

# Becoming me

## Becoming a CAT

Integrating the colliding parts of self



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# Abstract

The purpose of this inquiry is to collaboratively access knowing in its many forms, seeking deeper understandings and integrate knowing in new ways as the inquirer moves towards becoming an experiential creative arts therapist. The underlying intention is to move away from dissonance and chaos, towards an integrative flow of experience and human flourishing. Located in a postmodern, phenomenological participatory paradigm, this experiential creative arts based inquiry gives access to the multiple ways in which we know. Through clustering of emerging knowings and mapping the lived experience of these, the inquirer is led to deeper understandings about meanings and values held within her experience. Through collaborative relationships and the co-creation of meanings the inquiry opens to new possibilities of being. She discovers that through gaining understanding about her experiences she is able to integrate the once conflicted parts of herself and comes to see the same place with new eyes.

# Statement of Authorship

I certify that this research paper comprises of my original work except were indicated. Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other materials provided.

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# Introduction: becoming a CAT

a story about  
a desire for change

starting out

transitioning

becoming

# A desire for change

A desire for change in my working life has been evident for some time. As a primary school drama specialist I have become increasingly frustrated with my work. I am feeling misaligned with the outcomes focused curriculum and unhappy with a very congested timetable that allows little space for connecting with students, and meeting their learning needs. I know that I hold strong values, like most teachers around the need to connect with students on an individual basis to understand their needs and promote contextualised learning. I also know that the arts (not only drama) provide a means of exploration of human experience and the development of understandings about self, others and the world. I desire to be able to bring my skills in arts (having also a background in dance and visual arts) together with my values around fostering human growth and development. But in my rush to meet the requirements of an overburdened education system I feel there is little space or time for this. I feel it might be time to move on, make a change, and find a new career that can bring me a sense of satisfaction, and success as I work with others.

I take up study at The Melbourne Institute of Experiential and Creative Arts Therapy (MIECAT) with the hope that at the end of the study I will move into a more satisfying career as a creative arts therapist. During the course of my study I remain working as a primary drama teacher: still meeting with the challenges, and desiring change. As I near the final stages of the MA I join with Denise Howes, another MIECAT MA student, to explore as co-researchers the experiences of becoming an experiential creative art therapist (CAT\*)<sup>1</sup>.

misaligned  
challenge change struggling  
a desire for change

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<sup>1</sup> From now on I will refer to 'creative art therapist' as 'CAT' within the text of this document.



This is an account of my explorations using a multimodal creative arts inquiry method as I move towards becoming a CAT. I will firstly outline the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of my method of research locating this in a valid field of research. Following this is a telling of the unfurling story in an auto ethnographic style exposing the co-researching relationship with Denise, and other participants. I expand my understandings through a creative arts inquiry, creating representations of experiences, and dialoguing with others as well as myself to deepen understandings. I then cluster the material into like ideas and map the emerging themes and patterns. Through this I allow myself to remain open to other possible understandings. Eventually I make an attempt to come to an approximation of meaning about what has emerged from the inquiry. Along the way I acknowledge and engage with the works of other academics and artists who also are exploring with similar methods or exploring similar ideas.

# Methodology: ways to know

multiple ways to know  
accessing knowing

collaboration  
integration

## **A form of inquiry**

This is an inquiry into lived experiences in search of meanings and understandings. The conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of this project are based in a postmodern and constructivist view of the world that espouses that meaning and understanding are collaboratively co-constructed and acknowledges that there are many possible world views. It recognises that meanings and understandings are not permanently fixed. Rather they are emergent and changing, deeming that we can only ever approximate what we think we know. It is an inquiry that opens the way for the exploration of possible ways of being in the world.

I have deliberately chosen to use a collaborative, experiential multimodal creative arts based form of inquiry. This form of inquiry allows for the emergence of meanings and understandings held in lived moments through the creative representation of experience, collaborative dialogues and reflective practices. This process opens access to the multiple ways in which we can know by assuming that different ways of expressing can give access to these different ways of knowing. It provides space and time to collaboratively meet with others and make sense of and deepen awareness of the possibilities of what is emerging. This then introduces the possibility of integration of knowing in new ways. These key concepts of multiple ways of knowing coupled with multimodal accessing of knowing, collaborative meaning making and integration are fundamental to the facilitation of this inquiry and are explicated below.

## **Multiple ways of knowing**

Understanding 'how' we know what we know is important in leading us to accessing the knowing we seek. This inquiry recognises the view point that we know our world through multiple modes of experiencing; not only through our conceptualisations of the

world, but also through our bodily experiences (Lett, 2001, p. 10). As embodied creatures, our experiences of the world and each other first enter our perceptions through our body (Mitchell, Haggard, Stevens, Erskine, 2005). Even before we have begun to conceptualise what we are experiencing our bodies are experiencing and knowing something of the world.

Through our senses, of touch, smell, taste, hearing, and sight, we begin to 'make sense' of the world and our relationship to it. Dan Siegal (2010) in his book *The mindful therapist: a clinicians guide to mindfulness and neural integration* points to our senses and says,

these are the ways we take in data from the physical world - of our body and of the external landscape in which we live. This is "how" we create subjective perceptions of the physical side of reality. (Siegal, 2010, p. 5)

We feel heat or cold and respond with sweat, shivering, or seeking shelter. We smell a foul stench and know at a very practical level to avoid drinking the water. We taste the sweetness or bitterness and know whether to swallow or spit out. We hear the tone of another person's voice and know whether they are friendly or angry. We see the smiling facial expression of a loved one and know this is a sign that they are glad to see us.

Our body also gives us cues to our inner world: through our felt sense of our own body reactions to experience and emotional responses that arise as sensations in the body. We experience a churning gut that warns us of danger, the pounding heart that signals our excitement at meeting another. Eugene Gendlin (1981) says in his book *Focusing*,

A felt sense is not a mental experience, but a physical one (...) a bodily awareness of a situation person or event. An internal aura that encompasses everything you feel and know about the given subject at a given time - encompasses it and communicates it to you all at once rather than detail by detail. (...) A felt sense doesn't come to you in the form of thoughts or words or other separate unit but as a (...) bodily feeling". (Gendlin, 1981, pp. 31-32)

We can then see that "knowings"<sup>2</sup> are not only held in the conceptual thinking ways of knowing the world but also are implicit in the experiential: the sensory, the embodied, the emotional, as well as the symbolic and the practical ways of knowing our lives (Lett, 2001, p. 10). Heron and Reason (1997, pp. 280-281) further explicate this multifaceted way of knowing by naming four inter-dependant ways of knowing: experiential (the embodied participatory experience), presentational (symbolised forming of experience), propositional (conceptualisations of experience), and practical (the taking of knowing into doing). It is through the experiential that we move into the representational, propositional and practical ways of knowing. Our experiential knowing is therefore key.

Experiential knowings may not be fully comprehended by us, often being 'preverbal, pre-reflective, and not in the logical-rational-cognitive frames' of knowing, yet they may still be impacting implicitly on our lives (MIECAT, 2008, p. 9). We often respond to embodied experiences with little pre-thought or cognition. We may believe that our reactions and responses are justified and correct. We may not always understand fully the meaning behind what we do. However, when we look deeper we can see that underneath lie implicit beliefs and values that are driving us often in repeated patterns of behaviour. Gaining access to these knowings and their implicit meanings, and beliefs then becomes the next step towards deepened knowing.

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<sup>2</sup> I will continue to use the word 'knowings' when I am saying that some form of knowing is taking place: be it conceptually known or within the sensory, feeling, symbolic, and practical ways of knowing which may or may not yet be in awareness.

# Accessing knowing

As stated earlier it is a key assumption of this inquiry that multiple modes of expression access the multiple ways of knowing. Lett (2001) asserts that,

experience is processed in some or all of these, and thus in order to reflect upon experience or come to know the deeper structures of meaning of experiences, access through all modes should be available. (Lett, 2001, p. 10)

Through representational forming of experiences in multiple modes of creative arts such as drama, dance/movement, visual arts, music, and creative writing these other knowings are accessed and given voice (Somerville, 2007, pp. 227-228). As we create we access the lived experience, in the body, and the felt sense. So as I lay colours in patterns on the page they speak to me of my feelings about a relationship. I mould the clay to a shape that feels like a sensation that I hold in my gut after a distressing moment. We move our bodies, sensing a 'rightness' about it that resonates with a moment of experience we shared (Gendlin, 1981, pp. 32-33). When we create, meaning arrives.

As we begin to unearth meaning we begin to map how we see these patterns of being are played out in lived experience revealing underlying values and beliefs. We can then open up to new possibilities in ways of being that align with our preferred life enhancing values. Warren Lett (2009b) acknowledges the importance of this in his paper *Paradigms for meaning making* when he says,

living requires understanding about how things are: it requires exploration of the possible ways of being in that life and needs to have committed reference points - or valued meanings as beacons to irradiate the lived experience. (Lett, 2009b, p. 2)

But, meaning is not made in isolation.

# Collaborative meaning making

Meaning is made in relationship to other: the otherness of the world and also the otherness of self. In our relational world of existence we are surrounded by others whose thoughts, feelings and actions interact and shape our own. Daniel Stern (2004) states that,

Our intentions are modified or born in a shifting dialogue with others. Our feelings are shaped by the intentions, thoughts, and feelings of others. And our thoughts are co-created in dialogue, even when it is only with ourselves. In short our mental life is co-created. (Stern, 2004, p. 77).

Heron and Reason (1997) in their article '*A participatory paradigm*' claim the importance of this type of participatory and phenomenological inquiry is that it "places us back in relation to the living world" because the "experiential encounter with the presence of the world is the ground of our being and knowing" (p. 276).

This co-creative multimodal dialogue with others constitutes an intersubjective relationship for meaning making. Stolorow, Attwood, and Brandschaft, (1994, p. xii) suggest in *The intersubjective perspective*, that through attending to the intersubjective relationship we are freed to understand ourselves, each other and our ongoing relationship with increasing depth and richness. It is in the relational that we come to know ourselves. Collaborative inquiring and meaning making is then central to this inquiry.

