basic Theory U concepts of “letting go” and “letting come”. Appreciative Inquiry is a philosophy that I integrate into my professional and personal life experiences and I believe that it is much easier to integrate learning if learning is experienced, thus the inclusion of Experiential Learning Theory. It did not occur to me to incorporate any other theories into the course development.

Prior to joining the development team Andrae had not been exposed to Theory U. She was, however, happy to recognise it as the guiding structural force behind the course development. She was not particularly interested in learning more about Theory U relying rather on my understanding and insistence that it was an appropriate framework in its simplicity.

I believe that Theory U was an appropriate framework for the course because it is congruent with authentic leadership values and principles. It goes beyond the self-awareness journey to incorporate opportunities for skill building and discovery of the best possible future. It is holistic. I can think of no argument against using it as a framework. In this case it happened that I was exposed to its principles and they fit into what I believe can govern a leadership course. Perhaps I would have had an equally supportive reaction if I were exposed to alternative theories or models prior to the inception of the course.

Although Appreciative Inquire was a mostly silent partner throughout the course the ethos that it promotes is again congruent with authentic leadership.

In hindsight I understand the value of applying formal frameworks when developing a course. It would have been helpful to be familiar with
Graves’ framework for course design during the design phase. It would have been less frustrating for Andrae as she advocated for a more systematic approach. She argued for more structure with defined intended outcomes and a more formalised needs assessment. Without her input I would have not considered applying more standard course protocol regarding content and avenues for exploring effectiveness. I found value in her argument and conceded to include evaluation structure to the curriculum and more structure to the weekly sessions.

In the end we did not conduct a formal needs assessment but needs were attended to throughout the course both formally and informally. Each session was opened with a check in period where participants could articulate needs or ask for concept to be clarified. Informally, Andrae and I attended to the non-verbal by recognising confusion or discomfort. If we noticed discomfort we encouraged participants to challenge themselves past the discomfort. Usually discomfort was around volunteering for a leadership role or participating in an exercise that they were uncertain about.

The most obvious and significant theory framework around the management of the course for the participants was Experiential Learning Theory. They did not appear to be interested in the actual theoretical framework that drove the course but all of the participants appreciated and benefited from the learning exercises that they were exposed to. It was tangible for them.

**Learning Style Inventory**

Since Experiential learning was a major component of the course I wanted a way to determine if the course was on track in providing elements for each learning preference and style. Five participants as well as the Andrae and myself completed the Learning Style Inventory. I understood that inventory results were only one indicator of possibilities and could be changeable depending on time and called upon learning situation.
Of the eight women who completed the inventory four fell into the Diverging Style. Two scored Assimilating Style; one scored Accommodating. It is not surprising that Divergent style was highly represented as people with this style often gravitate to situations where they are in service to people and the community.

In the end I debate the merit of pre learning style assessments as Andrae and my goal was to represent the variety of learning styles into our course as it was designed. This is not to say that there is little value to the inventory, however, it is an expensive tool and its value in relationship to outcomes for this project is not discernable since the inventory was administered prior to the end of the course not as a planning tool. Fortunately, the participants appreciated the opportunity to take the Learning Style Inventory and to contemplate the results.

Focus Group

Only two participants attended the focus group meeting. Circumstances between Andrae and myself precluded having the meeting in a timely manner. It was scheduled months after the initial interviews were held. Participants had conflicting commitments and it was difficult to choose a time when the majority could attend. There also appeared to be a lack of interest. One participant had forgotten about it even though she had written it in her diary and received a reminder call. One had a routine sporting event, one was out of town and the others did not respond to the invitations. Both Andrae and I were disappointed by the lack of interest. The disappointment distracted Andrae and she was unable to focus on the agenda and her role in the event. I was distracted by the lack of energy and willingness to participate. I believe that there would have been a better outcome if the meeting were held closer to the interviews because momentum had been established. Interest waned over time.
Chapter 7 Conclusion

The “It’s All About U” leadership course would not have been developed if not for the chosen theoretical framework, especially Theory U. After experiencing Theory U in action at an Art of Hosting event I thought it would be an appropriate model for guiding the development of a leadership course. Appreciative Inquiry provided a philosophic grounding and Experiential Learning Theory brought life to the content. The trialectic model provided an opportunity to experiment with facilitating learning about authentic leadership.

