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THE INTROSPECTIVE VALUE OF A SELF-HELP JOURNAL

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts by Dissertation in Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (February 2011).

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts by Dissertation in Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

Signed this _____ day of _____ 2011

_____

Kelli Slotar

DEDICATION

To those who could not be here to see the finished form

Tony Slotar

Ian Wood

Ms. Noong

The world is not complete without you

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor, Ms. Nicky Israel. I absolutely would not have been able to complete this thesis without her willingness to supervise me in my chosen topic and her continued assistance through each step of the study. Her astute observations, suggestions and feedback have been invaluable to me and I am immensely grateful for the time and effort she has contributed. Her guidance has helped me not only with this piece of work, but also to become a more critical thinker and more thorough researcher, qualities I hope to carry with me for the rest of my life.

The patience and encouragement offered by my family Ellana Slotar, Dean Slotar and Gaby Maletsky, have bolstered me at every turn, and each has sustained my sanity through this process in a different way.

My father, Tony Slotar, tragically passed during the write-up of my thesis. I wish he had not left us, but I know that this completed work would have made him very proud, and that barring Man United games, he is always watching over me.

I am forever indebted to my dear friend Lindy Ettin, for the unwavering faith and support which she has shown me through this process. I don't believe a person could have a greater friend than she.

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ABSTRACT

Prompted by high stress levels experienced by most people in their daily lives, and the growing field of positive and preventative psychology, a self-help journal programme, called the One Wish Journal, was designed. Based in Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, Rational-Emotive Therapy and Narrative Therapy, the programme aimed to enhance participants' introspective abilities, particularly their insight and self-reflection, in an effort to improve their subjective well-being.

An experimental and a control group were utilised in the study to compare the results of those who took part in the journal with those who did not. The sample consisted of university students. Both groups completed the Subjective Happiness Scale, the Satisfaction with Life Scale, the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule and the Self-Reflection and Insight Scale at the start, in the middle and at the end of the programme for comparative purposes. In addition, open-ended questionnaires were administered to gauge participants' responses to the programme.

Both statistical and qualitative analyses were conducted. Simple descriptive statistics were used to establish attrition rates during the course of the study and to examine trends in scores through the course of the study. The relationships between the introspective constructs and those of well-being were assessed using Spearman's Correlation Coefficients; changes within the experimental and control groups were assessed using Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed Ranks tests and Man-Whitney U tests were used to compare results between the experimental and control groups throughout the course of the study and to investigate demographic characteristics of the participants. Content analysis and narrative analysis were used to analyse the qualitative components of the questionnaires.

Due to small sample sizes and high levels of attrition, few statistically significant results were found. Self-perceived levels of insight did increase significantly for participants in the experimental group although a larger number of participants would be required to assert meaningful statistical results. Qualitative analyses revealed a number of personal benefits and positive trends experienced by journal participants,

including increased self-appreciation and self-confidence. Participants also demonstrated learning fundamental psychological ideas and acquiring psychological skills through the programme. Qualitative findings suggest that preventative self-help measures may assist some people in attaining significant psychological benefits.

The journal programme was comprised of several aspects; one of which was a bookmark containing descriptions of common forms of irrational thinking and how to inhibit them, as well as positive thinking tips. The bookmark had a number of benefits for participants and has the potential to be developed as an intervention in itself. Unlike prior findings, the programme was not only beneficial to those who were innately invested in notions of self-help, suggesting that self-help benefits may be further reaching than previously thought.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

DECLARATION. ii

DEDICATION. iii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS. iv

ABSTRACT. v

TABLE OF CONTENTS. vii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION. 1

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW. 7

2.1 PREVENTATIVE AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY. 7

2.2 SELF-HELP. 10

2.3 INTROSPECTIVE TOOLS: SELF-REFLECTION AND INSIGHT. 17

2.4 SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING. 20

2.5 COGNITIVE THEORIES. 24

2.5.1 Process of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and Rational-Emotive Therapy. 26

2.5.2 Combination of theories. 29

2.6 THEORY OF NARRATIVE THERAPY. 30

2.6.1 Process of Narrative Therapy. 35

2.6.2 Writing used as a form of Narrative Therapy. 38

2.7 BENEFITS OF WRITING. 39

2.7.1 Creative Writing. 42

2.8 SUMMATION. 45

CHAPTER THREE: PROGRAMME. 47

3.1 THE JOURNAL. 47

3.2 BOOKMARK 51

3.3. PERSONAL PROJECTS. 52

3.3.1 Personal Project 1. 52

3.3.2 Personal Project 2. 53

3.3.3 Personal Project 3. 54
3.3.4 Personal Project 4. 54
3.3.5 Personal Project 5. 55
3.3.6 Personal Project 6. 56
3.4 CREATIVITY TIPS 56
3.5 THE CURRENT STUDY. 59

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODS. 61
4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN. 61
4.2 SAMPLE. 62
4.2.1 Experimental group. 63
4.2.2 Control group. 64
4.3 MEASURES. 66
4.3.1 Feedback questionnaires. 66
4.3.2 Demographic and life changes questionnaire. 67
4.3.3 Self-Reflection and Insight Scale (SRIS) 68
4.3.4 Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) 69
4.3.5 Positive and Negative Affect Schedule – Expanded Form (PANAS-X) . . .71
4.3.6 Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) 72
4.4 PROCEDURE. 73
4.5 ETHICS. 75
4.6 DATA ANALYSIS. 77

CHAPTER FIVE: STATISTICAL ANALYSES. 81
5.1 UPTAKE AND IMPLEMENTATION. 81
5.2 COMPARISON OF THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED AND THOSE WHO DID NOT. 83
5.2.1 Demographic analysis. 85
5.2.1.1 Experimental group. 85
5.2.1.2 Control group. 88
5.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSTRUCTS. 89
5.4 TRENDS AND PATTERNS IN DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS. 92
5.4.1 Self-reflection and Insight Scale. 93
5.4.2 Satisfaction with Life Scale. 97

5.4.3 Subjective Happiness Scale. 99
5.4.4 Positive and Negative Affect Schedule. 101
5.5 CHANGES WITHIN GROUPS. 105
5.5.1 Self-Reflection and Insight Scale. 106
5.5.2 Satisfaction with Life Scale. 107
5.5.3 Subjective Happiness Scale. 108
5.5.4 Positive and Negative Affect Schedule. 108
5.6 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUPS 109

CHAPTER SIX: QUALITATIVE ANALYSES. 114
6.1 ANALYSIS OF THE PERSONAL PROJECTS 114
6.1.1 Task completion and assessment. 114
6.1.1.1 Task 1: Quote. 115
6.1.1.2 Task 2: Qualities of Self and Others. 121
6.1.1.3 Task 3: Journal Appearance. 127
6.1.1.4 Task 4: Values and Expectations. 133
6.1.1.5 Task 5: Goals. 138
6.1.1.6 Task 6: Reflection. 140
6.2 USE OF BOOKMARK. 147
6.3 USE OF WRITING TOPICS. 158
6.4 TYPES OF JOURNAL ENTRIES 160
6.5 OTHER COMMENTS. 163
6.6 OVERALL JOURNAL FEEDBACK. 171
6.6.1 Motivation behind writing in journal 172
6.6.2 Overall enjoyment of journal 174
6.6.3 Experience of keeping a journal. 177
6.6.4 Overall experience of the bookmark. 180
6.6.5 Overall experience of writing topics. 180
6.6.6 Creative writing tips. 182
6.6.7 Website feedback. 182
6.6.8 Personal Project preference 183
6.6.9 Additional Comments. 185

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS. 190

7.1 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS. 203
7.2 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH. 208
7.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS. 213

REFERENCE LIST. 216

APPENDICES

Page

Appendix A: Cover Letter for Experimental Group. 230

Appendix B: Cover Letter for Control Group. 232

Appendix C: Journal Instructions and Commitment Form. 234

Appendix D: Bookmark. 236

Appendix E: Topic Suggestions. 237

Appendix F: SMS Notification. 238

Appendix G: Creative Writing Tips. 239

Appendix H: Personal Projects. 244

Appendix I: Task Feedback. 246

Appendix J: Journal Feedback. 248

Appendix K: Demographic Questionnaire. 253

Appendix L: SRIS (printed with permission). 255

Appendix M: SWLS. 257

Appendix N: PANAS-X (printed with permission) 258

Appendix O: SHS. 259

Appendix P: Ethics Clearance Certificate. 260

Appendix Q: Histograms. 261

Appendix R: Mann-Whitney U Test Tables for Experimental group. 268

Appendix S: Mann-Whitney U Test Tables for Control group. 271

LIST OF TABLES

Page

Table 1: Patterns of Attrition. 81

Table 2: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of high and low journal use at time one. 84

Table 14: Spearman's Correlations: initial results for experimental and control groups combined. 89

Table 15.1: Descriptive statistics for Self-Reflection and Insight Scale – experimental group. 93

Table 15.2: Descriptive statistics for Self-Reflection and Insight Scale – final eleven experimental group. 93

Table 15.3: Descriptive statistics for Self-Reflection and Insight Scale – control group. 94

Table 15.4: Descriptive statistics for Self-Reflection and Insight Scale – final seven control group. 95

Table 16.1: Descriptive statistics for satisfaction with life – experimental group. . . .97

Table 16.2: Descriptive statistics for satisfaction with life – final eleven experimental group. 98

Table 16.3: Descriptive statistics for satisfaction with life – control group. 99

Table 16.4: Descriptive statistics for satisfaction with life – final seven control group. 99

Table 17.1: Descriptive statistics for subjective happiness – experimental group. . . .99

Table 17.2: Descriptive statistics for subjective happiness – final eleven experimental group. 100

Table 17.3: Descriptive statistics for subjective happiness – control group. 100

Table 17.4: Descriptive statistics for subjective happiness – final seven control group. 101

Table 18.1: Descriptive statistics for positive and negative affect – experimental group. 101

Table 18.2: Descriptive statistics for positive and negative affect – final eleven experimental group. 101

Table 18.3: Descriptive statistics for positive and negative affect – control group. 103

Table 18.4: Descriptive statistics for positive and negative affect – final seven control group. 103

Table 19: Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed Rank Tests for engagement in self-reflection (IENG), need for self-reflection (IND) and insight (IINS) 106

Table 20: Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed Rank Tests for satisfaction with life. .107

Table 21: Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed Rank Tests for subjective happiness. 108

Table 22: Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed Rank Tests for positive and negative affect. 108

Table 23: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of experimental and control group at time one. 109

Table 24: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of experimental and control group at time two. 111

Table 25: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of experimental and control group at time three. 112

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Recently people have become more interested in seeking personal development, and some schools of psychology are moving with this trend, offering 'normal' people an opportunity to experience personal growth and improve their lives (Grant, 2003). It is however only with the recent emergence of positive and preventative psychology that the field has meaningfully started a movement towards a better grasp of preventative measures and the promotion of health and "optimal human functioning" (Lopez, 2000). One of the principles of these theories is that if people can be taught to deal adaptively with stressful situations, as well as their own anxiety, depression and anger, it may be possible for them to avoid developing social, emotional and cognitive difficulties for which further psychological and/or medical treatment might be necessary (Frydenberg et al., 2004; Teasdale, 1997).