My inquiry begins with a co-researcher. I join with Denise Howes to form a co-researching, co-companioning and co-participating relationship. We decide to research into the experience of starting out CATs. We commit to support each other and companion each other. We are employing the same inquiry method we will use as CATs (with clients) to unearth meaning in our experiences of starting out and becoming CATs. Together we share, reflect and make meaning, coming to understandings. Whilst we respectfully

attend to each other we also remain mindful of the separateness of our experiences and emerging understandings. We are each writing our own account of the research in separate thesis documents.

The establishment of a relationship that permits an open and reflexive exploration through co-companionship and co-researching practices provides a space to collaboratively come to understandings and make meaning. It is in the space between our subjective experiences that we can meet and explore possible meanings and understanding, moving deeper into areas of uncertainty. In remaining open to uncertainty and the ambiguity of experience, we are able to foster open explorations of experience that willingly welcomes the unknown (Allen, 2004, p. 21). It is here together in 'Being-With' each other that new knowing is made possible.

Clark Moustakas (1995) in *Being-in, being-for, and being-with* explains that Being-With also may include Being-In and Being-For the other. Being-In the world of another requires that "my attitude and interest are focused on being aware and understanding the other from his or her frame of reference" (Moustakas C. , 1995, p. 82). Being-For for the other person begs me to be in collusion with the other as an ally. Moustakas (1990, p. 82) says that in Being-With another I am always present as myself with my own experiences and knowledge. He explains that,

Being-With means listening and hearing the other's feelings, thoughts and objectives, but it also means offering my own. (Moustakas C. , 1990, p. 84)

Being-With each other, Denise and I deepen our experiences and emerging knowings through repeated acts of reflexive 'musing, reflecting and imagining' so that new knowings are made possible (Allen, 2004, pp. 20-26).



# Integration of knowing

As Denise and I move through our experiencing towards understandings we ask ourselves, "what is it that we think we know?" "how are we with what we think we know?" and "how do we want to be with what we think we know?". The lived moment is where knowings from many parts of our selves and our world collide (Stern, 2004, p. 20). Sometimes there is congruence and sometimes there is dissonance between these colliding aspects. The intertwined meetings of these knowings can lead us to personal chaos and rigidity or to integrative flow and flourishing (Siegal, 2010, p. xxvi; Lett, 2009a, p. 3). It is my aim through this inquiry process to move towards integrative flow.

When the interflow between what we think we know, how we are with what we think we know and how we want to be are coherent we can experience an integrated state of being or 'integrative flow' (Lett, 2010; Siegal, 2010, p. 99). Daria Halprin (2003) in *The expressive body in life, art and therapy*, asserts that as "we become attuned and aligned physically, emotionally and mentally, we grow closer to fulfilling our potential as human beings" (p21). It is my aim to achieve a state of integrated flow where I can as a CAT be attuned and aligned physically and emotionally and mentally.

It then becomes important to notice when there is dissonance between what we think we know, how we are with what we think we know and how we want to be. We can develop internal conflict which we experience as states of chaos or rigidity (Siegal, 2010, p. xxvi). Lett (2010) refers to this as a misalignment of values (p. 2). This inquiry holds central to its values that in our search for meaning and understanding we are looking towards the possibilities of human flourishing where as human beings we can integrate our selves into an acceptable and meaningful relationship with our world.

# Intentional inquiry

The aim of this inquiry is to collaboratively access knowing in its many forms, seeking deeper understandings about the experience of starting out as a CAT. The underlying intention is to move away from dissonance and chaos, towards an integrative flow of experience and human flourishing. Through experiential creative arts based forms access is gained to the multiple ways in which we know, leading to deeper understandings about meanings and values held within experience. Through collaborative relationships with my research partner Denise and others, the inquiry opens to new knowings and possibilities. It is my intention to integrate the multiple knowings in new ways that allow for human flourishing as I work with others in my emerging role as a CAT.

multiple ways to know  
felt sense  
body  
feelings  
memories  
thoughts  
relational world  
collaborative meaning making  
integration of knowing  
meaning  
understanding  
values

Co-researching  
a process of  
discovery

collaboration  
companionship

## Meeting others

Meeting with others is a significant part of this research process. As this is a collaborative inquiry there is besides myself of course my co-researcher and co-companion Denise Howes. There are also participants, several supervisors, and a significant fellow student. Surprisingly I also discover that parts of my self appear as types of otherness.

### Workshop participants



Isa



Alice



Louisa



Nell



Maud



Cassie



Victoria



Julia

Denise and I meet with other starting out CATs via workshops to gather data about their experiences. They provide a valuable source of experiences that speak with our own. It is however becoming apparent as I move through my research process that my inquiry focus has become significantly about my own personal experience. Therefore you will not see reference to the participant data in this document. You will find references to the participants in Denise's document "From urgency to presence: becoming a creative arts therapist" (Howes, 2010) where the above pseudonyms are used.

## Supervisors



Supervisors

MIECAT supervisors and lecturers contribute to the inquiry process through their dialogues and support in supervision sessions. They attend to me as I explore my own becoming of a CAT. One supervisor in particular companions me through the inquiry process to attend to me and my research process.

## Fellow student



Rosalie (her real name)

Rosalie is a fellow student and friend who companions me to come to deeper understandings. A dialogue we share is significant to emerging understandings as I come to the final stages of my inquiry.

## Myself and Parts of my self

Along the way I also meet myself. I find that within me there are different parts of myself that are impacting on my decisions, my feelings, my behaviours and my life at many levels. I will introduce them in more detail in the following chapters.



Me



## Denise



Denise (her real name)

The relationship between Denise and my self is an intrinsic part of the inquiry process. Through our co-researching, co-companioning and co-participating I am coming to understand about myself and my self in relationship to other. An account of our relationship as it unfolds follows.

## Companionship for the journey

Denise and I live thousands of kilometres apart across Australia: I am in Queensland and she is in Melbourne. We need to be creative in organising our researching. To assist us in maintaining our researching relationship and track our data we utilise our computers, the internet and telephone. In particular we meet via SKYPE, keep a shared BLOG and converse via email and telephone. Our regular meetings via SKYPE allow us to meet face to face so that we can companion each other in the inquiry process and be present to each other almost as if in the same room. The private BLOG "creativecrispycat" becomes a means to track our co-researching relationship via a shared journaling space. We post descriptions, images and insights of our own and respond to each other in a dialogue about the relationship. This we hope offers transparency of how we are working together, keeping our relationship open and honest.

Importantly we also engage separately in our own experiences and journeys out into the landscape of becoming a CAT. We track this in our separate private multimodal journals with creative arts representations, poems, and references, our notes from conversations, interactions, readings and reflections.

Our conversations and companionship are in keeping with collaborative experiential arts based form of inquiry. We offer each other representations of experiences and also written reflections on what this means to us. What follows is an account of our unfolding research and relationship. My contributions are written in red text and Denise's are in green text.

journaling  
internet SKYPE email BLOG

## A shared diary: BLOG

My first images and reflections on our forming relationship is created and added to our BLOG. I select black paper and draw a picture of two ducks. I imagine this to be Denise and myself: that we have formed a new community between ourselves and in search of the rest of our kind. We nest together looking after each other, with our eyes looking to something new, but our bodies planted in safe soft grass. A bright sun shines on us. There is a lot of hope in this picture.



*Two little ducks meet along the path,  
They are curious about this new journey together,  
With their own eyes, and feet and feathers: each will experience  
it in their own way,  
Full of hope, their feet upon the ground, they look skyward  
And wonder ... And wander*

full of hope  
new  
curious  
wonder wander  
journey together



There is comfort in knowing I have a companion to share aspects of this project. Being able to reflect, have another pair of eyes, a witness, a hand to hold, some one who could see me and my experience and be there to help me make sense of it.



*You and I are the two ducks meeting on the road.*

*...A bit like the ugly duckling we don't quite know where we fit in yet. We can see something beautiful that we innately resonate with (the swans represent MIECAT and the community of arts therapists we long to join).*

For me there is something unnerving about the uncertainty of our paths and the stuff we don't yet know, there is my own unsureness around the others, the turkeys and the swans. But there is also something comforting in having someone to trust along the way in Denise.

don't quite know where we fit in yet  
uncertainty  
comfort trust



*We have orbited into  
each other's gravitational field  
travelling together as equals  
in parallel at present  
Inquiring into a common experiencing  
borne from a common quest  
though unique to each  
The co-creative space  
extending our self knowing  
with shared moments  
of emergence and "ah ha"  
feeding and guiding us.*

Denise's posting brings to our attention that through our relationship we can create a space for each of us to come to some self knowings as well as shared understandings to help us move forwards.

*The co-creative space extending our self knowing  
companionship  
self other  
us*

## Co creating base camp

I further explore the significance of Denise and my relationship. I create a representation using artwork and found items.



*I create a campsite where we can meet to share and negotiate the next phase of the journey. I include a fire to gather by (with a moral compass), two seats: one for me and one for you, a map for the journey and my kit bag packed ready to go.*

*The notion of the moral compass emerged from a group process with MA students during class. The idea of a heart combined with the directional arrows of a compass seems to capture for us a way of linking head and heart. I add this image as a fire.*

*As I try to gain meaning from where our co researching relationship is at present for me, Scott Peck's 'The Road Less Travelled' (Peck, 1993) comes to mind. He speaks of a good marriage being like a base camp. Both persons go out and climb mountains and take on new experiences but they come home to the base camp - where there is sharing, rest, nurturing, and support to go out and strive on another day.*

## Relational journey

Denise and I sit together at Denise's coffee table in her cosy lounge room, one large piece of paper between us. We each reach for a pastel and begin to draw, exploring being together on the page, in the research, in starting out.



*I recall us starting at different parts of the paper and connecting particularly with the symbols of the dots which is where we were attuned. You chose the crimson red pastel and me the vermillion red / orange one.*

*As I look at this representation now it seems messy and yet connected in some way. There are inter-minglings, places of dark and light, overlaps and empty places. Some things stand out on their own; others seem connected. I feel overwhelmed by so much and don't know where to focus and that is just how I feel about not only this artwork but also the project and us. Floundering in a sea of colour and texture: what do I hold onto? I sense you there and am glad where we touch, but I am also aware of my aloneness, and how I am unsure in that. Some clarity comes when we touch: a focus for a moment, a place to rest and be understood, a place to hold an emerging something. Thanks for these meeting places and all the challenges and insights they offer.*

## Inquiring together and apart

Whilst our co-researching and co-companioning is significant to the journey we also see that our separate journeys are unique. As we continue our interactions on the BLOG; the understandings around our togetherness and our ultimate aloneness are further explored.