Half way through developing the course I decided to partner with Andrae Gold. We had complementary skills that helped equalize the course content and process. Andrae preferred structure and evidenced based processes. I preferred using my intuition and going with the flow. As we worked together we both allowed the other’s preference to be realised into a great whole. The process was not with out frustrations and challenges but in the end it was valuable and essential for the course development. We both traversed many “letting go” and “letting come” cycles throughout the process.

The options for content related to leadership are vast. Both Andrae and I chose content that was supported by experiential learning exercises. The basic leadership skill topics were covered including communication, leadership styles, time and stress management, and learning styles. Personal awareness exercises were offered to promote authenticity. We knew that we did not have the time capacity to offer more. In the end, however, the participants would have been happy to carry on with weekly sessions in order to cover more topics and deepen the understanding of the ones presented.

The development and delivery process provided tension and dilemmas for future course presentations. The tension between not knowing the course syllabus and the element of surprise is up for consideration. On the one hand some participants said they might not come to certain sessions if the topic did not interest them. Most said they appreciated
the aspect of surprise and looked forward to what would happen next. They said it was fresh. I expect that over time they learned to trust that the learning environment would be safe and interesting with some degree of routine.

Authentic leadership is not an easy road to take. Many roadblocks can stand in the way. Theory U’s barriers of judgment, fear and cynicism are real. However, the prospect of an opportunity to “let come” with a free and open mind, heart and will is a powerful incentive for exploration into the shadows towards potential change. The journey is a life long adventure with learning garnered by experience. The course was one of those experiences.

Because we had no one to account for other than the participants and ourselves, Andrae and I were free to experiment with our design and delivery. In the end the participants enjoyed the course either for enhancing their leadership skills, learning more about themselves or for the fellowship. All of them were disappointed when the course ended. How much they learned is yet to be determined as again the course was only the seed and each participant will germinate the learning in their own way and timeframe.

Since this was a one off course it is difficult to make recommendations based on my experience because much of my contribution was unconscious and often naive. I don’t regret this and I do believe it helped make the course what it was. Even though actions may be unconscious there is always something driving them be it past experience, past learning or process tools accumulation.

However…

If you are contemplating developing an authentic leadership course I recommend the following based on my experience:
• Partner with someone to help develop and deliver the course. Choose someone who will challenge you, is flexible, and who will work well with you.
• Be aware of, but not slaves to developmental foundations.
• Consider and respond to the needs of the participants throughout the development and delivery process.
• Adopt a theoretical framework that best fits your goals.
• Allow for both intuition and evidence-based processes.
• Constantly evaluate process and content throughout design and delivery, both formally and informally.
• Take advantage of the many experiential exercises that have been developed and tested. They can assist with integrating/grounding difficult concepts.
• Model what you aim to teach. “Let go” and “let come” along with the participants.
• Know your participants as much as possible. Let them know you.
• Provide learning processes that address all learning styles.
• Be flexible.
• Make it fun and interesting.
• Be authentic.
Appendix A

Application to the University of Otago HUMAN Ethics Committee for Ethical Approval of a Research or Teaching Proposal involving Human Participants

1. University of Otago staff member responsible for project:

Shannon, Pat Dr.

2. Department:

Social Work and Community Development

3. Contact details of staff member responsible:

Associate Professor Pat Shannon
Dept of Social Work and Community Development
University of Otago
Ph: 64 3 479 7666 (direct) cell 64 21 105 5885
Messages: 64 3 479 7951
Fax: 64 3 479 7653
E mail: pat.shannon@otago.ac.nz <reunion@xtra.co.nz>

4. Title of project:

Evaluation of change as a result of participation in the Leadership Course

5. Brief description in lay terms of the purpose of the project:

The purpose of this project is an evaluative study to learn if the women who attended the Leadership Course (the Course) co-developed by the student researcher had a sustainable level of change in thinking or behaviour as a result of participating in the Course, with a goal of making improvements to future Courses and contributing to overall course evaluations.