Common criticisms raised against traditional psychoanalytic forms of therapy include the elitist nature of the treatment and the distance between the client and therapist (Spong & Hollanders, 2003). Psychological treatment is generally not accessible to the "average individual", especially in South Africa, either because it is too expensive, or because it is aimed primarily at those with a higher education level (Côté & Barlow, 1993; Deane & Chamberlain, 1994). Behavioural methods are traditionally less elitist because they belong to the trend of brief therapy and are more economical to apply (Liberman, King & De Risi, 1976). They also require less training in order to be put into practice, making them more accessible than other forms of psychological interventions (Liberman et al., 1976).

In terms of distance between therapist and client, the cognitive approaches support more interactive, psycho-educational interaction, stressing the significance of explaining theory and the implementation of therapy to clients, as well as teaching them appropriate skills (Turner, 1993). Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and Rational-Emotive Therapy (sometimes known as Rational-Emotive-Behavioural Therapy) therefore present information openly to clients and encourage them to use this information in their

everyday lives (Dryden, 1990; Turner, 1993). These approaches attempt to help people improve themselves and recognise these subsequent developments as the product of their own effort (Teasdale, 1997; Turner, 1993). One of the ways in which Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and Rational-Emotive Therapy accomplish this is through homework – because clients are viewed as active participants in their therapy, they are expected to practise the adaptive skills they have learnt in order to bring about and maintain change in their lives (Dryden, 1990; Turner, 1993).

Although Narrative Therapy is not strictly part of the cognitive approaches, it shares similarities with these methodologies and is thought to work well with them (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Freedman & Combs, 1996). Narrative Therapy believes that people perceive their lives in a particular way, but can come to a new conceptualisation through're-authoring' their perspective (Freedman & Combs, 1996). There have been occasions when writing has been used as a form of Narrative Therapy (Crossley, 2007; Freedman & Combs, 1996) and the value of writing is an area that has been explored more and more extensively over the years. Writing has been linked to personal benefits, including self-realisation, a greater sense of agency and, for some, a form of catharsis (Bolton, Gelipter & Nelson, 2000; Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987; Monk, 1997).

On this basis, this study examined the utility of a self-help programme based on these principles and presented in the form of a journal. For the study, an introspective journal programme, called the One Wish Journal, was designed to aid people in recognising and using their own skills and abilities to enact positive changes in their lives. The central tenets of the programme were based on principles of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, Rational-Emotive Therapy and Narrative Therapy. The aim of the study was to investigate the efficacy of the self-developed journal programme. The journal programme's intentions were to improve participants' introspection, specifically their self-reflection and insight, in an effort to assist them in becoming more aware of themselves and their abilities and to use their innate skills to improve their perceptions of themselves and their lives, to enhance their coping skills and to experience greater subjective well-being.

Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and Rational-Emotive Therapy are cognitive theories that value the significance of people's thoughts and the impact that these have on their feelings and behaviours. They focus on investigating people's ways of thinking and the content of their thoughts in order to gain greater insight into their reasoning and the way they react to outside stimuli (Dryden, 1990). Narrative Therapy is based on the idea that people are intrinsically drawn to storying their lives, but may not be aware of the ways in which their discourse and diction are impacting their narratives. They are consequently unaware of how they could effect changes in their lives through their own storying process (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Monk, 1997).

The cognitive theories and Narrative Therapy also emphasize the significance of perspective – they believe that people generally have a sustained point of view of the world, their lives and themselves, but can be introduced to new ways of looking at things to alter their perspectives and, through this process, can come to new ways of thinking and understanding (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Weishaar, 1993). These theories also stress the active role people play in their own lives – emphasizing and making an effort to introduce people to the talents and abilities which they possess. It is thought that people are often not aware of their innate skills, but that they can be guided to recognise and actively employ them, which can lead to greater appreciation of themselves and their abilities (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Monk, 1997; Weishaar, 1993; Wessler & Wessler, 1980). These ideas fitted well with the underlying principles of the One Wish Journal programme, namely that: people could be encouraged to spend more time contemplating their thoughts and the repercussions these have on their lives; becoming more aware of their thoughts could allow people to change some of their thinking, which in turn could impact other aspects of their lives positively.

The One Wish Journal was designed to encourage people's consideration of their thoughts – most people today endure busy and stressful lifestyles that leave little time for introspective activities, yet these are important features of a person's internal life. While people are taught and often vigorously trained in particular skills for their line of work or

field of expertise, the same focus is often not given to psychological skills, although these are valuable tools that can be highly beneficial and have a significant impact on many other spheres of a person's life and personal development. The journal programme thus aimed to provide an opportunity for people to learn more about their internal and innate abilities and to optimise them in order to improve their lives.

To investigate participants' general happiness and satisfaction within their lives, the concept of subjective well-being was employed. Subjective well-being is generally thought to consist of three elements – cognitively, it comprises of a person's assessment of his/her own satisfaction with his/her life and emotionally it consists of a person's positive and negative affect (Bradburn, 1969; Diener, Suh & Oishi, 1997; Kingdon & Knight, 2005). Subjective well-being has been connected to other constructs, including happiness and optimism, as well as the benefits associated with these qualities (Diener et al., 1997; Forster, 2003; Strongman, 2006; Tennen & Affleck, 1987).

Some theorists propose that lasting happiness can only be experienced if there is meaning attached to the emotion (Wu, 2010). This supports the notion that subjective well-being centres around not only the presence of positive feelings and absence of negative ones, but also involves the individual's cognitive assessment of his/her state of satisfaction. It is for this reason that introspection is suggested as a means through which people can alter their subjective well-being – it is thought that through the process of investigating their lives and coming to greater awareness and understanding of themselves, people can change their feelings and perceptions of their subjective well-being.

Introspection itself is a broad term that is often difficult to meaningfully quantify. For this reason, two facets of this construct were investigated – self-reflection and insight. Self-reflection may be seen as a specific form of thinking that allows people to scrutinize themselves and make sense of their thoughts and feelings; insight is something more of a destination, the arrival at new realisations and knowledge (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Grant, Franklin & Langford, 2002; Reber & Reber, 2001). Insight is a particularly useful construct in this context, as it has been linked to greater levels of life satisfaction and

happiness (Lyke, 2009). Self-reflection is more complex, with different studies finding different consequences of this practice. However, much research into this topic seems to indicate that when self-reflection has a definite direction, it can have a positive influence on the areas in a person's life on which it is being focused (Grant et al., 2002).

Aside from principles of cognitive theories and Narrative Therapy, the journal programme also borrowed ideas from the self-help ethos in its efforts to impact introspection and subjective well-being. Self-help echoes many of the sentiments of the other theories already mentioned, as it emphasizes personal agency and empowerment, the value of people's own experiences and the innate abilities which people possess (Adams, 1990). While its place in the formal field of psychology is still debated, there are several avenues within formal psychology in which self-help has come to be accepted (Mains & Scogin, 2003). Self-help has also become regarded by many as a useful supplement to other forms of more formal psychological interventions and is sometimes even recommended to be used in conjunction with other psychological services (Adams, 1990; Powell, 1990; Rappaport, 1994). In this study, notions of self-help were used in conjunction with aspects of positive and preventative psychology, working to emphasize participants' positive qualities and encourage their further development, rather than focusing on negative elements and deficits.

The way in which these various ideas were implemented was through the process of writing. Writing has been associated with many benefits, including acting as a mode of externalising; in some cases it has even been linked to improved health (Morrison, 1987; Strongman, 2006). In the journal programme, writing was encouraged as a way for participants to story their lives in a tangible form and through which they could later look back and reflect. In line with the theories forming the foundation of the One Wish Journal programme, writing was employed as a means through which participants could investigate their thoughts and way of thinking to potentially gain new or different perspectives of their lives; it also encouraged the exploration of thoughts to reveal patterns or significant meanings that may not have been immediately evident to participants while they were in the process of writing (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Henry

& Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987). Writing itself is an active endeavour and the intention of inviting participants to this action was also to re-introduce them to their agency and the control which they hold over their own lives.

The One Wish Journal programme was therefore an amalgamation of notions and theories which were combined in an effort to enhance people's introspective experiences and ultimately their subjective well-being**.** The research focused on exploring the efficacy of this programme and the extent to which it was able to fulfil its intended aims in a sample of undergraduate university students.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Stress is a prominent feature of contemporary life and, while everyone encounters everyday stressors, some people have more adaptive methods of dealing with them than others. The ways in which people alter their state of stress to one of greater comfort is known as coping (Strongman, 2006). Methods of coping differ from person to person according to a number of factors however some forms of coping are more stable and beneficial than others (Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989; Strongman, 2006). Many psychological theories have notions or recommendations about coping skills and how to improve them and this issue is a central concern within the field of preventative psychology.

2.1 PREVENTATIVE AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Although positive psychology and preventative psychology are not identical, the theory behind them shares certain underlying similarities that allow aspects of both to be explored simultaneously (Ingram & Snyder, 2006). Both positive psychology and preventative psychology aim to prevent pathologies while simultaneously promoting people's own autonomy and positive qualities (Jason, Corradi & Torres-Harding, 2005; Resnick & Rosenheck, 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Typically, psychology has centred on dysfunction, focusing on people's problems and deficits (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Ingram & Snyder, 2006). The emergence of both positive and preventative psychology has emphasized the value of promoting positive qualities, such as personal insight and rationality, linked to the belief that these constructs can enhance a person's resilience, mental health and, ultimately, their quality of life (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Ingram & Snyder, 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Historically, psychology was not focused solely on human impairment – before World War II, the central focus was spread over three key areas: the repair of mental difficulties and pathologies, the improvement of people's lives and the encouragement and cultivation of people's innate abilities (Seligman, 2002b). After World War II, there was a dramatic re-direction in focus, with the disease model receiving more attention and

resources and the other facets of the field becoming largely neglected (Seligman, 2002b). Positive and preventative psychology thus emerged, or re-emerged as the case may be, as a reminder that, although relevant, the deficit model of psychology is an incomplete approach that may overlook other significant aspects in the field. There are a considerable number of people with psychological difficulties who require the skills developed by the deficit model however this form of psychology emphasizes the treatment of symptoms and often leaves little room for the encouragement of life satisfaction, subjective well-being or the promotion of people's talents (Checkoway, Chesler, & Blum, 1990; Ingram & Snyder, 2006; Seligman, 2002b).