### Aloneness in companioning and co researching

*I feel Gayle that you have very succinctly highlighted to my attention, two states of existence in our co-researching and companioning relationship. I sort of feel that in the end we are both alone in our unique journeys of becoming creative arts therapists as we are in our unique journeys in life.*

*Companioning and co-researching with each other do not take away that aloneness but exist alongside and provide a mirror of myriad reflections which enable us to gain moments of meaning as well as inspiration in our individual experiencing.*

*As I continue to write the word "interdependence" comes to mind.*

### The leap is always alone

*I am getting a picture of a circus with acrobats who rely on each other to stay safe but when it comes to the moment of flying through the air the acrobat is alone and really needs to be able to trust in himself to manoeuvre to a safe and satisfying landing. There is sense of adventure and risk: but also a sense of knowing what to do.*

*There is also a sense that things have to be done before the performance to build skills, strengths and back up plans and then there is a lot of faith in 'leap and the net appears'.*

*These three pictures also seem to offer something to the conversation (see next page).*



leap  
strength  
meaning faith  
aloneness  
companioning trust

As time passes we explore more and more of our own paths and come back at times to our base camp to reflect on the emerging knowings and the confusions together.



Untangling is easier with two

*In being able to companion each other as we decipher our own personal experiences and values we are like two friends. One is knitting a jumper and her wool has become tangled...we work together one holding the wool and jumper whilst the other unravels the threads. Two sets of eyes at times notice what is happening and guide the process, but when all is said and done each woman takes back her work into her own hands to continue to knit her own work of art.*

*The disengaging from the untangling process allows each woman to get on with her own business of creating....they can ask for help if needed, they might point out a dropped stitched that wasn't noticed, they can admire the differences and samenesses of their creations. They will take the finished product into their lives to wear themselves.*

time passes

untangling  
untangling  
untangling  
untangling



Tangle, travels and our base camp

*What a beautiful metaphor on untangling. Yes, how much easier it is to sort out a tangled skein of wool when there is another to hold part of it - like a base with her hand opening out the tangled threads exposing a way through to continue winding the ball - ins and outs, overs and unders - perfect co-reflexivity. I like the metaphor of each of us being a base to the other - a place to come back and rest, to off load the back pack, to make sense and be sustained for another day's travels. The photo of the two women knitting - side by side - together and alone. I think our photo taken on March 20/21 at MIECAT gives me a strong sense of the base camp which has emerged through our co-researching - there is you, there is me and there is the base camp of our co-researching relationship that has been created and we also need to upkeep.*

there is you  
there is me  
there is the base camp of our co-researching relationship



## Separate journeys

In our working together Denise and I create together a relationship that allows us to attend to each other and ourselves. Our base camp provides a safe place to connect, to share, to hold, to untangle, to reflect and to create. It has also become a place from which we can leap with new understandings out into our lives. In Being-In, Being-For and Being-With each other we support each other to explore and deepen our understandings of our individual experiences as we become CATs (Moustakas C. , 1995).

Eventually there comes time in our research when we have to turn away from each other and turn inwards to ourselves to make sense of what we have been exploring for our selves, and what this might mean in our own lives as we journey toward becoming CATs. We each begin to write our own account of the research in our own thesis documents.

I again invite you to also look to Denise's account of this project in her document, 'From urgency to presence: becoming a creative arts therapist' (Howes, 2010).

turn away  
turn inwards  
own account  
own thesis

Data tells  
a story

descriptions  
feelings  
keywords  
representations  
images

## Meeting myself on the road

As I explore the data that I have collected over 6 months I come to the realisation that the significance of the inquiry is becoming for me about my own personal story of transitioning. For Denise her inquiry is significantly orbiting around the participants and the landscape of creative art therapy. It is evident that there are resonant themes emerging that are echoed by the participant's experiences. But it is time to make choices about my focus. I choose to stay with my own emerging story of transition.

I meet with my supervisor to look at the data as I am not sure which way to go with it and I feel overwhelmed. I explain that I have been shuffling data about for some time now trying to organise it: I have been getting confused and then bored, and I keep moving to different places around the house to try and settle into it.

To start we look at the rather cumbersome (original) title of the project that Denise and I have come up with together:

***Project title: Dancing the Path of Transition:  
Spirals of Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny***

*A collaborative multimodal arts based inquiry into entering the profession of creative arts therapy and the community of creative arts therapists.*

It feels like a mouthful and there are parts of the title that no longer feel like they fit with my experience of the inquiry.

My supervisor asks what part of the title I resonate with. I answer my supervisor by enthusiastically pointing out that I feel alive with the idea of 'dancing the path of transition'. I feel that as I am moving and dancing along the path I see two parts of my self struggle in the dance: both are coming at it in different ways. I believe that my 'head' wants to choreograph an amazing and perfect dance that is impressive to others. And

the 'body' wants to feel its way through the dance responding to the music and the emerging landscape.

My supervisor suggests I stay with this personal experience and that I cluster into groupings some of the data that might resonate with these emerging notions around head and body that I had mentioned during our discussion.

The importance of having a companion is evident here in that it allows me to stay present to my own material but also to gain access to her clarity around what I am talking about. She is able to reflect back to me and name the significant struggle between my head and body. I am now able to recognise this experience within my self and also within the mass of data. I notice the images of the 'insatiable task master' and 'the little girl' that have come from a companioning session with Denise. These two images seem to represent these parts of myself: the head and the body that struggle together.

At this point I will do a sharp u-turn on the road and take you back to that companioning session just as I did in the moment of looking at the images with my supervisor.

struggle together      head  
body  
dancing the path of transition

## Reflexive turn back in time: Drawing out the voices from a moment of experience

I am experiencing a frenzy of studying and am concerned about the lack of self care I am affording myself. Denise and I meet via SKYPE and she companions me as I explore this.

Denise asks me: 'where do you feel that?' and 'What is it like?' I use movement and gesture, as I describe my experience to her. Metaphors began to arise of a task master and a little girl. We recognise an emergent theme (for both of us) around 'obligation' to others but not to self.

We decide to create some representations. So across several thousand kilometres each of us turn to our pastels and begin to scratch marks on paper, our computer cameras still on, we can hear the scratching of pastels on paper as we both make our marks.

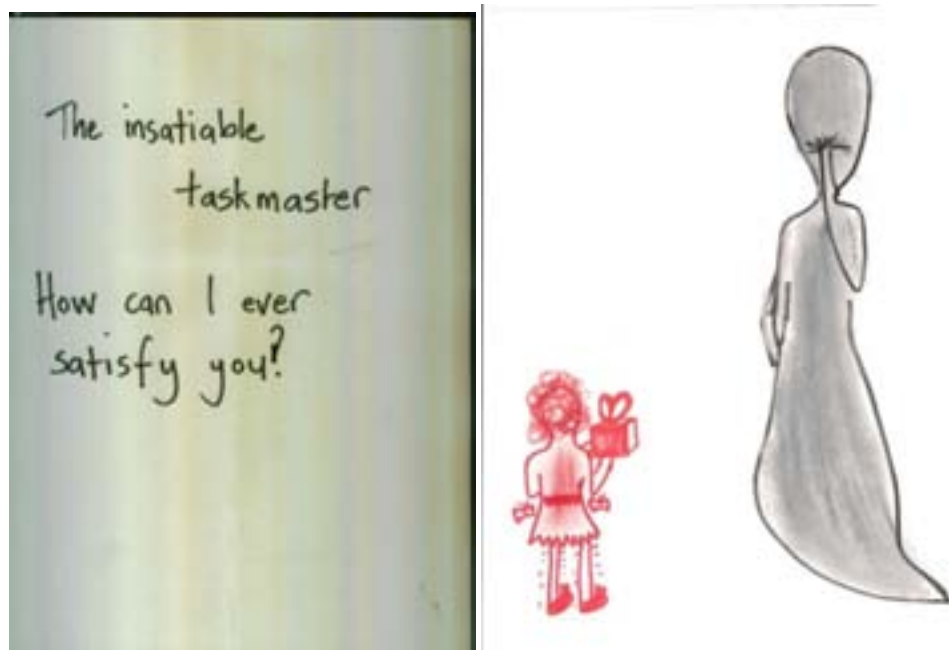


My image of the task master and the girl.

reflexive  
task master  
girl

I represent the feeling I have when I am trying to prove myself through my frenzied activities: that I feel like I am a little girl offering something up from herself, she has a swirling, gut and fuzzy energy about her: she is anxious that she won't be acknowledged for the precious thing that she brings: a gift, something growing. She stands before 'the insatiable task master' who looks down on her. He is faceless but is surrounded by important books of knowledge. She is anxious.

Denise also draws a task master who stands and judges the little girl and what she brings, his hand is on his chin, and he is thinking and judging her. She is nervous with butterflies and shaky knees bringing her offering of a gift that she feels is now insignificant and not enough.



Denise's image of the task master and the girl.

We share the images and are struck by their similarity. From our discussion we have both gleaned the idea of a small anxious girl standing before a demanding force, wanting to offer up something and yet afraid of not being enough.

These reflexive turns when the mind goes back and reflects on a past moment that resonates with a current moment seem to confirm that this 'something' emerging here and now is significant in

some way. The re-emergence of the same 'ways of being' in different forms points to a patterned way of being that exists within me.

I am inspired to move into all my data which is spread on the table. I know that there are images and texts that resonate with the 'task master' (head) and 'little girl' (body) aspects of my self. I place the images of the 'insatiable task master' and the 'little girl' on the floor and fairly quickly other artworks from the table and around the room call to me to be placed with one or the other. I cluster some of the data from the table into these two main groups.

In the 'task master' pile I toss images of armour and desperate people who seem overcome by a force outside of themselves. Even as I arrange images within this data my supervisor notices how breathless I have become. I notice that I feel quite urgent and driven. I call this group of images the 'Insatiable Task Master' as I recognise that there is something impossible about meeting his demands.

In the 'little girl' pile there are appearing images around my desire to be accepted: a small child offering a gift nervously, small ducks looking skyward hopefully, and on a journey towards the community of swans. I call this group 'Seen, Heard, Understood, Accepted, Valued: Embodied Little Girl' as I recognise that her unfulfilled desire to be accepted is significant to her experience that is often reflected through sensations of anxiety in the body. I also begin to recognise that there is something in her that she values sharing, that in some way delights her, that is being overshadowed by task master.