6. Indicate type of project and names of other investigators and
students:

Staff Research Names

Student Research Names Joan Huling (Masters)

Multi-Centre trial Names

7. Is this a repeated class teaching activity?
   No

8. Intended start date of project:
   As soon as ethics approval has been received, early 2011.

   Projected end date of project:
   Jan 2012

9. Funding of project.
   Is the project to be funded:
   No

10. Aim and description of project:
   This project aims to: evaluate both thinking and behaviour change:

   a) Evaluate how effective the Leadership Course was in promoting sustainable change, using both formative (process) and summative (outcome) evaluation.

   b) Understand the impact of course participants’ inclusion in the research design.

   c) Compare other change promoting courses.

   d) Make improvements to the Leadership Course for future presentations.
11. **Researcher or instructor experience and qualifications in this research area:**

Dr Shannon has extensive experience in promoting change within communities and leads a major ten year research programme into the development and evaluation of participatory methods in community development and learning. He teamed with Hokonui Horizons in Gore to develop and implement a Parenting Forum with emphasis on providing opportunities for local parent to become involved in developing the forum. This was a precursor to the programme to be evaluated. He has an understanding of the ABCD Framework for Evaluating Community Development. I plan to explore this framework as part of this project.

12. **Participants**

12(a) **Population from which participants are drawn:**

The participants will be the seven women who attended the Course and the women who co-developed the course.

12(b) **Specify inclusion and exclusion criteria:**

Inclusion Criteria:

Leadership Course attendance

Involved in the course development

12(c) **Number of participants:**

Eight

12(d) **Age range of participants:**

Adult

12(e) **Method of recruitment:**

Personal invitation

12(f) **Please specify any payment or reward to be offered:**

Participants may receive a small ($10 or less) gift to cover any costs.
13. **Methods and Procedures:**

The design of this study will include information gathering tools and processes around both formative and summative evaluation including:

a) Review and content /process analysis of journals that participants completed during the Course
b) Use of participatory methods to assess participants’ inclusion in development of what and how to measure change
c) Implement evaluation process once developed in cooperation with participants
d) Interviews course participants and co-developer
e) Analysis in terms of appropriate Community and Appreciative Inquiry models of evaluation.

14. **Compliance with The Privacy Act 1993 and the Health Information Privacy Code 1994** imposes strict requirements concerning the collection, use and disclosure of personal information. These questions allow the Committee to assess compliance.

14(a) Are you collecting personal information directly from the individual concerned?

Yes

14(d) Does the research or teaching project involve any form of deception?

No

14(e) Please outline your storage and security procedures to guard against unauthorised access, use or disclosure and how long you propose to keep personal information:

A password will be required for all project material stored on my computer. Hardcopies will be stored in a locked, secure location and will be provided to Otago University to store for their required period.

Names of participants will not be associated with interview question data. Participants will have access to their own data and will be encouraged to correct any errors. Participants will understand that they are not required to participate and they can stop at any time during the process. All efforts will be made to accommodate the
participants’ level of comfort and time constraints. Participants will have my contact details, as well as my supervisor’s, and will be encouraged to talk to me or him about any concerns re the project.

The co-developer may be named depending upon her wishes. She will enjoy the same rights as other participants as described above.

14(f) Please explain how you will ensure that the personal information you collect is accurate, up to date, complete, relevant and not misleading:

The researcher collecting data will be in close contact with the supervisor who will be aware of my processes to make sure that they do not create any of the above issues.

14(g) Who will have access to personal information, under what conditions, and subject to what safeguards against unauthorised disclosure?

Interview transcripts will remain in my care. No identifiable information will be disclosed in any manner, verbal or written.