The growing influence of preventative ideas may thus be attributed to their potential to maximise the effectiveness of therapeutic methods by not only treating a particular problem, but also enhancing the quality of people's lives (Meyers & Meyers, 2003). The underlying belief of this process is that problems can be averted before they occur. This perspective emphasizes people's abilities and strengths; encourages the development of skills and transfer of knowledge; and works to promote laypeople's participation in preventative initiatives (Checkoway et al., 1990). Indeed, these methods have been involved in various prevention measures for psychological disturbances, ranging from the mild (such as coping difficulties) to the extreme (such as psychosis) (Frydenberg et al., 2004; Liberman et al., 1976). Contemporary theory suggests that programmes that educate all people in coping with stress more adaptively could be an effective step towards the prevention of a number of social and emotional difficulties, and in this way could also contribute to more positive life experiences, such as increased feelings of fulfilment and subjective well-being (Frydenberg et al., 2004).

Preventative psychology has identified certain traits that may act as protection against the development of mental or emotional pathologies (Seligman, 2002b). Optimism, problem-solving and adaptive coping skills are some examples of these potential psychological safeguards and a significant feature of preventative psychology is its belief that people's proficiencies in such abilities can be enhanced (Frydenberg et al., 2004). It has been suggested that all people can learn to improve their coping skills – this can be highly

beneficial as studies have shown that effective coping skills make people more resilient against developing depression (Frydenberg et al., 2004; Seligman, 2002b). Learning to be optimistic has also been linked to the prevention of anxiety (Seligman, 2002b). These ideas are shared with positive psychology, which has its foundations in notions of promoting people's strengths, positive emotions and empowerment (Resnick & Rosenheck, 2006).

The central tenets of positive psychology focus on encouraging a more fulfilling manner of living, by supporting the development of people's virtues, happiness and ultimately life satisfaction (Gillham & Seligman, 1999). The key purpose of positive psychology is thus often conceived as "[u]nderstanding and facilitating happiness and subjective well-being" (Carr, 2004, p. 39). These central ideas have led to suggestions that positive psychology is aimed at and will only carry benefit for people who are already psychologically healthy however, in reality, positive psychology has been shown to have great benefits for the psychologically distressed as well as those without psychological problems (Resnick & Rosenheck, 2006).

Positive and preventative psychological methods generally have the potential to reach more people than traditional forms of psychological interventions and the methods and ideas of positive and preventative psychology translate well into the self-help sphere (Meyers & Meyers, 2003). Many authors in the fields of positive and preventative psychology express themselves in a more simplified manner in order to spread their ideas in a more accessible way (cf. Peterson, 2006; Seligman, 2002a). Much like self-help practitioners, these authors attempt to disseminate their information in a comprehensible manner that is not intimidating to those without the same level of knowledge. There is an acknowledgment within their works that people outside their field may wish to take advantage of some principles of their philosophy, however while the practical application of their ideas may be beneficial to laypeople, they are often academically out of reach. Some authors even include self-help tactics and techniques for their readers to use. It is therefore not surprising that much of the self-help movement has taken inspiration from positive psychology (Bergsma, 2008; Lambert, 2007).

2.2 SELF-HELP

Self-help is a broad term that is realised in a variety of ways. People throughout the world employ methods of self-help, including prayer, private reflection and meditation, and while different techniques are used in different ways, these solitary acts of coping point to the significance of self-help and the space it occupies within the world today (Adams, 1990; Powell, 1990). Self-help typically involves a person's conscious effort to improve him/herself and his/her situation, based on the belief that people can learn skills and virtues which allow them to effect meaningful changes in their lives (Tucker-Ladd, 2006).

In line with preventative and positive psychology, and in particular their notion that people can be taught to enhance adaptive psychological skills, self-help subscribes to the idea that people possess internal resources which can be optimised (Kurtz, 1997). It is a core concept of the self-help ethos that people are capable agents within their own lives – they have the ability to manage their own self-help once they have become aware of their intrinsic skills and begin to use them effectively and efficiently (Checkoway et al., 1990). Self-help theorists have also asserted that as well as innate abilities, people can display talents which they may not have been aware they possessed; and they may learn new skills, especially when an appropriate form of instruction is administered. It is thus believed that people are capable of learning or enhancing virtues through practice and that situations which demand certain virtues, such as courage or self-confidence, may evoke the necessary reactions from people, even if they do not perceive themselves as regularly possessing these qualities (Gillham & Seligman, 1999).

'Empowerment' has different meanings for different people and within different contexts, however here empowerment will be used as "the process by which individuals…become able to take control of their circumstances and achieve their own goals, thereby being able to work towards maximising the quality of their lives" (Adams, 1990, p. 43). The self-help movement is a strong supporter of personal autonomy, and encourages people to be active participants in all aspects of their lives (Adams, 1990; Watkins, 2008). This does not necessarily mean that people should not seek help from other avenues – self-

help has often been viewed as a process of transferring responsibility from the professional to the layperson, however engaging in self-help and sharing power and responsibility does not have to be 'all or nothing' (Kaufmann, 1994). Rather, the ideal is for people not to feel disenfranchised in their lives and instead seek the methods that best allow them to explore and discover their own capabilities, whether this is done through self-help methods, more conventional means involving qualified professionals, or a combination of both (Checkoway et al., 1990). This is especially true because of the numerous ways in which different people experience empowerment. Some people feel empowered through the achievement of physical or at least tangible results, while others can experience a similar feeling through an entirely internal or introspective process; the ways in which self-help systems attempt to assist people in achieving empowerment therefore also differs according to the specific theory, techniques, and goals underlying a particular self-help programme (Adams, 1990).

Self-help has been defined as "a therapeutic intervention administered through text, audiotape, videotape or computer text, or through group meetings or individual exercises such as 'therapeutic writing'" (Bower, Richards & Lovell, 2001, p. 839). As such, it is not surprising that self-administered materials can occur in various forms and within various regimes. Some of these materials are used in conjunction with other exercises or processes while others are implemented in isolation; some involve homework and/or consultation with a professional, while others contain neither of these elements (Adams, 1990; Mains & Scogin, 2003). Despite, or perhaps because of this range of products and manners of use, an assessment of their fundamental effectiveness is still lacking (Scogin, 2003). The plethora of materials available also precludes a full evaluation of all materials and their effects, however of those that have been assessed some have been found to be effective, especially for people with depression or anxiety disorders (Den Boer, Wiersma & Van den Bosch, 2004; Scogin, 2003). Many self-administered materials which have been investigated have produced results indicating positive trends in their outcomes, but ultimately display insufficient evidence to firmly assert the value of such materials in a conclusive way (Bower et al., 2001).

There appear to be a number of factors which affect the efficacy of self-help materials. Some of the findings around these materials have linked effectiveness to participants' adherence levels. As with other forms of interventions, participant adherence generally declines (for example, minimal contact therapy has demonstrated a 59% adherence rate; and telephone-administered psychotherapy a 5% rate of adherence) and this can have an impact on the results of the intervention (Den Boer et al., 2007). Aside from some participants who do not follow the instructions of self-help materials, and those who have unrealistic expectations of these materials, there is the additional obstacle of attrition from self-help programmes (Murray et al., 2003; Starker, 2009). Other factors that have been determined to impact the effectiveness of various self-administered treatments in previous studies include: the particular difficulty the person was experiencing; the person with the difficulty him/herself; and, possibly the most influential, the attitude of the person towards the self-administered programme (Mains & Scogin, 2003).

Research has shown that if people have a positive attitude towards a self-administered programme and are invested in it, they are intrinsically motivated to continue with it and are more likely to experience its benefits (Kingree & Ruback, 1994; Mains & Scogin, 2003). This suggests that only those who are inherently interested in such programmes should take part in them. It also suggests that a degree of self-awareness is necessary within the self-help participant in order for effective use of the material to be made – that is, the person taking part in the self-administered programme must be, at least to some degree, conscious of his/her own needs and his/her feelings about the programme upon which s/he intends to embark, in order to ensure that s/he is mentally willing and prepared to take part in a manner that will be fitting and effective for him/herself (Kingree & Ruback, 1994; Mains & Scogin, 2003).

The active role given to people using self-administered materials is another factor thought to affect its success – people are put in a position of control as it is their choice and therefore their responsibility to make use of the materials, meaning their self-help experience is both voluntary and under their own management and direction (Luke, Roberts & Rappaport, 1994; Mains & Scogin, 2003). This is empowering for participants

and allows them to view the results of self-administered materials as the product of their own effort, rather than that of an external presence, which may be why self-help has been associated with enhanced self-confidence and self-worth, as well as feelings of self-fulfilment (Checkoway et al., 1990; Luke et al., 1994; Mains & Scogin, 2003; Watkins, 2008).

While there have been a number of positive findings in association with self-help, the meaning and interpretation of these findings has been complex, in large part because the exact mechanics regarding *how* self-help works to help people are unknown (Powell, 1990). Also, not everyone experiences benefits from self-help (Powell, 1990). The answer then as to who should take part in self-help, who stands to benefit the most from which type of intervention and which particular form should be used, can only be found through consideration of what is being intended by a particular self-help material, for whom it is intended and whether the person who intends to use it is sufficiently motivated (Bower et al., 2001; Scogin, 2003).

Further complexities emerge as a result of confounding findings around the similarity of effectiveness across various treatment methods. Gillham & Seligman (1999) have commented on this issue, noting that it has been consistently found that different treatment methods often produce similar results. In terms of self-help, Bower et al. (2001) have found that "the effect size of self-help treatments is greater than no treatment and similar to that of conventional psychotherapies" (p. 842). It is thought that the reason different methods often create equivalent results is that they have similar core elements, and it has been suggested that the most significant common denominator in effective treatments "may be the building of human strengths" (Gillham & Seligman, 1999, p. s169). Thus, any treatment that fosters qualities such as optimism, rationality, and empathy seems more likely to engender effective outcomes for its participants (Gillham & Seligman, 1999).