As I continue to work between the two developing clusters I also notice that there seems to be images that sit between them: images about being connected, disconnected, inside, outside, bridges, mirrors, walls or places of meeting. A new cluster develops between them. I call this 'Ways of Meeting'.

I also notice that there is an image that is about another way of being: something I long for and yet something that I also know I am able to do in some instances. These images represent moments of when I know something different: there are images that speak to me of moments of being able to not be in a state of struggle. I know I can experience it. I just am not able to easily access it. So I gather images and texts around this. As I work compiling this cluster my supervisor and I notice that I have moved into a different way of breathing and being that is easy, slow and focused. I call this 'Breath of Me'.

I now have four significant clusters: 'Insatiable Task Master', 'Seen, Heard, Understood, Accepted, Valued: Embodied Little Girl', 'Ways of Meeting' and 'Breath of Me'. So as my eyes run over the mass of unsorted data and my hands reach for the familiar pieces of paper I toss them knowingly into the piles on the floor. Other art works that are hanging around the room catch my eye and are tossed into the mix. Images and texts are also left on the table as they hold no interest for me at this time or are saying in a less clear way the same ideas forming before me. I know I can return to them at some point if I feel I need to.

This reduction of the mass of data into four significant clusters of images allows my supervisor and I to notice that a story might be held here: a simple story but a significant story. Together we attempt to make sense of what has happened.

She asks, what do I think I know at this point? I recognise that there is a struggle between parts of myself: my head which can be like an insatiable task master and my body which can be like an embodied child anxious and unsure. They are often operating separately and when they meet their relationship can be a struggle. I also recognise that there is something else I know about being present, breathing, focused and calm that seems easier.



## Data as stepping stones: building a landscape

Let's now look at the clusters of data gathered on the floor. I wish to share with you the significant stepping stones they provide as I walk amongst them to find deeper meaning.

Each significant image gathered into each cluster is explained briefly below. I acknowledge the source of each piece of data, the feelings and knowing that I recognise as I choose them, and I highlight keywords that arise. Acknowledging the source of each of these images allows me to track the non linear emergence and reoccurrence of feelings through a variety of forms that have been taking place through out the last 6 months.

Acknowledging the feelings and memories that arise as I choose each image/text also allows me to see that the embodied knowing about these images are linked to something within me that is significant, even when I am not sure as to the significance yet. By highlighting key words that stand out as I explore I am reducing my experience into the significance that stands out for me now.

clusters

Insatiable Task Master

Seen Heard Understood Accepted Valued: Embodied Little Girl  
Ways of Meeting

Breath of Me

# Cluster

## Insatiable Task Master





Precious  
Jiggling gut  
Force  
Small girl

As you now know this is one of the most significant images that emerged for me when I was first beginning this inquiry. The small girl in red with jiggling in the gut and something precious: something growing. The business man figure with his no eyes is beaming force over her: he is the task master that demands me to meet expectations. He wants me to succeed, he wants to protect. I know this urgent demanding in my self that drives me to keep going and doing, meanwhile there is also a part of me that is anxious about this and overwhelmed.



Desperation  
Overwhelm



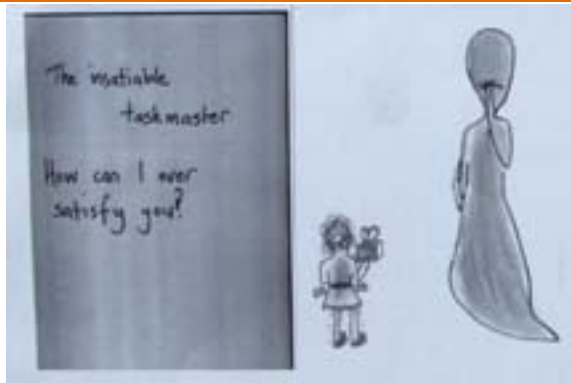
Dragged along  
against will  
Have too

These two images were used in a representation I created with a group of starting out CATs. I grab them now to include in the cluster as they hold such strong emotion and bodily overwhelm and desperation about being dragged along and prodded against ones own will. I feel this in my own body when I am out of my depth with trying to meet demands.



Business  
No power  
Large hand

I notice this image that I have carried for almost 20 years: of the man being moved around a chess board by a large hand. He is dressed for business, but seems to hold no power. I feel like this as a starting out creative arts therapist and as a teacher: being moved about to meet expectations of other.



Small offering  
Task master  
Requires a lot  
Trying  
Satisfy  
Insatiable

This visual response from Denise has been referred to already in the inquiry. The insatiable task master is present in many ways: from the experience of doing the research project, to the experience of starting out. I am small and offering up something to a task master that requires a lot from me and I know that I will never be free of trying to satisfy it while we are in relationship like this.



Eyes that stare  
Judge  
Struggle  
Fear

I notice these eyes amongst the mix of data and even though I created this whilst reflecting on a struggling personal relationship. The eyes seem to stare at me angrily and with judgement. I also notice that they hold fear. The way I can perceive and can be perceived is reflected here.

The following images of armour (on this and the next page) resonate with my desire to protect myself. They are dark and scratchy and full of energy. Task master is trying to protect, to armour, to strike up action. There is something about the armour and how it can get in the way of connecting to other that catches my attention.



Boundaries  
Clear  
Relationship

This image of armour is a representation of my growing awareness of my need to have clear boundaries around client/companion relationships.





Boundaries  
Armour  
Protection  
Fear  
Anxiety  
Defensive  
Expectations  
Avoidance of pain  
Urgency  
Dark  
Scratchy  
Energy

More images of armour created in response to an issue with a friend. Writing keywords: boundaries, armour and protection, unclear, expectations, fear, anxiety, and avoidance of pain, I notice an emerging theme. When I am overwhelmed and my life unstable I can feel scared and defensive. The armour is somehow related to this need to protect. There is an urgency to protect and relieve pain.





Deep Sadness  
Weak  
Frail  
Bleeding heart  
Anxiety  
Overwhelmed  
Depleted

This image was created at the same time as the armour pictures. It shows what lies beneath the armour when I am overwhelmed with doing: a sad, weak and frail being with a bleeding heart. I am beginning to notice that when I actually stop 'doing' that this is how I feel...the anxiety becomes deep sadness.

## What do I think I now know?

This cluster holds for me images that are anxiety producing. There is a sense of desperation, expectation, judgement and lack of choice. I notice there is an urgent need to protect, to avoid pain, and to avoid feeling sad through attempts at controlling things around me and in me. I recognise this experience in my relationships with others: at work, at home and in my movement towards becoming a CAT. I can become controlling and task driven in situations to try and meet what I perceive are others expectations and will often deny my own needs. As I never seem to be able to meet all the demands I become overwhelmed, exhausted and angry. I also notice an underlying deep sadness.

As I move towards becoming a CAT I am often driven by the desire to meet all the business requirements as soon as possible. I am exploring affiliated bodies that I can sign up with to legitimate my practice, insurance, business needs (plans, ABN, where to work, who to work with, advertising, resource collecting, and experience gathering). The urgency with which I am seeking has set me all a dither. As I slow down I notice that I am tired and sad that there doesn't seem to be 'room for me' in the picture. I notice I can also feel like this in my work as a teacher.

As I now look at the images I notice they are dark, scratchy, and violent, there is imbalance of power. Hands are busy doing: trying to connect, grabbing, offering, protecting and expressing overwhelm.

Desperation Expectation  
Judgement  
Angry Sad  
Protect Control  
Task driven Urgent  
Overwhelmed Doing

# Cluster

Seen, Heard, understood, Accepted valued:  
Embodied Little Girl



Meeting Places  
These places where we bleed  
into each other  
To know each other  
Through our touching deeper  
Into the intimate places of  
feeling  
It can be messy  
This bleeding  
Raw and exposed  
Seeping into the corners  
Where we hid our shame at  
being human.

But once touched with loving  
hands  
Behold!  
Oh Joy! Oh Bliss!  
I am known and I am  
complete.





Child self  
Seen  
Heard  
Understood  
Small  
Overwhelmed  
Bigger  
Stronger

This image of a small child bringing a gift to another with shaking knees and butterflies was created by Denise in response to my exploration of a moment of anxiety about meeting expectations of others and my growing understanding about my inner child. I know this feeling in my gut when I am in situations where I perceive that I am inadequate.



Community  
Together  
Hope

When I created this image of two ducks I imagined it to be Denise and myself: that we have formed a new community between ourselves and in search of the rest of our kind. I love the way we nest together looking after each other, with our eyes looking to something new, but our bodies planted in safe soft grass. A bright sun shines on us. There is a lot of hope in this picture. I remember the support that comes from my relationship with Denise. I recognise that I have already experienced being seen, heard and understood.

As I place this image representing Denise and my relationship I notice that I feel a sense of gratitude for Denise and my connection, and the safety and hope our relationship offers.



Values  
Conflict  
Meet  
Longing  
Connection  
Validation  
Seen  
Heard  
Understood

I look to this image again and see that I have represented here not only my starting out as a CAT with Denise but also my struggles with my work as a primary drama teacher. I am now drawn to the depiction I wrote at the time that explains the story:

*...I am in a phase of transition and journeying. I see myself in conflict with the values of the place I now work and that I must jump through hoops to impress the turkeys who don't necessarily stick to what they say. There is hypocrisy and I am tired from trying to make myself fit. I want to move on. I draw a path that meets another path and I see that I am at the same time on a new journey and I have met with other ducks like me. (...). A bit like the ugly duckling we don't quite know where we fit in yet. We can see something beautiful that we innately resonate with (the swans represent MIECAT and the community of art therapists we long to join). I feel that there is bridging to be done so I draw a pier between the swans and ducks.*

The significance of this image is very strong for me as it holds within it my longing for being valued in my work: to be seen, heard and understood for the work I do. I am longing for connection and validation in my work community.