14(h) Do you intend to publish any personal information and in what form do you intend to do this?

There may be personal information on the co-developer as she had a significant role in developing and implementing the Course and she may choose to have her name associated with the project. This will be her choice with no pressure either way.

14(i) Do you propose to collect information on ethnicity?

Ethnicity of participants is already known to investigator and the other participants so no new collection of information is applicable. Ethnicity will be discussed in the report in terms of the results.

15. Potential problems: No harm or discomfort is anticipated, however, care will be taken to assure that any issues will be identified immediately and appropriate steps taken to remedy them.

16. Fast-Track procedure: Do you request fast-track consideration?

No
18. Other committees

Maori Consultation in process.

19. Applicant's Signature: .................................................................

Date: ................................

20. Departmental approval: I have read this application and believe it to be scientifically and ethically sound. I approve the research design. The Research proposed in this application is compatible with the University of Otago policies and I give my consent for the application to be forwarded to the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee with my recommendation that it be approved.

Signature of *Head of Department:

.................................................................

Date: ........................................

*(In cases where the Head of Department is also the principal researcher then the appropriate Dean or Pro-Vice-Chancellor must sign)
Appendix B

10 March 2011-03-10

Mr. Gary Witte
Manager
Academic Committees

Dear Mr Witte,

Re Ethics Application 11/07

Thank you for your advice of 21 February of the conditional approval of the above ethics application.

Information on the Leadership Course.

This was an informal one-off course conducted on behalf of the Mataura Community Task Force by Joan Huling MSW in 2010.

It was conducted for members of the Mataura Task Force and other interested community members as part of the requirements for a Community Trust of Southland study award.

Please advise if this information is sufficient for the Committee's purpose.

Regards

P. T. Shannon
Appendix C

EVALUATION OF CHANGE AS A RESULT OF PARTICIPATION IN THE LEADERSHIP COURSE

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS
I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.
I know that:
1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary.
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage.
3. Personal identifying information will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years.
4. This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes degree of change in thinking or behaviour. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops and that in the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind."
5. If there is any discomfort or risk experienced through taking part in the project the respondent may withdraw and will be referred to appropriate support.
6. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity.

I agree to take part in this project.

............................................................................  ............................................................
(Signature of participant)  (Date)

The University of Otago Human Ethics Committee has approved this study. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix D

EVAUATION OF CHANGE AS A RESULT OF PARTICIPATION IN
THE LEADERSHIP COURSE

INFORMATION SHEET

Thank you for your interest in participating in this project. Please read this information sheet before deciding whether or not you wish to participate.

PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH

This research project aims to discover the extent of change, in your thinking or the way you behave, that you may have experienced because you participated in the Leadership Course.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AND HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE

Should you agree to take part in this project you will be asked to meet together with the other participants. At this meeting we will plan how to evaluate changes you may have made as a result of attending the Leadership Course. This meeting would last for 2 to 3 hours. You would be asked to participate with providing information at the level agreed upon during this meeting. With your permission I would like to review your journals as a part of my review. You can withdraw from the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

WHAT WILL OTHERS KNOW ABOUT YOU IF YOU PARTICIPATE?

No personal information, including names will be disclosed during this project. Every attempt will be made to keep your responses private. You will be given the opportunity to review the responses at your request.

The result of this project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin).

WHAT IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about this project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact my supervisor:

Associate Professor Pat Shannon, Department of Social Work and Community Development

University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin – Ph 03 479 7666 – pat.shannon@otago.ac.nz

Thank you for your consideration.

Joan Huling

The University of Otago Human Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this project.
References


Figures

1.1 Invitation to attend the course sent to local participants of the Bliss Browne planning day.
1.2 The trialectic framework of Appreciative Inquiry, Theory U and Experiential Learning Theory.

4.1 Leadership self-portrait created by one of the course participants.
4.2 Sample of how the light bulb was used by one participant.
4.3 Invitation to attend focus group meeting designed by a participant.