Self-help occupies an uncertain space in the realm of psychology – traditionally professionals have had little regard for the self-help culture and have been sceptical about

its effects and worth; however, other trends are currently emerging, with a number of professionals recognising that a combination of their own expertise and self-help principles could be highly beneficial for clients (Rappaport, 1994; Powell, 1990). At present, there are many who consider self-help as being more closely related to professional systems of psychology rather than seeing it as part of the informal sector of the field – this is likely due to the theoretical underpinnings which provide a solid foundation for the system, as well as its framework and goal-setting nature (Rappaport, 1994; Powell, 1990). This idea has been taken further, with some seeing self-help as an evolutionary step of psychology, a development following on from what came before it (Adams, 1990). It is perhaps for this reason that self-help has been described as:

> aris[ing] naturally between the gaps left by existing services and complements them to complete the pattern of overall provision. Self-help is thus an inevitable consequence of the inability, or unwillingness, of professionals and their agencies to meet needs (Adams, 1990, p. 21)

This line of thinking has led to self-help being considered as a supplement or complement to traditional methods of intervention. Some believe that self-help materials can assist to prepare clients and better enable them to maximise the benefits of professional treatments; there is also support for the idea that the use of self-help can assist to consolidate the progress made after professional treatment has been administered (Powell, 1990; Starker, 2009). There have even been suggestions that professionals may use aspects of the self-help ethos within their own practices. While some treatments have long included independent work done by clients between therapy sessions, such as Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy's use of homework, the new movement to actively incorporate self-help aspects into conventional therapy may stimulate professionals to "reconsider their own ways of working and change for the betterment of their clients" (Adams, 1990, p. 130; Bower et al., 2001). Den Boer et al. (2007) report a 63% crossover in the use of self-help with other forms of mental health care out-patient treatment, further illustrating the spreading and diversified use of self-help methods. The growing intersection between traditional methods and self-help also points to the latter system's ability to address issues of access.

The increasing occurrence of mild or moderate psychological disorders (such as anxiety and depression), coupled with the limited number of professionals and the cost of psychological services, have led to severe deficits between needed and available psychological resources (Bower et al., 2001; Den Boer et al., 2004; Scogin, 2003). In South Africa, issues of access also arise from geographical distance from services as well as language barriers; Rock & Hamber (1994) estimated that approximately 80% of citizens would not be in a position to benefit from psychological services. Self-help methods have been suggested to address this shortfall, due to their effectiveness in dealing with a number of milder psychological complaints and potential to be a more cost-effective solution (Den Boer et al., 2004; Marks et al., 2003; Watkins, 2008). Self-help strategies that are based on established psychological intervention methods are thus recognised as a means to widen access to psychological services, both within primary care and community settings (Bower et al., 2001).

Beyond their ability to improve access to psychological services, self-help methods also have the potential to move beyond treatment and fulfil a preventative role. As the theory of preventative and positive psychology points out, people are not naturally deficient beings and self-help approaches offer the opportunity for people to learn more about adaptive behaviours (Seligman, 2002b). Some self-help materials may also aid people in improving their psychological skills, particularly their coping skills, which can assist in the prevention of mental disorders (Mains & Scogin, 2003). These types of assistance therefore offer potential benefits to the people who use them, as well as possibly easing the demand on psychological services.

Some of the self-help programmes that have been found to be most effective in this order are those which include written materials (Bower et al., 2001). Written materials have the potential to be easier to access for a greater number of people, as well as being more economical and generally easy to use (Bower et al., 2001). Typically, this may be referred to as bibliotherapy – bibliotherapy is generally understood as a form of self-help that makes use of mostly written materials to assist an individual in his/her personal development (Den Boer et al., 2004; Morgan & Jorm, 2009). Bower et al. (2001) have

noted that there has been a sizeable increase in the bibliotherapeutic formats being used in many traditional psychological treatments.

People who use self-help materials often appreciate their independence, however, complications and drawbacks of self-help also need to be considered (Den Boer et al., 2007; Scogin, 2003). In the case of bibliotherapy, the treatment is considered a form of self-help, however this particular type is usually administered by a professional – some questions have arisen as to what the effects of this intervention method will be if a person were to employ it without guidance (Morgan & Jorm, 2009). However, bibliotherapy has been found to be effective even when implemented with only minimal contact and self-help material that is reputable would generally be expected to carry sufficient explanations and guidelines (McKendree-Smith, Floyd & Scogin, 2003). Clear instructions and comprehension of a self-help method, however, can never be fully guaranteed, which could result in problems of misunderstandings; people using the material may also fail to follow the instructions and these issues may have negative effects for users (Morgan & Jorm, 2009; Watkins, 2008). Unfortunately, bibliotherapy also requires literacy, which brings with it concerns around reading ability and home language. This may be quite problematic in countries such as South Africa, where there are high rates of illiteracy and multiple home languages (Prinsloo & Janks, 2002).

The uncertain empirical quality of self-help materials more generally and number of products available which have not been evaluated by persons with knowledge also pose difficulties for the field (Bower et al., 2001; Watkins, 2008). In addition, concerns have been raised that when clients use self-help in conjunction with traditional therapy and become more attentive to their own well-being and act independently to improve it through self-help, the professionals with whom they are working may be prompted to feel less responsible for the part they play in their clients' treatment, and may possibly even neglect a holistic approach to assisting their clients (Checkoway et al., 1990). This may impact the goals which the client is trying to reach or even hinder his/her empowerment. Thus, as with any form of intervention, a delicate balance must be struck to extract the maximum benefit for participants, while minimising any potential negative side-effects.

While caution must be exercised when any intervention is administered, self-help has been acknowledged as a tool that could offer significant benefits for a large number of people in a range of situations. Some of the most valuable effects of these methods may come from its potential to impact people's internal worlds and processes of introspection. McKendree-Smith et al. (2003) mention that self-help materials can lead people to insight; they also make note of findings that indicate the ameliorating effect bibliotherapy can have on depression, suggesting that methods based in self-help can help improve people's outlook on life.

2.3 INTROSPECTIVE TOOLS: SELF-REFLECTION AND INSIGHT

Introspection is a process of self-observation that is difficult to measure; its value has therefore been debated with numerous contradictory evaluations emerging (Dawes, 1988; Grant, 2001; Hixon & Swann, 1993; Reisberg, 2001). Many of the problems encountered by concepts around introspection derive from the difficulties in measuring these constructs. Research around introspection or its various components is limited by the means of measurement – introspection is an internal process and as such can only be thoroughly investigated by the person who is engaging in it (Locke, 2009; Lyke, 2009). Attempts have been made to observe people's introspective processes more objectively through the verbalisation of thoughts, and, while this has become an established method for investigating thinking, it is difficult for people to convert their internal worlds into speech without at least some interference, alterations or censoring occurring (Ericsson & Simon, 1998). Indeed, some people have trouble expressing their emotions in words, or even identifying what their emotions are (in the case of people with alexithymia) (Fortino, 2009). Introspection has also been criticised as being an unreliable means of attaining self-knowledge, because people are often not aware of their internal processes (Reisberg, 2001).

Despite these weaknesses, it has been argued that introspection is a vital element within psychology, from which an extensive amount of other understandings in the field emerge (Locke, 2009; Froese, Gould & Barrett, forthcoming). Understandings of psychological concepts, such as emotion, perception or self stem largely from people's ability to

internalise their subjective meaning through introspection (Locke, 2009). It has subsequently been put forward that greater acknowledgement and use of introspection is likely to benefit people using this process, as well as the field of psychological knowledge (Locke, 2009).

Notwithstanding the growing support and appreciation of the significance of introspection, the term is still a broad and complex one, which is easier to investigate when divided into more practical aspects. Looking at introspection through two components – self-reflection and insight – therefore allows more specific assessments to be made. These two aspects are more easily defined than introspection and allow less ambiguous explorations to be carried out (Dawes, 1988).

Self-reflection may be thought of as the process through which people examine their internal processes and make sense of their thoughts, feelings and experiences, while insight refers to the ability to identify and express core ideas about oneself, the arrival at self-knowledge and self-understanding (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Grant et al., 2002; Reber & Reber, 2001). This definition of insight contributes to its esteemed position among many contemporary researchers and theorists who deem it as "the ultimate goal of psychotherapy" (Lyke, 2009, p. 67). The constructs of self-reflection and insight may seem similar, however they are considered separate constructs – self-reflection is often regarded as a specified form of thinking, while insight is the active process that orders thoughts into something more meaningful (Grant et al., 2002).

The relationship between these two constructs is also often misjudged – while it is frequently assumed that when people begin to self-reflect they gain insight, this is not always the case (Grant et al., 2002; Horowitz, 1998). Research has shown that self-reflection and insight do not correlate ($r = –0.03$) suggesting that one does not necessarily have an impact on the other (Grant et al., 2002). This idea has been supported through findings that motivation is a key factor in determining the impact of self-reflection on insight. When self-reflection is undertaken as a course to arrive at insight it is often successful; however when self-reflection occurs as its own means, it generally does not

lead to insight (Grant et al., 2002). This finding is unsurprising as the process of self-examination does not necessarily mean that understanding is achieved or that self-knowledge is reached (Lyke, 2009).

The exact effects and impact that self-reflection and insight have are not known, however a number of associations with these qualities have been discovered. Self-reflection and insight have been linked to self-regulation and goal-attainment, and have also been used by people to bring about purposeful changes in themselves (Grant et al., 2002). These qualities have been known to assist people in enhancing their self-awareness, often leading to greater personal exploration and understanding (Horowitz, 1998; Lyke, 2009). This developed self-understanding aids people in conveying themselves – awareness of their thoughts and feelings, coupled with an appreciation of their origins and manner of working, allows people to appreciate their inner workings, to examine them more critically and gives them the ability to express themselves more clearly to others (Horowitz, 1998). Awareness also introduces people to a more detailed and clearer understanding of things. From this vantage point they can see and understand issues from new and sometimes more in-depth perspectives, allowing them to make decisions with greater knowledge of a situation and its possible outcomes (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Horowitz, 1998).

New or different perspectives can also lead to different attitudes and ways of thinking, which can make people more aware of their surroundings, themselves and their options. These practices enable people to become more attentive to things they would like to change and then assist them in determining how to implement and manage these changes (Horowitz, 1998). It must however be kept in mind that people have different levels of self-awareness and a person's position along this spectrum of self-awareness may impact his/her potential to alter his/her introspective processes (Fortino, 2009).

Self-reflection and insight have also been related to psychological mindedness, which can be understood as a person's predisposition to engage in affective and intellectual investigation of his/her internal processes (Grant, 2001). It follows that people who

engage in such inquiry will be prone to be more aware of their subjective well-being, which is largely comprised of similar cognitive and affective aspects. This fits with findings that suggest that self-reflexive practices used together with cognitive-behavioural techniques can lead to improved mental health (Grant, 2001).