Holding  
Willingness to hold the  
uncomfortable  
Bleed to death  
Unaware  
Attention

As I choose this image I am reminded that I created it as a representation of my ability to hold doubts and perceived threats in a companioning relationship: things that might be uncomfortable. There is something significant about a willingness to hold something or someone even though it may prick or be uncomfortable: I know that I can learn to hold in other ways so that I can be with the uncomfortable and not bleed to death. This is how I want to be with others when I companion them, but it is also how I want others to be accepting of me. I notice that I can be pricked when I am unaware and this then brings it to my attention.



Space between  
Similarities  
Differences  
Trying to penetrate

This image was created in response to my experience as a companion with a client. The space between the two figures seems significant. The similarities and differences of the two figures also draws my attention. Something is trying to penetrate. I remember how my client also seeks to be known just like I do and it is in our relational space of companioning that there is potential for this to happen.





Pruning  
Tending  
Environment  
Landscape  
Place  
Room for me

This tree in a park reminds me of a recurring image of trees that has emerged during my inquiry. The tree draws its water and nutrients from its place in the landscape. It may need pruning and tending. It will be affected by the seasons and the tree needs to respond to its changing environment if it is to survive. There is a growing sense in me that I can be part of the landscape of creative arts therapists and there is room for me. The tree image reminds me that I can manage myself in the landscape with the choices I make.

*Meeting Places*  
*These places where we bleed*  
*into each other*  
*To know each other*  
*Through our touching deeper*  
*Into the intimate places of*  
*feeling*  
*It can be messy*  
*This bleeding*  
*Raw and exposed*  
*Seeping into the corners*  
*Where we hid our shame at*  
*being human.*

*But once touched with loving*  
*hands*  
*Behold!*  
*Oh Joy! Oh Bliss!*  
*I am known and I am complete.*



Meeting places  
Know each other  
Touching  
Intimate  
Feeling  
Raw exposed  
Being human

This image and poem I prepared for a presentation for MIECAT captures for me the essence of longing that I hold within me in my inner child place where I desire to be accepted as I am: including my messy emotions. The poem is extremely significant to my emotional experience and I still respond in my gut when I read it. I know the bliss of being seen, heard, and understood by others. It is so important to me.

## What do I think I now know?

As I look at this cluster of images I recognise myself. I am reminded of myself as a child who longed to be understood emotionally. I am also reminded of myself at work where I long to do fulfilling work and be acknowledged and valued for what I bring. I am reminded of myself with my family and friends and how I seek recognition and emotional connection. I see myself as I attempt to find my way into the professional field of creative art therapy: I have a strong desire to share this skill that nourishes me with others, I long to find a place doing this in the professional world and I fear that I will not be accepted because what I bring is not what others can understand and I might fail in sharing it. I remember my very familiar feelings of anxiousness when I sense that others do not understand me, or value who I am or what I do. I feel the anxiety in my body as tingling under my skin, a heavy swirling gut, sleep becomes difficult as I worry, and I can become overwhelmed by it.

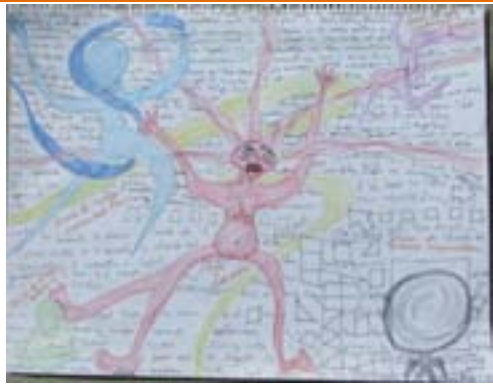
As I look at this collection of images I notice the orange green tones and images of holding, looking, seeking, bleeding, space between, apart and together.

Holding  
Looking  
Seeking  
Bleeding  
Space between  
Space apart  
Together

# Cluster

## ways of meeting





Try  
Frenzy  
Busyness  
Chaos

I created this crazy sketch after an experience of dancing Gabrielle Roth's 5 rhythms (Roth & Mirrors, 1984) in my pool in an attempt to try and calm myself from frenzies of trying to do too much. I am struck by the busyness of this picture the chaos and the frenzy. And my gut churns with recognition.



Choices  
Response  
Demands

This image was created by Denise in response to my decision to put this project away in a suitcase for two weeks. It was about me meeting the task master in a new way: with the ability to make a choice about how I respond to his demands.



Bridging  
Between  
Intention  
Language  
Accessible

This image is hanging in my art space as I cluster the images. My supervisor asks me about it and I notice its significance again; in particular the bridging of the two sides of the image. I am beginning to see that there is a possibility for reaching across the space between to make connections.



Mind  
Body  
Conversation  
Meaning

I created this image as I came to an understanding about the importance to me of my mind and body being able to converse with each other. I love the natural way the parts of me are contained within the one image and are accepting of each other. I long for this within myself and I recognise that whilst I can do it I am not always able.

## What do I think I now know?

As I sit with this collection of images I am struck by the busyness and frenzy that I recognise as a familiar way of attempting to meet my world. I am so busy 'doing' a lot of the time. There are attempts to control things. I put things out of sight, I try to build bridges. I am left with a great sense of trying to get things right and yet the more I try the more crazy it can become.

My supervisor offers a few words that hit me as significant. "Perhaps there is a need to control the need to control." The image that is about the parts of my self talking to each other seems significant and as I look at it I get a sense of things falling into place and making sense. If only I could do this in the way I meet myself and others more regularly, but without the urgent need to control it.

Busy Doing  
trying to get things right  
frenzy  
Building bridges  
meet others  
need to control the need to control



# Cluster

## Breath of Me





Light  
Opening  
Feel my body  
Breathe  
Aware

I created this image of the butterfly during a gathering of Brisbane starting out CATs. We had been dancing to Gabrielle Roth's "Initiation" (1984). I had moved through the dancing from feeling tight and bound by my head to an experience of deep breathing and presence in my body. I said "it is nice to dance, feel my body, breathe and be aware of my aches and pains". As I look at it in my sorting process I feel light and breathy in my body.



Growth  
Stillness  
Movement  
Trust

This image resonates with the desire for self growth I am feeling as I sift through the data. As I look at this image I notice new growth in her hand, stillness, movement. I feel I can have trust in the process of my own growth taking place even when I can't see it myself.



Nature  
Emerging  
Flourishing  
Breath deeper

This image 'Amazonia' (Salerno) sat amongst the data I have collected for quite some time. I am now drawn to the woman as a part of nature, her emerging, and flourishing. I know I feel much easier in my body in nature, I breathe deeper, easier, slower and I feel good.



Light  
Eyes open  
Movement

I created this image whilst exploring the idea of armour (see 'Insatiable Task Master' cluster) and I imagined this as a part of me that seeks to change the armoured way of being for something better. She is free, light and has movement about her. Her eyes wide open to see more fully, her sensual mouth is slightly open: she is sensual and breathes big and easy and so do I as I look at this picture.



Big  
Small  
Reflection  
Potential

I found this image in an old magazine in my collage materials and I remembered the reoccurring duck metaphors and the idea I have been playing with around my size: I can sometimes feel too big and sometimes too small in social interactions. This big and small reflective image says something about the big and small inside my self: I remember how I have been afraid to be too big, and I am afraid when I am too small. The big part of me could be like this majestic pure and graceful bird that is the potential already inherent in the smaller one. I have a longing to be comfortable with my self in interactions with others, and within myself. I am now considering the perceptions I hold of myself as I enter the world and interact with others. I notice I now want to meet myself with appreciation and acceptance.

## What do I think I now know?

As I look at this collection of images I notice the movement of swirling lines, and the common themes of opening, growth and movement: the images of nature: the butterfly, the woman as a tree, the duckling looking to its grown reflection, and the young plant in the girl's hand. The soft pink green hues are gentle and natural.

I see that I do know about a more graceful way of being that is softer, embodied and natural. That in meeting my self and the world there is the possibility of being open to growth and movement that comes from my self.

I notice in myself as I interact with the images that I am breathing easier and slower, my movement is less urgent, less rushed. The breath seems significant in grounding me into the moment in my sensual body so I can be more open and aware to my experiences.

opening  
growth  
sensual  
natural  
gentle movement  
slower softer  
aware

# Maps of experience in an emerging landscape

I now take the clusters and map them to see how I experience these emergent knowings in my life experiences. As I map where, when, with whom, and how I am experiencing the 'Insatiable Task Master', 'Seen, Heard, Understood, Accepted, Valued: Embodied Little Girl', 'Ways of Meeting', and 'Breath of Me' in my life, I am able to isolate the core values and conflicts that underlie the experiences. This allows me to access the themes of my patterned ways of being. I can then ask 'how is it that I want to be with this?' And what does this mean for me as I become a CAT? From here the possibilities of choices begins to open up to new ways of being that are more aligned with my preferred values.

mapping  
values  
themes conflicts  
patterned ways of being



# Mapping Insatiable Task Master



<b>What happens to me (emotions)?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel an urgency to get a task done</li> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Can't stop</li> <li>• Rushing In my head</li> <li>• Struggling for a sense of relief</li> <li>• Get angry if interrupted or if things don't go to plan</li> <li>• Get panicked if I can't find an answer</li> <li>• Push through coldness, tiredness, hunger.</li> <li>• If I stop: I feel sick in the stomach like throwing up, spinning</li> </ul>
<b>When does it happen?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lot of the time</li> <li>• Habitually</li> <li>• When there is an outcome or expectation outside of me</li> <li>• When there are expectations outside of myself to be met: work, business admin for being a CAT</li> <li>• When I place demands on myself: management of home, master's project,</li> <li>• When I want to keep things structured and controlled</li> </ul>
<b>With whom does it happen?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With self</li> <li>• Family</li> <li>• Imagined creative arts community that I am entering</li> <li>• At work: classroom, with administrative stuff,</li> </ul>
<b>Where does it happen?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At work (now I able to say 'no' to him there)</li> <li>• At home</li> <li>• At my studies</li> <li>• At my starting to be a CAT</li> </ul>
<b>How does it happen? (behaviour)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an outcome or expectation outside of me</li> <li>• I feel an urgency to get the task done</li> <li>• It is about getting it done and ticked off so as to feel relief but relief never comes because there is always more to do</li> <li>• There is a need for relief, definitive answers, for knowing, for things being done and controlled. This is about control and there is great anxiety around this. I need to Do and Know in order to feel that I am being correct, that I am OK and safe in the world.</li> <li>• I Start making lists</li> <li>• It lingers in my mind</li> <li>• I get frenzied with everything; as it has to be NOW</li> <li>• I try to ignore my body's needs in order to get the job done.</li> <li>• I resent interruptions</li> </ul>

### **Which values and conflicts are emerging?**

- There are values around meeting the needs of others
- Gaining respect
- Being seen to be doing the right thing
- Safety and Control
- Conflicts are that I do not respect myself and my own needs
- There is a sense of this not being right for me
- I put others needs/requirements / expectations before my own

### **What are the emergent themes?**

- I have a need to have a sense of control over things in my life because I want to protect myself, feel safe and be recognised.
- When I want to keep things in control and structured (which is most of the time), I have an urgent desire to get it done and get it right. I feel anxious. I make lists, and work unrelentingly (even ignoring my body's needs) in a struggle to get relief and feel safe in the world.
- When I am in a working frenzy I become angry if things don't go to plan or I am interrupted.
- When I am in a working frenzy I do not stop until I get the job done... but there is always work to do and so relief never comes
- When I am doing working frenzies I become overwhelmed and tired.

### **What do I think I now know?**

I urgently try to control and complete tasks to satisfy others, gain their approval and feel safe in my interactions. I often will neglect my own needs when I am trying to please others.

### **How do I want to be with this?**

I want to be more authentic in my interactions with others in the accomplishing of the work I do. I want to be present in my self so that I can know what I need whilst also being aware of the needs of others. I want balance and harmony.

### **What do I think I now know about this pattern of being in my starting out as a CAT?**

I am aware that as a starting out CAT I am concerned about the lack of understanding about what I do. I feel inadequate, and that I don't bring enough. I am busy gathering resources and making sure that I know all I need to know about the business expectations of being a CAT: insurance, ABN, affiliated bodies, supervision requirements, advertising through web, flyers and business cards: and the importance of meeting the market with the right words to satisfy their needs and promote myself. I am obsessed with making sure I am going to be a legitimate CAT. The choices I am making are based on what I think the community wants me to do and I am not listening to my inner felt sense of anxiety over this. I am not really connecting to the community. I am too often busy and overwhelmed.

I can now notice when I am being obsessive and overwhelmed and see that I have a choice: though I often still choose the 'doing the right thing' behaviour at the moment. Sometimes I am choosing differently.

Mapping Seen, Heard, Understood,  
Accepted, Valued: Embodied  
Little Girl



<p><b>What happens to me (emotions)?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotions: impassioned, frightened, sad, angry, anxious</li> <li>• I am excited about what I want to bring forward;</li> <li>• But very near the surface I am frightened of not being accepted, there is churning in the belly and a dizziness in the head</li> <li>• I then become sad about not being seen heard and understood by others, my throat aches</li> <li>• I can become angry that I am not valued, I feel I cannot control myself I want to express this explosive anger inside</li> <li>• I also become anxious about what I can do</li> <li>• I become overwhelmed by feelings</li> <li>• I hit a wall: I feel useless</li> <li>• I want to protect myself to be safe: I become anxious</li> <li>• It feels risky:</li> <li>• I might not be enough</li> <li>• I might be seen to be bad for having a different idea</li> <li>• I might be put down for not agreeing</li> <li>• I can feel too big (unacceptable) and too small (not bringing enough)</li> <li>• I am anxious that I might be rejected or ignored</li> <li>• I reject myself and my feelings</li> </ul>
<p><b>When does it happen?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When I am seeking to validate my place within my work place or emerging work</li> <li>• When I want to show myself and what I value to others</li> <li>• When I want to find a place for me and what I do</li> <li>• Often</li> </ul>
<p><b>With whom does it happen?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With authority figures</li> <li>• Work colleagues</li> <li>• Arts therapy community and related organisations</li> <li>• My intimate and wider communities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Where does it happen?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At work</li> <li>• The professional context</li> <li>• Intimate relationships</li> </ul>
<p><b>How does it happen? (behaviour)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When I want to bring myself forward to meet the other and show myself and my ideas I struggle because I come across a great wall of fear and anxiety: I know there is something valuable in me to share with others, But I am scared of rejection/failure/being hurt. It might hurt me</li> <li>• Task Master then usually appears to take control of things</li> </ul>



### **Which values and conflicts are emerging?**

- I can value what I do and who I am
- I value myself
- I value place for me within community
- But I doubt that I have enough skills, or that I am acceptable
- I seek validation from others for what I do and who I am
- I believe that I am unacceptable in some ways

### **What are the emergent themes?**

- I have valued ideas about the ways I want to work that are important to me.
- When I want to bring myself forward to meet others with ideas and/or feelings of importance to me I seek validation and this makes me afraid of rejection, afraid of not being enough of not being anything really.
- When I bring myself forward to meet others with ideas and/or feelings of importance to me I am anxious that I do not have enough skills, or proof of my abilities
- When I bring myself forward to meet others with ideas and/or feelings of importance to me, if I am not validated by the other I often reject myself and my ideas.
- When I meet with others my body responds to this meeting and I get a strong sense of how I am being with them.

## What do I think I now know?

I seek to be seen, heard, understood, accepted, and valued by others. Whilst I understand these are basic human needs, I notice that when I bring myself forward to others I can experience overwhelming levels of anxiety around not being accepted, understood or valued. I notice that I place a lot of worth on their external validation.

This reminds me of my childhood and the circumstances in which I grew up. I lived in a busy household where my mother was a fulltime carer of my father. Under these circumstances the business of doing and caring for others was vital to our family's survival. I watched my mother care for my father even when she was exhausted and overwhelmed. As the youngest child I often wanted to help, I often wasn't capable, but when I was able I gained a great sense of recognition and satisfaction.

As an adult I can very easily recall the anxiety I felt as a child as I experienced my mother's frenzied working often above her own needs and above my needs. It was a necessary part of our life but I still remember what those moments felt like when there was a lot of (unintentional) rejection of my feelings and emotional pain. I see that I learnt that this emotional part of my self can get in the way of work to be done or my being accepted. I would try to fix it, ignore it, master it or get rid of it. And when I couldn't I would get angry and sad. I now notice that this pattern still exists within me today.

I understand that some of my nervousness about becoming a CAT is a natural anxiety of being that emerges as human beings encounter change and the unknown. But this is also part of a strongly ingrained patterned way of being that can tie me up in knots of self doubt and anxiety rendering me quite useless and frozen in unproductive behaviour.

It has become apparent to me that when I am able to be present to and aware of my embodied feelings I get insight into how I am in the world. I can sense when I am anxious about my situation



through the rising sensations in my body. I can get a felt sense of what nourishes me and what depletes me. This is something I now value and can be put to great use.

### **How do I want to be with this?**

I no longer want to reject this part of myself. I want to embrace my embodied self. I want to be present to its sensations and attend to it so that I can gain deeper understanding about myself in the world.

I no longer wish to be reactive with anxiety and fear. I wish to be responsive with understanding and integrity. I want to be able to meet others in a more open and equal way.

I want to be able to value myself. I want to be able to validate my own feelings and ideas and be more resilient to others' rejections. I want to enter into my intimate relationships, my community and my work confidently and authentically. I do not want to be reactive from fears and anxieties about my not being enough to others.

### **What do I think I now know about this pattern of being in my starting out as a CAT?**

As a starting out CAT I recognise that I bring with me an embodied anxious child self. I want to value what this part of me brings and utilise her assets. I want to engage my embodiment and what it can teach me about myself as I enter the field of creative arts therapy.

In taking time to acknowledge my relationship to the world I then hope I will find ways to bring myself more confidently to my work. I can possibly validate myself to myself and to others.

## Mapping Ways of Meeting



This representation shows a very familiar and difficult way that I meet with other and also the parts of my self. This is often my dominant way of meeting (in black). On rare occasions I recognise that I can meet myself and others in a more accepting way. (in blue)

<p><b>What happens to me (emotions)?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I want to meet others expectations: this manifests as organising, administration...so it is not about me at all,</li> <li>• When I turn up to others stuff there is no room for me. I feel I can't arrive messy - have to sort self out or I panic</li> <li>• I need to control</li> <li>• Seeking peace and safety</li> <li>• Rarely there is acceptance</li> </ul>
<p><b>When does it happen?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dominant way of being: When body and mind meet in a place of battle</li> <li>• New meetings when I meet the system/admin</li> <li>• When I meet the system of how I think the relationship should be</li> <li>• Making installations</li> <li>• When meeting myself (body and mind)</li> <li>• Rarely: When body and mind meet in a place of acceptance it is different, calm and graceful</li> </ul>
<p><b>With whom does it happen?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Others</li> <li>• Self</li> <li>• Husband</li> <li>• Admin stuff / the system</li> <li>• Admin</li> <li>• Creative Arts Practitioners: acceptance</li> <li>• Sometimes with the above</li> </ul>
<p><b>Where does it happen?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within me</li> <li>• Meeting self with self</li> <li>• School/work</li> <li>• Intimate relationships</li> <li>• School: classroom, staffroom</li> <li>• Rarely: I am starting to trust that I know what I am doing and work emergently</li> <li>• The empty space</li> </ul>
<p><b>How does it happen? (behaviour)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitually</li> <li>• I feel I need to meet expectations of others/system and this comes first before myself. I am afraid so I need to get control. I present the administration stuff first and use it as armour, but then feel there is no place for me. I am not present. I am busy. I ignore my own needs.</li> <li>• Rarely there is meeting in a present way, I just turn up and be present that is calmer and more respectful of everyone including me.</li> </ul>

### **Which values and conflicts are emerging?**

- I value what my body and my mind bring to my experience. However they are often conflicted in what they want to achieve in the moment: the parts of my self do not often value each other.
- I value others and meeting with others, but I will often value them over myself and what I am feeling and desiring/needing.
- I value feeling safe and in control.
- But the need to control is in conflict with my need to really meet others.

### **What are the emergent themes?**

- When I attempt to meet with others I present myself with controlled proof of how I meet their expectations. This makes me feel overwhelmed and I am often so busy trying to achieve this that there is no place for me.

## **What do I think I now know?**

The ways in which I meet others is often not very healthy: my desire to please them and to stay safe and be accepted is not allowing me to be present and authentic. I am often overwhelmed by my desire to keep things in control and safe in my relationships. Within myself there is a struggle between this constant busy doing to control things and please others, and my own needs.