2.4 SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

The significance of happiness, as well as the subjective nature of this quality, has been widely acknowledged (Diener et al., 1997). Subjective well-being and happiness are often thought of as synonymous, however the term happiness may be understood in a number of ways, thus pinpointing specific aspects has allowed more precise definitions to emerge within the field (Diener, 1994). Subjective well-being is conceptualised as an internal experience that is measured entirely from a person's own perspective of his/her life – it is a person's perceptions and evaluations of his/her life, based in his/her fundamental way of perceiving the world around him/herself (Diener et al., 1997; Diener & Ryan, 2009). It is based on a global assessment of well-being in general, rather than appraisals of more restricted aspects of well-being, and consists of people's own subjective evaluations of their lives in the form of cognitions and affect (Diener, 1994). Subjective well-being is generally regarded as being a moderately stable construct and is usually considered to consist of at least three constructs – satisfaction with life, positive affect and negative affect (Arthaud-Day, Rode, Mooney & Near, 2005; Bradburn, 1969; Diener et al., 1997; Galinha & Pais-Ribeiro, 2008; Kingdon & Knight, 2005).

The cognitive aspect of subjective well-being entails the way in which people judge and evaluate their lives (Diener et al., 1997; Van Hoorn, 2007). The satisfaction which people feel in their lives in general, or in some specific aspects of their lives, will affect their level of subjective well-being (Diener et al., 1997; Kjeldstadli et al., 2006). For the affective aspect, subjective well-being is rated according to the frequency of negative and positive emotions (Bradburn, 1969; Diener et al., 1997). People are seen to have a higher subjective well-being when they exhibit greater life satisfaction in conjunction with frequent positive emotions (such as happiness) and infrequent negative emotions (including anger and depression) (Diener et al., 1997). Studies have varied in their

findings on the relationship between positive and negative affect, with some finding no correlation and others finding weak or inverse correlations, however, consensus is that the constructs are independent enough to be looked at as separate entities (Ciarrochi, 2004; Galinha & Pais-Ribeiro, 2008).

Subjective well-being is significant not only because it has implications for the happiness and satisfaction people perceive in their lives, but also because it is thought to have an impact on people's mental and physical health (Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005; Veenhoven, 2008). Although people who display higher levels of happiness do not necessarily have better lives, they interpret and remember experiences from a more positive perspective – this perception does not change objective reality, however it is a shaping force in the way people understand and react to their experiences (Diener et al., 1997). Positively-inclined people are thus more likely to experience events in a more positive way, leading to greater levels of happiness, creating a cycle of positive effects (Diener et al., 1997). It is also thought that when people are in positive moods they are inclined to improve their internal resources and work towards goals, which may be why happiness and success have been associated (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Another reciprocal relationship seems to exist between these qualities of well-being and achievement, with research indicating that happy people tend to achieve success and success tends to lead to happiness (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

People with higher subjective well-being are also more prone to experience the benefits associated with optimism, such as enhanced coping and problem-solving strategies, as well as improved immunity (Diener et al., 1997; Diener & Ryan, 2009; Forster, 2003; Strongman, 2006; Tennen & Affleck, 1987). Aside from the individual benefits associated with this construct, it is thought that subjective well-being may offer further-reaching benefits for the functioning of societies (Diener & Ryan, 2009). The positive affect aspect of subjective well-being has been linked to increased confidence, superior social skills and improved coping, among other qualities (Diener & Ryan, 2009; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). The associations that have been made between subjective well-being and healthy psychological functioning therefore seem to emerge as a result of

the interrelatedness of effective coping, happiness and aspects of subjective well-being (Diener et al., 1997). The links between subjective well-being and these other qualities suggest that "its measurement is crucial to understanding how to improve people's lives" (Diener & Ryan, 2009, p. 392).

Research has also linked subjective happiness, insight and subjective well-being with a number of studies having investigated these relationships. Insight has been found to be associated with measures of life satisfaction ($r = 0.38$) and happiness ($r = 0.38$), although insight levels must be high to assert this connection (Lyke, 2009). The relationship between self-reflection and measures of subjective well-being is more debatable, as contradictory results have emerged from different studies. One study revealed a tenuous relationship between self-reflection and life satisfaction ($r = -0.04$) and self-reflection and happiness ($r = -0.02$), suggesting that self-reflection does not contribute to well-being, although it does not seem likely to impair it either (Lyke, 2009). However, other studies have suggested that self-reflection may be detrimental to well-being (Grant, 2003). Elliot and Coker (2008) have given what may be considered a more holistic view of this issue, finding that self-reflection has different and often opposite effects on people depending on their initial levels of happiness before they embarked on the process of self-reflection. People who are rated as extremely happy (according to the Subjective Happiness Scale) are more likely to experience a decrease in their happiness levels when taking part in self-reflection, however participants in Elliot and Coker's (2008) study who initially scored closer to the middle on the Subjective Happiness Scale experienced increased happiness through self-reflection (Elliot & Coker, 2008). This seems to indicate that self-reflection may offer well-being benefits to people who have lower levels of happiness (Elliot & Coker, 2008). The study however also warned that continued self-reflection may contribute to people undermining their view of themselves if pursued without perspective (Elliot & Coker, 2008). These complex dynamics mean that introspection, and specifically self-reflection and insight, have multifaceted implications for people's internal lives, their life satisfaction and subjective well-being.

Subjective well-being has also been criticised for its highly subjective nature – it has been argued that subjective well-being cannot be considered as a measure of mental health because its definition varies according to each individual's personal evaluation (Diener et al., 1997). However, objective measures of qualities, such as happiness, also face obstacles, including the difficulty of accurately assessing a person's internal experiences and moods. This leads to the contention that both subjective and objective ways of investigating well-being face obstacles which may impede their suitability and effectiveness and that different situations warrant different methods of enquiry (Conceição & Bandura, 2008; Diener, 1994). It has been acknowledged that subjective measures are valuable in that they take people's own perceptions into account, and self-report measures of subjective well-being have been found to "display adequate levels of validity and reliability" (Diener, 1994, p. 105). However it is also recognised that an average person is not equipped to assess psychological health and a self-rating of high life satisfaction or general levels of happiness does not necessarily mean that the person is mentally or psychologically healthy (Diener et al., 1997). In circumstances where these health issues are a concern, it is recommended that subjective evaluations are not the only measure used (Diener et al., 1997).

In order to have an impact on subjective well-being, this study created a self-help journalling programme that sought to improve self-reflection and insight. Diener & Ryan (2009) propose that although there are a number of interventions aimed at enhancing subjective well-being, further research and more interventions are necessary to arrive at the interventions which are most effective, as well as culturally transferable and contextually relevant. To facilitate the central ideas and processes of this study, principles of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, Rational-Emotive Therapy and Narrative Therapy were employed. Subjective well-being has been investigated in a number of ways. The cognitive theories provide a valuable framework to look at this construct as they connect to both the cognitive and emotional elements of subjective well-being. The evaluation of life satisfaction is conceived as a cognitive process and a component of subjective well-being; cognitive theories would therefore seem to offer a way of furthering the understanding in this field, which could lead to improvements in people's evaluations of

their life satisfaction and subsequently their subjective well-being (Galinha & Pais-Ribeiro, 2008; Sheu & Lent, 2009). Cognitive theories are also central in the treatment of maladaptive thinking. It has been posited that irrational beliefs may lead to the deterioration of well-being and that interventions which improve these dysfunctional beliefs can return levels of well-being to equilibrium (Ciarrochi, 2004; Diener & Ryan, 2009). The cognitive theories present means of adapting irrational thinking and in this way offer the opportunity for this type of thinking to be altered. Internal investigations conducted in this manner may also offer benefits to the affective aspects of subjective well-being. The identification of an emotion is itself a cognitive process and even where people may not be aware of their emotions, their internal psychological workings which lead to emotions contain cognitive elements which may be explored and altered – the cognitive theories stress the role which people's beliefs play on their feelings and behaviours, changes to their beliefs can therefore have a powerful impact on these other aspects (Galinha & Pais-Ribeiro, 2008).

2.5 COGNITIVE THEORIES

The cognitive theories of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and Rational-Emotive Therapy are psycho-educational approaches to counselling that value people as active agents in their own lives and well-being (Dryden, 1990; Rudolph & Thompson, 2000; Weishaar, 1993). These theoretical frameworks propose that thought, emotion and behaviour are interrelated psychological processes that cannot be separated and that it is people's interpretations of events and circumstances that determine the way they think, feel and consequently the way they behave (Corey, 2005; Dryden, 1990; Turner, 1993). A person's perception of the world is composed of his/her views, his/her attitude towards it and his/her thoughts about it, thus Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and Rational-Emotive Therapy believe that when a person's perspective of his/her life is changed, greater changes will follow in the rest of his/her life (Horowitz, 1998; Weishaar, 1993).

Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and Rational-Emotive Therapy subscribe to the A-B-C idea of behavioural and emotional responses, with 'A' being the activating event, 'B' the person's beliefs about the event and 'C' the consequences of these beliefs (Wessler &

Wessler, 1980). ‘A’ can be seen as a catalyst, something that causes a reaction or response to occur and may be in the form of “an event, a thought, an inference, an image, a sensation, a behaviour, as well as an actual activating event” (Dryden, 1990, p. 38). ‘B’ emerges from people’s way of processing information, as their cognitions mediate what they understand and integrate from the world around themselves, affecting the formation of their attitudes and feelings (Donigian & Hulse-Killacky, 1999; Hope, Holt, & Heimberg, 1993). Rational-Emotive Therapy and Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy therefore regard ‘C’ as a result of ‘B’ rather than ‘A’, meaning that people’s perception of reality and experiences is more significant than the reality and experiences themselves (Goldfried, 1979; Turner, 1993; Weishaar, 1993). This leads to the idea that emotions and behaviours can be altered by changing one’s perceptions.

On this basis, the concept of rational versus irrational thinking developed. Rational thinking is adaptive and assists people in the achievement of their goals (Cobb & Stevens-Long, 1983; Dryden, 1990; Wessler & Wessler, 1980). It consists of practical, matter-of-fact and logical thoughts and improves coping skills, as well as being associated with greater emotional and mental health (Corey, 2005; Donigian & Hulse-Killacky, 1999). Irrational thoughts, on the other hand, are maladaptive – they are associated with negative affect such as anxiety and may often be self-defeating (Cobb & Stevens-Long, 1983; Dryden, 1990; Goldfried, 1979). They are essentially inconsistent with reality (although the person thinking these thoughts may not realise this) and serve as an obstacle to people achieving their goals (Dryden, 1990; Goldfried, 1979).

While everyone experiences irrational thinking at some point, it is the degree to which it occurs and the way in which people deal with it that determine the effect which it will have (Salkovskis, 1997; Turner, 1993). If irrational thoughts are recognised and ceased, it is likely that the person will experience greater well-being, however if these thoughts are obsessed about, the likelihood of disturbance is increased (Salkovskis, 1997). Many people are capable of following the former route and overcoming these irrational thoughts without the assistance of therapy. Research has shown that many people experience depression in a mild manifestation and come out of this depressive state by

themselves without any form of therapy or medication (Teasdale, 1997). It is therefore apparent that therapy is not always necessary for changes and improvements to take place – some occur spontaneously and are brought about by the efforts of the individual him/herself (Freedman & Combs, 1996). This is also why psycho-educational approaches may offer clients considerable benefits, as they present people with the opportunity to use their own abilities to learn more about themselves and their skills. Through teaching clients skills to recognise and improve on their own abilities, these theories may assist people is becoming more capable of understanding and helping themselves.