On rare occasions, and more often recently, I am able to be more present to myself and others and to even say 'no' to unreasonable expectations. I have seen myself at work being able to stand up and negotiate with the system over what I can humanly manage. So I see that I am capable of not being driven by others expectations but am able to see the bigger picture that includes my self and negotiate a workable way. I notice when I slow down I can listen to my mind and my body but this is rare.

## **How do I want to be with this?**

I want to not be driven by the expectations of others, but rather to be able to hear their needs and my own and find solutions together. I want to be able to meet others in ways that respectfully attempt to meet the needs of all in a realistic way.

I do not want to be in a state of anxiety and panic over my relationships with others. I want to be open and relaxed and graceful. I also want to meet the parts of myself in this way creating a space to open up to understand. I want to make space for me in my life that is accepting.

**What do I think I now know about this pattern of being in my starting out as a CAT?**

In my desire to meet with the community of CATS and the environments in which I will work, I have been driven by my desire to prove my worth, be safe and in control. This implanted a lot of fear into my starting out experience. I don't think I have been fully available and present in the moments when I have approached institutions regarding prospective work or volunteer opportunities. In my client work there have been times when my desire to be seen to be doing a 'good job' has over taken my ability to be present to the client and myself and hindered the working relationship. These are things to explore further in my creative arts practices, journal or in supervision.

## Mapping Breath of Me



<b>What happens to me (emotions)?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of easy breathing</li> <li>• Dropping away of tightness</li> <li>• Slower</li> <li>• Space which I don't fill up with talking because I am feeling</li> <li>• Stop rushing</li> <li>• Content with what it</li> <li>• Sense of relief</li> <li>• Tingly feeling of senses being open and aware</li> <li>• Receptive to what is going on within and what is going on without</li> </ul>
<b>When does it happen?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rarely</li> <li>• I know I am capable of it</li> <li>• I have experienced it</li> <li>• Creative work and playing</li> </ul>
<b>With whom does it happen?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who are present to me</li> <li>• When I am on my own</li> <li>• When I am present to other</li> <li>• With animals</li> </ul>
<b>Where does it happen?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In my body</li> <li>• In nature</li> </ul>
<b>How does it happen? (behaviour)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With my breath</li> <li>• Slowing down</li> <li>• Something happens in my eyes: they open out and then allow me to focus in</li> <li>• Being in body not in my head</li> <li>• I become aware of the space between my skin and the world</li> <li>• Being in the space I am in</li> <li>• Awareness of my own energy to just be with it and not change anything</li> </ul>



**Which values and conflicts are emerging?**

- I value being open and receptive so that I can be present to others and myself in relationship.
- I value my breath, and body as a way to access awareness. I am not sure how to bring this into being when I am in moments of overwhelm and panic.

**What are the emergent themes?**

- When I slow down and am aware of my body and my breath I feel a sense of relief and presentness to my self and where I am and that can include others.
- When I go into my body and /or nature I feel there is space for me to become aware of my self in the world and that makes me feel replenished.

## What do I think I now know?

What I think I know now is that my body and breath are key guides to my wellbeing in the world. By being present to my embodied sense and to my breathing I am able to get relief from the overwhelm and anxiety to gain some balance in my connection to others and my experience. I can replenish myself when I am feeling overwhelmed by giving myself space and in particular taking time in nature.

I look to an image of a bus that emerged around my work at school. Denise asked me "Who is driving the bus?" in regards to what part of my self drives me when I am at work. I draw the bus and who I want to be driving it.



The passengers are metaphors for the parts of my self that I want to accept and include but I don't necessarily want them driving my actions. The driver for the journey is accepting and responsive to all the passengers on the bus. She makes realistic, respectful and manageable choices about where the bus could go with all these passengers. I notice that some of the

crazy characters look anxious, panicked, angry, busy and overwhelmed. I know for a fact that they do drive my bus at times. They leap into the seat without thinking and react in unproductive ways and overwhelming ways that increase my anxiety and inhibit my connections to others.

### **How do I want to be with this?**

Firstly, I do not want to react with overwhelm and panic. I would rather be more open and receptive to others and myself so that I can respond more respectfully and gracefully as I journey.

I am not yet sure how to access this more calm and accepting part of myself at will yet, but I sense it is near.

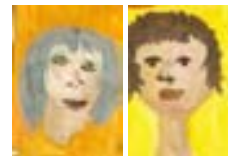
### **What do I think I now know about this pattern of being in my starting out as a CAT?**

I think that the graceful attending and accepting I want for myself is also what I wish to bring to my clients. I have experienced through this inquiry the value of attending openly to what experiences arise. I know we can deepen and widen our understandings and open up to new possibilities. I know that in being attentive to my own experience in my role as a companion I can more honestly attend to others with integrity. I hope that by using my breath and awareness I can bracket out my own unruly aspects of self at the times when they threaten to take over sessions with clients. I can see that by using my own breath to focus my awareness I can better stay present to the other, myself and our companioning relationship.

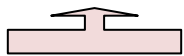
# Approximation to meaning

emergence  
possibilities

In an attempt to depth what I now know after mapping the clusters I join with my friend Rosalie in a conversation. She suggests that we role play the characters that I had developed through the inquiry. We notice that anxiety features highly in the emerging themes and there is a sense of overwhelm that accompanies it. Rosalie companions me and through her attention to the keywords and feelings I present she is able to focus me into the relationship of these aspects of myself. She introduces the possibilities of other ways of seeing and being with anxiety. She is able to hold the space as I immerse myself in the feelings and sensations that accompany each aspect and facilitate their meeting.



## A Telling Conversation

As we dialogue we switch roles in an effort to make room for all the voices to be heard. I have also included some dialogue in pink boxes (  ) to highlight what is emerging for me as we talk. For the sake of concise writing of this dialogue:

'Insatiable Task Master' is now called 'Task Master'. 'Seen, Heard, Understood, Accepted, Valued: Embodied Little Girl': is now called 'Embodied Girl'. 'Breath of Me' is still 'Breath of Me'. And introducing the voice of 'Anxiety'.

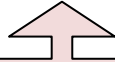


**Rosalie begins by taking on the role of Breath of me talking to the other characters:** *Okay everyone lets just stop and take a breath. Task Master, can you just sit to the side for a moment.*

*So, little one (to Embodied Girl) I notice that you are anxious, with your arms swinging around, what is it you need?*

**I answer as the Embodied Girl:** *It's too fast. I need it to slow down. All this rushing is making me dizzy.*

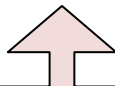
**Rosalie as Breath of Me:** *It sounds like you are being dragged along by the hand.*



Rosalie is really aware of Embodied Girl's experience. I feel heard and understood.

**Me as Embodied Girl:** *Yes, Task master drags me along too fast.*

**Rosalie as Breath of Me:** *Ok Task Master, I know you like to 'do': 'slowing down' is a 'doing' a thing, can you slow down?*



This is new to me I had never thought of utilising Task Master in this way: I feel excited about this new idea.

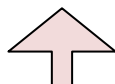
**Me as Task Master:** *Actually, I am going faster to try and get things done so she will stop all this whining. She is so anxious and I am trying to help her.*



This consolidates an idea I had earlier: he is trying to help with all this frenzied doing.

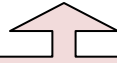
**Rosalie as Breath of Me:** *That's interesting. Does the girl know this is what you are doing; that you are trying to get things done for her?*

**Me as Task Master:** *She doesn't know about that. I haven't told her.*



That's interesting news to me. How one part of my self doesn't talk to another: how disconnected!

**Rosalie as Breath of Me:** *I wonder what would happen if you tried to do it her way: to slow it down?*



Now that's a new idea, I want to consider: a new way of looking at things

**Me as Task Master:** *Well, it would be more playful and creative and fun. We can get some good ideas together when playing, we can be creative. She is good at ideas when she is playing.*



There is something reconciling for me about Task Master valuing the Embodied Girl's abilities. It feels like such a relief after all their struggles.

**Rosalie as Breath of Me:** *So it sounds like the girl is not anxiety, but anxiety visits her.*



I suddenly realise that I have been assuming that the Embodied Girl actually is anxiety and Rosalie has introduced the possibility that anxiety visits. I like this way of looking at myself. I have been blaming myself for "being anxious" for a very long time.

**Me as Embodied Girl:** *Yes I am spontaneous, playful and creative, and embodied, and I am so much more, but anxiety does visit me.*

**Rosalie as Breath of Me:** *What is it like when anxiety visits?*

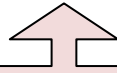
**Me as Embodied Girl:** *Well I flap my arms and get dizzy. I can become completely overwhelmed. There is a lot of energy like static and I can't think properly.*



I am surprised by this clarity that comes.

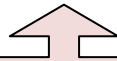
**Me as Task Master:** *And, for me I get busy trying to get control and keep it safe. I can rush and panic, but I can concentrate just enough to get some things done. I have to really focus on*

*the tasks.*



I notice it takes a lot of energy to focus, no wonder I get so tired.

**Rosalie as Breath of Me:** *so it sounds like you are both reacting to this visitor 'anxiety' that is like static. I wonder what 'anxiety' looks like?*

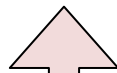


It is interesting that Rosalie picks up on my 'reacting' and this notion of 'static' is a very familiar felt sense that I have when I am anxious.

**Me as Anxiety:** *I am anxiety I am flapping my wings and pecking at things, I have lice and I am extremely agitated, I squawk out criticism and jump about. I will say things to Task Master to make him see that the girl is stupid and insignificant. I will say things to the girl to make her hate Task Master and see him as controlling and dominating. When I am about no one can see the other clearly. I impact on them. Things are chaotic and I feed on the escalation. (An image of anxiety emerged)*



**Rosalie as herself:** *I wonder what would happen if they all met. Task master, Embodied Girl, Anxiety and Breath of Me; How can they meet? What qualities does this meeting space have?*



Rosalie's invitation, opens me to a possibility and I am reminded of the "space left blank intentionally" that appeared in earlier installations. The blank space is intriguing as it seems to suggest opening up to something new where meeting could be done without the previous judgemental intentions (Somerville, 2007, pp. 232-239).