2.5.1 Process of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and Rational-Emotive Therapy

According to the A-B-C theory of disturbance, changing 'A' is a practical solution that will not necessarily resolve disturbances in the long run (Corey, 1995). It is rather the beliefs of a person that must be challenged (Corey, 1995). For this reason, the cognitive approaches attempt to change people's perceptions in order to improve their coping ability – a change in attitude may be the most effective solution not only for one particular situation, but for other future problematic situations as well (Dryden, 1990; Goldfried, 1979; Rudolph & Thompson, 2000). Changing 'B,' therefore has the potential to bring about a new way in which people see the world. This can change people's awareness, altering their powers of self-reflection and insight and can result in changes in behaviour (Horowitz, 1998).

The agency of clients in this process is very significant. People are seen as constantly and actively interacting and dealing with their environment, suggesting that different people may react in very different ways to the same external stimuli, because each person's means of processing the situation is different (Cropley, 1967; Deci & Ryan, 2000). This view of people also leads to the assertion that clients should come to their own new perspectives, rather than having an outside force, such as a therapist, impose a new perspective on them (Weishaar, 1993).

Based on these notions, the cognitive theories promote the dissemination of relevant information to clients in order to inform them of how the therapy process is intended to

work, as well as what the roles of the client and therapist will be in the therapeutic relationship (Weishaar, 1993). They also advocate the employment of contracts – Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy maintains that changes come about when a commitment is made to actively working toward adaptive change; a contract acts as an explicit understanding of a person's intentions (Corey, 2005; Dobson & Dobson, 2009). Contracts have the potential to improve people's adherence to the Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy programme and to encourage people to develop a clear perspective of their purpose for being involved in Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and what their particular goals are for themselves (Dobson & Dobson, 2009). A contract also serves to remind participants of their commitment to Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and is viewed by some as "an intervention in and of itself" (Dobson & Dobson, 2009, p. 57). Cognitive theories also often make use of homework exercises in order to further promote clients' own actions and to encourage clients to work towards their therapeutic goals during the time when they are not interacting with their therapist – it is a means through which clients can "practise and maintain new skills and techniques" (Kazantzis, 2005, p. 2) and thus improve their ability to make changes in their lives (Ellis, 1969).

An effective way to change irrational beliefs is to investigate the belief system informing the idea and assess whether there is evidence to support it. The cognitive approaches suggest that people should be taught to evaluate their thoughts and behaviours in order for them to learn how to differentiate what is rational and appropriate from what is not – a systematic evaluation of thinking (Goldfried, 1979; Horowitz, 1998; Weishaar, 1993; Wessler & Wessler, 1980). By virtue of their ability to think about their thinking, people can then examine their thoughts and choose how to respond to situations by monitoring how they intend to react and deciding whether or not to carry out the intended action (Donigian & Hulse-Killacky, 1999; Freedman & Combs, 1996). This capacity allows people to become more aware of their internal processes, contributing to their ability to change the way they think and thus enabling them to alter their behaviour (Dawes, 1988; Donigian & Hulse-Killacky, 1999).

Theorists posit that profound changes can be brought about in people through self-observation, awareness of self-talk and being taught coping skills (Corey, 2005). The starting point for most of these processes is the investigation and assessment of self-talk, promoting people's self-awareness and enhancing their sense of control and autonomy in their own lives (Corey, 1995). Self-talk is, quite literally, 'what people say to themselves' – the significance of this is that these things are accessible to people on a conscious level, meaning that they can become more aware of their thought process (Weishaar, 1993). The act of looking inward and reflecting on oneself and one's thought processes provides an avenue for different realisations, understandings and perspectives. This awareness gives people power to change what they are saying to themselves; a step towards changing their outlook on life and thus their emotions and behaviour (Weishaar, 1993).

The extent of the effects of self-talk are thus far-reaching and the positive effects should be maximised wherever possible. The practice of 'self-affirmations' – repeating positive or encouraging statements to oneself about what one would like to achieve or who one wants to be – has become more widespread and seems to offer considerable benefits to those who take part in it (Harris & Epton, 2009; McQueen & Klein, 2006; Schimel, Arndt, Banko & Cook, 2004; Sherman, Bunyan, Creswell & Jaremka, 2009). Greater understanding of and instruction in self-talk can therefore encourage self-statements to become more positive as well as more empowering; and emphasizing the abilities of people through self-promoting self-statements is one of the ways in which the cognitive therapies aim to change the way people view themselves (Wessler & Wessler, 1980).

According to rational-emotive therapy, it is through self-talk and self-analysis that clients become their own therapists. The cognitive therapies believe that it is the investigation that clients undertake of themselves that leads them to new perspectives and that the best way for a client to learn is through his/her own experience (Weishaar, 1993). It is therefore stressed that the work must be done by the client – it is believed that the solutions a person comes up with him/herself will be more personally appropriate, adaptive and effective than those implemented by an outside source (Corey, 2005; Weishaar, 1993). This agency of the client within therapy is a strong connecting fibre

between the spheres of traditional psychological practices and self-help. The notion that a person's self-talk is accessible to introspection and appreciation of clients' own self-knowledge are key elements in the momentum propelling self-help (Weishaar, 1993). Self-help thus has the potential to be instrumental in changing people's self-statements by teaching them more about self-talk and how to alter it (Wessler & Wessler, 1980).

The practices of becoming more aware of one's internal landscape and understanding oneself better in order to make changes are pivotal to the cognitive theories and are regarded as successful ways of assisting people to cope with everyday life and its stressors (Corey, 2005). Cognitive therapies have also been at the forefront in treating more serious problems, including anxiety, depression, panic disorders and phobias (Beck, 2005; Carlbring et al., 2005; Corey, 2005).

Cognitive therapies are designed to assist the process of transferring knowledge from the professional to the layperson in a clear and understandable way, while still being cost-effective (Corey, 2005; Dryden, 2009). These are values which are echoed in the self-help ethos and illustrate the way in which the cognitive therapies complement the ideas and practices of self-help (Corey, 2005). It is therefore not surprising that clear links have been made between the cognitive theories and self-help, with some theorists specifically advocating the use of self-help materials, as well as a number of theorists creating self-help material themselves (Corey, 2005). Although self-administered materials cannot treat severe pathologies independently, they have often been found to be effective in assisting treatment for many problems, including depression and anxiety (Mains & Scogin, 2003; Weishaar, 1993).

2.5.2 Combination of theories

Although the amalgamation of theories was initially resisted, it is becoming increasingly common for therapeutic practitioners to combine elements from various theories in recognition of the fact that different people react differently to the same stimuli (Corey, 1995; Goldfried, 1979; Ingram & Snyder, 2006; Turner, 1993). People's problems are rarely clear-cut or simple to deal with, thus a combination of theories seems to be a

suitable response (Hope et al., 1993). Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy is itself an amalgamated approach, as it incorporates ideas from various schools of thought including cognitive psychotherapy, behaviour therapy, and social learning theory (Corey, 1995; Turner, 1993; Weishaar, 1993). Another perspective which fits with many ideas of the cognitive approaches, as well as aspects of self-help, is Narrative Therapy.

2.6 THEORY OF NARRATIVE THERAPY

While Narrative Therapy does not originate from the same schools of thought as Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and rational-emotive therapy, there are many parallels between the theories. Perhaps the most significant similarity between these different approaches is the emphasis they place on the individual's perceptions and experience. Just as the cognitive theories highlight the way in which people perceive incoming information as being the mediating factor between their feelings and behaviours, so too does Narrative Therapy regard people's narratives as the way in which they come to experience and understand their lives (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Rappaport, 1994). Narrative Therapy also subscribes to the idea that the way people view themselves and their lives is not necessarily static, believing that people can "actively re-author their lives" (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Freedman & Combs, 1996, p. 11). Other similarities between the theories as well as with the self-help ethos include: the emphasis placed on people's agency and the significance of their experiences; the acknowledgment that people have valuable internal resources; the intention to empower people; and the balance they try to achieve between the roles played by the professional and the individual.

Narrative Therapy is about the manner in which people story their lives. The way people conceive the story of their lives shapes the reality of their lives and the way people describe themselves reflects their potential selves (Cobb & Stevens-Long, 1983; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Rappaport, 1994). These concepts are formed through a combination of factors and, similarly to social constructionism, Narrative Therapy recognises the significant role that society plays in shaping a person and his/her narrative (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Freedman & Combs, 1996). Just as social constructionism stresses the significance of an individual's own reality and the way in which it is constructed by

outside societal forces, so Narrative Therapy distinguishes the way in which society creates meanings that become immediately attached to certain ideas, affecting the way people use language in that society, and thus impacting their narratives (Corey, 2005; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Drewery & Winslade, 1997). The values, beliefs, and general concept of 'the way things are done' in any context are ideals that are passed on from generation to generation in a society and act on individuals within that society (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Thus everyone is a product of his/her context and is influenced by it in innumerable ways – it shapes who people become and the way they see, understand and label both their internal and external worlds (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Rappaport, 1994).

Accordingly, Narrative Therapy acknowledges the significance of a person's narrative, and the impact that exploring other narratives can have (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Smith-Acuña, 2011). While this approach does not advocate simply erasing a participant's narrative or substituting one's own narrative with another, it does promote the investigation of other narratives as an avenue of self-exploration, a way to come to a greater understanding of self, and a vehicle to experience different points of view (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Even if the new perspectives are not adopted by the person, this approach believes that people can derive significance benefit from this type of narrative exploration (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Narrative Therapy posits that telling our stories is a way of expressing ourselves, and also a way of re-experiencing the things that we are narrating (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

Narrative Therapy proposes that people create their world and understanding of others through their own words (Drewery & Winslade, 1997). People's descriptions are especially significant in their potential to act as self-fulfilling prophecies. When a person subscribes to a certain set of meanings or definitions, this is how s/he comes to see and understand the world and people around him/herself and it affects the way s/he reacts to and interacts with the outside world. This, in turn, impacts the things or people being acted upon, often resulting in the original ideas being reinforced, for example, a person who perceives a colleague as "unfriendly" may make no effort to include him in plans

with other colleagues, resulting in the colleague feeling excluded and not attempting to be "friendly" towards the person (Silvester, 1997).