**Me as myself:** *I see an empty space, like I have seen before in my representations. I close my eyes and imagine a circle, and there is space for them all. I take a breath and feel the spaciousness. Everyone takes a breath and looks at each other for a while.*



*The space is relational, gentle, integrative, and with Breath of Me holding it there is the possibility of grace. Breath holds the space.*



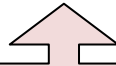
I relax. For the first time I really see that it is possible for all these aspects to be together and find a way to be. I have a sense of calm even with anxiety sitting in there. I know I have what I need here to find ways forward.

Rosalie then invites me to create a mandala showing these aspects of self and how I see them coming to be in this integrative, relational gentle space. She asks me to reflect on what I now know.



Mandala: Breath of Me holds the space

I tell Rosalie: *I notice there is room for everyone, there is space around each of them. Task Master sits relaxed waiting his turn, the Embodied Girl is happy and leaping, Anxiety is still present but not taking over or impacting overtly on anyone else, the Breath of Me holds the space for all of them to be attended to.*



I now notice that in this space where there is room for everyone, that everyone can be seen, heard, understood accepted and valued. This is what I want for me within myself and my relationships with others. I also know this is what I value in my work as a teacher and a starting out CAT. That in this graceful relational space there is the possibility of real and caring connections that can be productive.

Rosalie and I have collaboratively created a dialogue in which aspects of my self can meet. New meaning has emerged out of this interaction. David Bohm in his book *On dialogue* says,

in a dialogue, each person does not attempt to make common certain ideas or items of information that are already known to him. Rather, it may be said that the two people are making something in common, i.e., creating something new together. (1996, p. 2)

Through the conversation a kind of emotional efficacy has emerged in which I am able to name and understand my emotions

and move towards regulation of them in appropriate and acceptable ways. Jan Allen (2004) agrees that "in conversation we are able to become aware of the blending of emotions, how emotional experiences can change and to reflect on how we constitute our emotional life" (p. 28). I now want to find a way to represent what I now know in an artistic form.

### **Graceful Integration**

I return to the image of the bus. I now have a sense of how I want this image to be. I redraw it. I label the bus 'Integrative Tours' because there is a sense that everyone on the bus has a role to play. Breath of Me is the driver. I now suspect she holds the moral compass to guide her. She is confident and present to all. She sees, listens, accepts, understands and values each and every one on board. As Breath of Me attends to all the passengers they come to know together where they could go. I add the word 'Grace' on the side of my bus. Grace seems to be the overarching intention: graceful integration of my self as I move forward to meet others.



I look back at the first stages of this inquiry and notice the struggle between my head and body, and how I represented this through Task Master and Embodied Girl. I am now relieved that they no longer need to struggle against each other but can work together in an integrated way. I recognise the importance of both head and body in knowing the world. When head and body are working together, I can make sense of my experiences. My breath and awareness allow this to happen.

Dan Siegal (2010, p. 81) suggests that the very act of "making sense is integrative". He and Lett (2010, p. 3) both agree that integration is a necessary part of wellbeing. It has become apparent that an integrative flow can occur when we attend to what we think we know, how we think we know, and how we want to be with what we think we know. This can bring us to a coherent state of being with our values and with our preferred ways of being in the world.

Michael Leunig's (2004) prayer comes to me and resonates with my story.

*Dear God,*

*We give thanks for places of simplicity and peace. Let us find such a place within ourselves. We give thanks for places of refuge and beauty. Let us find such a place within ourselves. We give thanks for places of nature's truth and freedom, of joy, inspiration and renewal, places where all creatures may find acceptance and belonging. Let us search for these places; in the world, in ourselves and in others. Let us restore them. Let us strengthen and protect them and let us create them. May we mend this outer world according to the truth of our inner life and may our souls be shaped and nourished by nature's eternal wisdom.*

*Amen. (Leunig, 2004, p. no page numbers)*

Leunig's reference to finding grace within our selves, in the world and in each other reminds me of the collaborative nature of living. He reminds me that nature itself is a restorative place that I can turn to when I need renewal: where I can see

the inherent connection and inclusion of all things in existence together. He reminds me that it is deep within our inner lives and experiences that our truths live. He suggests that through collaborative co-creation of reality we are able to nourish ourselves, each other and the world.

The collaborative nature of this inquiry has revealed the value of seeing, hearing, understanding, accepting, and valuing each other. We have seen that in our creation of spaces that are curious, open, attentive and receptive to all our ways of knowing, by accepting what emerges, and 'Being-With' each other we can create meanings and understandings towards our own human flourishing (Siegal, 2010). Moustakas (1995) says "The presence of another human being is often essential to the birth and serves as an inspiration for a person who dares to hope for new experiences" (p.86).

Through dialogue and cooperative sharing we have opened pathways to each other for exploring the phenomenon of our lives. Through receiving each other, accepting and affirming our co-existence and giving to each other the gift of 'feeling felt' by another we come to thrive (Moustakas, 1990, p. 47; Siegal, 2010, p. 134). Edwards says it beautifully when he asserts that "a person becomes a person through other people - only through you do I become an I and I am because we are" (2006, p. 4).

As I have walked through the landscape of starting out as a creative arts therapist I have been re-searching my self and I have come to understand what I really seek. I desire to be seen, heard, understood, accepted, and valued, I desire to make sense of my life and live in an integrated way that aligns with my preferred beliefs and values. I also desire to assist others who I meet along the way to also have this. I aim to do this as a CAT. I am taking slow gentle steps to set up a small business a few days a week.

Surprisingly I notice that I am now using this new understanding about myself in my current work place at the school (yes, the work I so desperately wished to leave). I notice I feel

different, and I am being different at work. I no longer feel the need to bow to every demand of the insatiable system. I do what is manageable and realistic. I no longer strive for perfection to please others and consequently I am more relaxed and contented. What I aim to do each day is to be with my students, my colleagues and myself, to work with who we are to learn, grow and expand our lives. Possibilities are gently opening to use my CAT skills at school to enhance my work in the classroom and in new projects with the guidance counsellor and students in need. Seigal (2010, pp. 2-3) says "there is always your own inner life that needs attending to in order for you to do your job well". I begin to now wonder if this creative arts process could help other teachers. This is something I might consider exploring.

What I now know is that the values and methods implemented through this inquiry has led me not only to become a CAT in ways that I hadn't imagined, but as well it has assisted me to become more of myself. I celebrate with Lett (2010) who says "it is the integration of knowing, being and valuing that has the best prospect of generous, vital meaningful living" (p. 7). I see, hear, understand, accept and value more of myself than I have before and I feel inspired to move forward in to further unfurling and becoming in my life and work.

creative arts therapy  
graceful attending  
seen, heard, understood, accepted, valued  
integration  
becoming

# Conclusion

Through this collaborative, experiential multimodal creative arts based inquiry I have come to know more about myself in the world and how I want to be. I am now able to locate myself in the world in a more integrated way than I was when I began. I can see that by beginning with my experiential knowing of my world, and bringing it into my presentational and propositional knowing, I am moving towards a much more integrated and effective practical knowing about how I want to be in the world.

I begin with a desire for change in my working life and a curious wondering about my experience into becoming a creative arts therapist. I collaborate with my colleague Denise. Together we create a space, a base camp to meet to explore together the experiences of ourselves and others who are starting out as CATs. Along the way it becomes evident that my focus is leaning towards my own personal experience and the significant meanings that are arising for me. Denise and I continue to support each other as researchers and companions as we head in different directions with our quests. I also meet with others along the way.

I create representations, gather images and dialogue with Denise, Rosalie, supervisors and others around experiences of becoming a CAT. I then cluster these into like ideas. What emerges is a struggle between two significant aspects of myself: my head and my body which I come to call 'Insatiable Task Master' and 'Seen Heard, Understood, Accepted, Valued: Embodied Little Girl'. I recognise that the way these parts meet and the way I meet with others does not serve me well. This is represented in the cluster 'Ways of Meeting'. There is an emerging possible other way of being which I come to call 'Breath of Me'.

I map the way I see these experiences happen in my life, naming values and conflicts within myself and the emerging patterns of being in my life. In making sense of things in the patterns of lived experience I become aware that I want to bring myself forward to meet others but I bring with me fear and anxiety about not being seen, heard, understood, accepted or valued. I



recognise this pattern also existed in my childhood. I also recognise that this is a familiar experience in most people's lives. I notice that I have a need to control things because I want to feel safe with others and be recognised. This manifests as working frenzies to meet others' expectations that often deny my own needs. I also notice that my body is my own map to my experience. Emerging for me is a possible new way of being that includes being more aware of my embodied living to gain insight into myself. I now see that this slower more embodied way of being present to myself and others is what I greatly value in my being and working with others. There emerges a possibly more graceful way of being with others and my work.

Eventually through the project I come to see that my desire to leave my current work as a teacher is coming from my desire to be seen, heard, understood, accepted and valued. As I engage in my work at school I now see my work with new eyes and see the value of bringing my skills as a CAT to my work in schools. I have a more balanced view of the expectations I put on myself and those that are laid upon me. I am no longer willing to deny myself in the experience of my work. I recognise that the skills that I bring as a CAT and as me to others are more valuable than any rushing, urgent box checking I might do to try and prove myself. I bring myself, my presence, my awareness, and my willingness to Be-With others. I bring my desire to see, hear, understand, accept and value them as they make sense of their lives for their own growth and flourishing.

I now also recognise that by seeing, hearing, understanding, accepting and valuing myself and all my parts I can find ways to live a more integrated life. I can also be more at peace with the situations around me. I am becoming more willing to see, hear, understand, accept and value me and all that I am. I love that I can embrace all the parts of myself and my experience. I give more consideration to what part of me I choose for "driving my bus" and I contend that I am most comfortable if the graceful and aware part of me that holds the moral compass drives more often. If this part of me that is willing to be open and

accepting can move me towards my becoming a CAT, and toward myself, I can attend to what I experience in each moment in more productive and satisfying ways. I can call on other parts of myself when needed, I can respond more authentically in line with my values rather than in reactive ways.

I now know that in becoming a CAT I have learnt much about being me and how I want to be in the world. I now see my desire for becoming a CAT is aligned with my desire to see, hear, understand, accept and value myself and others as we explore and come to understand ourselves in the world, so that we can flourish. I see that this is a value that pulls my moral compass into alignment and points me in the direction I want to go for now.

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