The organisation, control and reconstructive aspects offered by Narrative Therapy can help people cope with the emotional repercussions of daily life and even have the potential to improve people's health (Murray, 2006; Strongman, 2006). For all these reasons, there is a clear implication that slight changes to one's narrative can change the way one feels about things in dramatic ways. In fact, behaviour modification has long appreciated the significance of a person's narrative as well as the obstacle which language can be to this process (Krasner, 1976).

Narrative Therapy believes that the way people story their lives frames their existence and will have ramifications for their identity. This approach views people's identities as continually evolving – their narratives are dynamic and changing, meaning that their concepts of themselves, their lives and the world are constantly in a state of flux (Crossley, 2007; Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Payne, 2006). While this is an idea that stands in opposition to many other theories, it provides another way of looking at identity and personality and gives people greater power in their lives. It credits people as being able to gain self-awareness and act on this knowledge to become proactive in the process of their identity and personality formation, thereby gaining greater control over who they are and what they do with their lives (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Sinclair, 2007). A positive narrative with autonomy leads people to experience a sense of control in their own lives and to become more accepting of their complex existence in the world (Drewery & Winslade, 1997). However, this approach does not see the person him/herself as the only role-player in the process of creating identity (Freedman & Combs, 1996). The effects of society, as well as his/her interactions with others, are also part of identity-formation (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Freedman & Combs, 1996). People are conditioned by society about what is correct and appropriate and this has important ramifications for the way they see their world, themselves and their behaviour (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

These ideas are central factors in Narrative Therapy's view of the client. Narrative Therapy advocates a more active role for clients than other theories, seeing them as local experts who are constantly working to make sense of their lives and who have unique knowledge that is vital to a successful collaboration (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Monk, 1997). As such, this approach believes that the therapist should not be "doing the work" for the client, instead, the client should be introduced to his/her own resourcefulness and use this new awareness of his/her skills and abilities to effect active control in his/her narrative and life (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Monk, 1997). One of the weaknesses of many theories is that agency is removed from the person – even when positive results are achieved, these approaches often treat the person as a recipient of treatment, rather than a participant, depriving him/her of the true value s/he has had in the therapeutic process and in some ways denying his/her local expertise (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Narrative Therapy posits that people should escape the belief that problems can only be solved with the help of a professional and rather become aware of and explore their own talents and skills and come to new resolutions using their own resources (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Monk, 1997). In fact, some therapists have started to question whether formal psychological intervention is necessary for change to occur, suggesting that some changes may be spontaneous while others may have emerged primarily as a result of the actions of the client (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

This has contributed to the notion that people do not need the same psychological knowledge that a therapist may have – laypeople may not grasp some concepts of psychological theory, but this is not necessarily what they need to change or improve their lives (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Rather, it is purported that people need an environment that is conducive to the cognitive exploration of their lives in order to find and maximise their understanding of themselves and what they need (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

The idea of a person's agency is mirrored in this approach's perception of narrative. Narrative Therapy sees people's narratives as dynamic "acts of communication and self-definition" (Rappaport, 1994, p. 132). It believes that language itself is not passive and

therefore the people who use it and the manner in which they do so are likewise active, interactive and productive – constantly creating their stories and their realities through their words (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Rappaport, 1994)

Narrative Therapy therefore appreciates the significance of the role that language plays in people's narratives:

> Language is not simply a representation of our thoughts, feelings, and lives. It is part of a multilayered interaction: the words we use influence the ways we think and feel about the world. In turn, the ways we think and feel influence what we speak about (Drewery & Winslade, 1997, p. 34).

Thus, the language which people use can reveal the influences that other people and society as a whole have on them and the way they see themselves (Parry & Doan, 1994). It also reflects a person's values and belief system. What we know and how we know evolves from our language; our language is also pivotal in the recreation of our stories and experiences, and in this way comprises these things. The discourse from which language emerges is therefore a lens through which people see the world – it colours their perceptions and highlights certain elements over others (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

Discourse can be understood as a consistent set of ideas and practices associated with certain common values of a group, that is, a person's discourse is the way s/he expresses him/herself which emerges from his/her context (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Freedman & Combs, 1996). Words do not exist in a vacuum; the context from which they come instils many connotations regarding their meaning and this implies that the way a person speaks and the language s/he uses is deeply entrenched in his/her social and cultural origins and experiences (Murray, 2006; Winslade, 2006). This is particularly significant because it suggests that people's means of expressing themselves are determined, and sometimes restricted, by the discourses available to them (Drewery & Winslade, 1997). The discourse available to any individual is a feature of the society in which that person exists and if people are only exposed to some discourses and not others, they may find themselves without a way to understand or express certain thoughts or feelings which exist outside of these. Since people use their narratives to understand themselves and

their experiences, this can be problematic (Monk, 1997). For example, a young man's socially-oriented discourse might provide descriptions of him as a son, brother, friend and student, however if he is also gay and comes from a society that has no recognition of or terms for homosexuality, the ways for him to understand himself are drastically limited. The way we use language and what we speak about therefore determines a great deal about who we are and how we exist in the world (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Freedman & Combs, 1996).

Discourses not only influence the way we see and understand things and the meaning that they have for us in return, they also create short-cuts in meanings (Freedman & Combs, 1996). This aspect sometimes serves to simplify complex ideas into more convenient ways of thinking, however the same process can deprive the original ideas of their real or full meaning (Everett, 2002; Freedman & Combs, 1996). This practice may also lead to people becoming stuck in certain descriptions or understandings, which can hinder their ability to change or grow psychologically (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Changes in language can have a significant impact on a person's perspective and life in general. Every thought and verbal expression is conducted through a person's language, thus any change in his/her thoughts, beliefs or feelings involves an alteration in language (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Even slight changes in language can change meaning, which can alter a person's experiences and outlook, and ultimately their reality (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Monk, 1997). Indeed, if discourses are a socially-driven mechanism in which language is restricted, even very small changes can bring about a ripple effect of further changes throughout the system, leading to larger and more considerable overall changes (Freedman & Combs, 1996). The process of Narrative Therapy addresses ways in which such changes may be brought about.

2.6.1 Process of Narrative Therapy

Narrative Therapy may be seen as a postmodern approach in its focus on meaning, rather than just facts (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Payne, 2006). Rather than looking at the facts that comprise their lives, this theory sees people's narratives as the core of life's organisation, understanding and maintenance and is concerned with how people use their

narratives to create knowledge of their world and themselves (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Winslade, 2006). Telling stories is seen as a way for people to make sense of their thoughts and integrate them into their meaning system, while the ability to tell stories is seen as an innate talent that every person possesses, meaning that people do not need to be taught how to story their lives, but they can be taught what to do with these stories in order to optimise their effects (Crossley, 2007; Rappaport, 1994; Strongman, 2006). Telling stories enhances people's sense of being in control of their lives and Narrative Therapy uses these ideas to help people move past problems that have kept them stagnant and reconstruct their lives in new ways that help them escape prior narratives that were not as adaptive or appropriate (Monk, 1997; Strongman, 2006). To bring about these changes, Narrative Therapy works towards giving people greater perspective and awareness through reflection, teaching them to negotiate their narratives and assisting them in externalising.

Narrative Therapy advocates reflecting on experiences to make sense of them. This theory also believes that the process of self-reflection is one that leads to personal agency (Crossley, 2007). However, while everyone can, and at some point will, reflect on their lives, this reflection will not necessarily be beneficial or even useful if it is not focused where the person actually needs it or if it does not elicit further thought and resolutions (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Reflection that holds potential gains for a person is the kind that leads to the person becoming his/her own audience. People have a specific narrative about their experiences born from their context, but if they realise that this is only one perspective they can begin to appreciate the different meanings that other people with different perspectives can attach to the same experiences (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Payne, 2006). When a person acknowledges that his/her point of view is *only* one way of looking at a situation, s/he starts to become his/her own audience, capable of seeing things from other people's perspectives (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Payne, 2006). From this position of awareness, people can "try on" different perspectives, which may lead them to adopt this alternative view or at least introduce them to an exploration of the different ways in which they can story their lives (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Monk, 1997; Sinclair, 2007).

The process of reflection may also be used to reintroduce people to their agency. If people's narratives are 'out of their control,' they may feel that they are being carried along by life, without participating in it (Monk, 1997). In this situation, Narrative Therapy endeavours to reacquaint people with the power and authority they have and encourage them to actively be the tellers of their own stories (Drewery & Winslade, 1997).

Awareness plays a significant role in change, because once people become more conscious of their thoughts and actions, they can have greater control over them. Greater awareness of our actions and the motivations behind them may act as a window to a deeper understanding of how we are storying ourselves (Monk, 1997). Narrative Therapy therefore advises people to pay close attention to their narratives – to take notice of the way they describe themselves and others, as well as the way they use language in their interactions and its effects (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Freedman & Combs, 1996). If people are invited to construct and explore meaning and pay greater attention to their narratives, they can identify areas of stagnation in their stories and begin to reconstruct their lives through more adaptive narratives (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Monk, 1997). As discussed, when people change their narratives, they may change their representations, perceptions, the meaning of their experiences and therefore their identities and overall outlook on life (Horowitz, 1998; Monk, 1997).

Narrative Therapy calls for participants to recognise that there are many different realities available to every person at any given time and that they must therefore actively choose which narrative fits them most appropriately (Freedman & Combs, 1996). It emphasizes the fact that the stories we construct involve expectations which do not necessarily match actual experiences (Monk, 1997; Sinclair, 2007). Expectations play a role in our interactions with other people and the world and therefore need to be investigated, evaluated and balanced with reality (Drewery & Winslade, 1997). A recommended solution is for a compromising narrative to be used that can encompass the expectations as well as the reality (Monk, 1997). Narrative Therapy does not simply demand that people change their narratives completely; instead it urges people to consider their

narratives and their origins, as well as the other narratives available to them in order to negotiate a storying system that is fitting to them in their particular context (Monk, 1997).

People are also encouraged to extend their awareness as to how much their narratives are influenced by other factors (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Narrative Therapy reminds people that it is not only they who create the stories that shape their lives – important people around them have an influence over their narratives too (Freedman & Combs, 1996). The way other people view and describe us has a significant impact on our own views – the relevance and validity of these different viewpoints must be weighed and evaluated in order to decide which should be incorporated and which disregarded.

In the therapeutic setting, narrative counsellors often make use of externalising conversations – a process of separating a person from his/her problem (Monk, 1997; Payne, 2006; Silvester, 1997). The process of externalising begins with the person being acknowledged as an active agent in his/her life with resources and expertise that can be used to improve his/her life (Drewery & Winslade, 1997). Just as this approach sees people and their language as being produced by their context, so too are problems seen as features that are created by the social and cultural environment (Monk, 1997; Winslade, 2006). People are therefore seen as having a relationship with their problem, which means that a person is never blamed for his/her problems or identified as being the problem (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Rather than holding the view that a person's problems emerge as a result of his/her deficiencies, this perspective introduces a person to him/herself as a human being who is encountering difficulties that are common to many people (Drewery & Winslade, 1997). When people learn to change their narratives and separate themselves from their problems, they can move forwards towards a future that is less problem-oriented with less self-recrimination (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Monk, 1997).

2.6.2 Writing used as a form of Narrative Therapy

While Narrative Therapy is usually conducted verbally in therapy sessions, its premise and connections to social constructionism, as well the significance it places on language

and use of words, provide links to the potential use and value of writing. Diary-keeping has even been used as a Narrative Therapy method for people to identify and understand their personal narratives (Crossley, 2007). Writing may be a more tangible way for people to explore their narratives and understand that they are actively storying their lives (Freedman & Combs, 1996). In such a format, people may realise things which they had not appreciated before because events have meaning ascribed to them even after they occur and the written form allows people a greater opportunity to make sense of the events themselves, as well as their meanings and stories (Freedman & Combs, 1996; McKenzie & Monk, 1997).

The recording of thoughts or events also frequently leads to re-experiencing, which is an important process through which people may come to appreciate a new perspective and possibly gain a better understanding of themselves (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Through writing, people may realise that the way they are describing other people, events or situations is merely an interpretation and not an account based solely on facts (McKenzie & Monk, 1997). The written version of thoughts may also reveal patterns in people's thinking, potentially making them more aware of the way in which they perceive and think, and the demands that they make of themselves and others (Dryden, 1990). In addition, the quality of people's writing is not necessarily significant; it is rather the personal resonance of the written content that contributes to its impact, which means that anyone has the potential to benefit from his/her own writing (Morrison, 1987).

2.7 BENEFITS OF WRITING

Writing has been lauded by numerous professionals in different fields for many years. In its simplest form, writing can be used as a memory aid, reminding the reader of his/her logged experiences and thoughts (Boud, 2001). On more meaningful levels, it may serve as an avenue for self-discovery, a means of practising externalising; or a tool for wish fulfilment; and it has been linked to improved health in some cases (Boud, 2001; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987; Monk, 1997; Morrison, 1987; Strongman, 2006). Poets and authors have long extolled its virtues, describing writing as an escape from both the mundane and the painful which aims to give the writer

a means through which to enjoy life more or, at the very least, a way to make the difficulties of life more tolerable (Morrison, 1987). One of the main aims of psychotherapy, in turn, has been described as the resolution of conflicts which hold people back from a more comfortable and meaningful existence (Morrison, 1987). The potential effects of writing and those intended by therapy can therefore be seen as complementary.

While our own written words can bring back certain instances or specific parts of memories that we did not initially recall, memory is not by any means infallible (Dawes, 1988; Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987). The act of writing is itself a storying process – events cannot be remembered precisely and the record is thus a representation of the reality; the person who is doing the writing is also interpreting the events and actions from his/her own subjective narrative (Winslade & Cotter, 1997). Although people tend to recall their autobiographical memories better than other types of memories, there is often a reconstructive element (Dawes, 1988; Reisberg, 2001). This means that human memory can be unreliable, and while interpretations of things will be from an individual's own perspective and therefore biased, memory will also be affected by the context during which information is recalled (Dawes, 1988; Reisberg, 2001). Writing will not necessarily solve this complexity although it does offer some assistance – in cases where writing has been used as a log of events it can help to clarify a person's memory about occurrences and their timeline. While written accounts may not always be accurate, people can learn about themselves and their perspective by investigating their writing and identifying what is and is not written, as well as patterns of ideas, content and ways of writing (Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987). This reflexive nature of writing offers writers the opportunity to explore the meaning of their internal processes (Boud, 2001). In this way, writing may act similarly to self-talk.

Writing is frequently viewed as a process of self-discovery through which people can come to self-realisation (Bolton et al., 2000; Wyngaard, 1998). Different forms of art therapy have been used on the journey to self-discovery and self-actualisation, possibly because they offer people a way of expressing themselves in a different format, which

allows further or more diverse self-exploration (Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987). Writing, and journal writing in particular, has been associated with people "making sense of the world" (Boud, 2001, p.9), which could be why writing can be one of these forms – people tend to gain greater insight into themselves in re-reading things that they have written (Wyngaard, 1998). The process and products of writing encourage people to delve into their thoughts and emotions, to make sense of them and to use or discard them in the pursuit of self-understanding (Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987). This is a potential avenue for new awareness and even new experiences, and means that writing can sometimes serve a cathartic purpose, leading people to experience the relief associated with the release of thoughts and feelings (Bolton et al., 2000; Esterling, L'Abate, Murray & Pennebaker, 1999; Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987; Whitaker, 1987).

Some forms of writing have also been linked to the resolution of conflicts, simply though the expression of the issue in a concrete manner (Morrison, 1987). This aspect of writing, however, can be taken even further if people use their writing as a way of practising externalising. Writing allows people to explore different ideas in a safe venue and, as such, invites them to investigate different meanings – this feature means writing is a way through which people can practise seeing and using different points of view and can therefore be utilised to introduce them to the practice of separating themselves from their problems (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Monk, 1997). Even minute changes in a person's thoughts or attitudes may be seen as progress. Interventions are not only considered successful if a participant experiences a complete turnaround; any steps toward more adaptive thinking or behaviour can be considered positive developments (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

Writing may also serve as a tool for wish fulfilment in that it has the potential to deliver to the writer those things that s/he does not or will not have in reality (Morrison, 1987). The implications here are that writing then allows people to explore different realities – ones in which they have what they desire, ones in which they can behave in ways that they would not in real life, ones in which they can interact with people they may not have

access to in real life and so on. It can also assist in furthering a person's investigation of him/herself through an examination of what wishes s/he is vicariously fulfilling through writing.

Writing has also come to be appreciated as a valuable activity for both mental and physical well-being (Esterling et al., 1999; Strongman, 2006). It has been found that when people write meaningfully about their experiences, they often undergo positive changes within their lives, including improvements in their general physical health (Strongman, 2006). Interestingly, it has been found that the content of what is written is not necessarily relevant to the benefits which result – rather it is the intention behind the writing that determines the value of the exercise (Strongman, 2006). People are known to find benefits, specifically health benefits, from writing as long as they are using it "to explore emotions and thoughts about emotions" (Strongman, 2006, p. 32).

2.7.1 Creative Writing

"Literature is a force, an act of human magic that alters the way we see our lives and so changes us" (Morrison, 1987, p. 51). Perhaps this is why some specific values of writing are magnified when creative aspects are added. Creative writing allows an exploration of thoughts, feelings and situations that introduces new perspectives, offers an escape from everyday life and may act as a safe and even consoling outlet. Although creative writing offers elements of escapism, it is also connected to rationality. Rationality is an organised and systematic way of thinking and it is thought by some that creativity is equally structured and methodical in its own way (Sinnott, 1959). It has also been argued that even fiction can hold valuable real life lessons. The interpretive nature of human behaviour means that people constantly infer meanings from their surroundings and experiences – this means that even fictional accounts can encourage internal investigations of thoughts and perceptions and may lead to new meanings and discoveries (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

There is also the notion that anyone is capable of creativity, and, while some may be more adept at being creative, it is a skill which anyone can learn and improve upon.

People who do consider themselves creative often do not know where their creativity comes from specifically or how it operates, however they tend to be more open to it than those who label themselves as 'uncreative' (Holmes, 1970; Neethling & Rutherford, 2005). Creativity also manifests itself in a variety of forms for different people, depending on its function and the way it is being used (Neethling & Rutherford, 2005; Spender, 1952).

There have been suggestions that creativity works in similar ways to the unconscious process, acting as a linkage system between thoughts and ideas (Sinnott, 1959). Just as the unconscious sifts through the images and ideas of the conscious and detects combinations that may not have occurred to the latter, so creativity often highlights things that were not initially seen (Sinnott, 1959). Creativity may also be viewed as a specific type of thinking – the cognitive theorists in particular regard creative thinking and reasoning as its own style of attaining and organising information (Cropley, 1967). Creativity also generally demonstrates greater cognitive flexibility, and this ability to look at things from a number of different perspectives can lead to people changing their point of view and even their overall way of thinking (Cropley, 1967).

Since creative writing offers an opportunity to explore situations through metaphor, as well as a chance to add fictional elements to writing, it has the ability to transform the experience of things (Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987; Monk, 1997). For example, an unpleasant situation could be written about in a way that provides the writer with amusement – while the writing does not change the situation, it may alter the writer's experience of it and consequently his/her feelings and behaviours about the event (Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987). Therefore, an imaginative way of dealing with things can lead to them being experienced quite differently (Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987). This fits with the cognitive theories and their supposition that a person's beliefs mediates their feelings and responses – if a person can alter his/her beliefs through imaginative exploration, this creative act can lead to further changes in their feelings and behaviours (Horowitz, 1998).

Figurative language has a propensity to blend different ideas and different realities together and tends to make static ideas flow (Barker, 1985). Creative writing thus also offers the potential opportunity to escape from real life (Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987). The writer has the power to separate him/herself from who s/he is in everyday life and pursue any persona s/he would like to experience; s/he is also free to live in a different place, time or set of circumstances through his/her writing (Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987). Using literary forms such as metaphor is also linked to stimulation of the right side of the brain, which is associated with the processing of emotions, intuition and nonverbal processing (Barker, 1985; Weiten, 2001). This is perhaps why creative writing enhances freer expression; it is not as rigid or restricted as other forms of expression and blends variations in meaning, rather than stagnating at one denotation (Barker, 1985).

Creative and fictional writing have also been identified as a way of expressing emotion (Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987). The written world may be hypothetical and therefore allows people to explore, think about and come to an understanding about their emotions in a safe environment (Boud, 2001; Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987). This zone of distilling thoughts, feelings and experiences into written words allows people to express themselves in a space where they are not judged – the writing process is a personal one in which people are not restricted and may therefore write anything they desire and possibly even things which they had not expected from themselves. They are also then free to return to their words and consider the source and meaning, both past and present, of what they have written. This distance from actual events and emotions allows the writer a different perspective of him/herself and his/her situation and thereby alternative options of reaction and behaviour (Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987).

This aspect may also be a contributing factor to the self-discovery that writing offers. Art forms have been viewed as an outward expression of the artist's inner landscape – a way for the person creating the piece of art to trace an image of his/her self into a format which is tangible and visible to others (Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987; Jorm et al., 2006; McCaffrey, 2008). In this process, the person is also creating a physical and

external manifestation of him/herself that s/he can look at from a more objective point of view. Writing used in this way can act as a vehicle through which people can pursue self-understanding and eventually self-discovery (Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987; Pateman, 2005). Going a step further, writing can also be used as a means of "creative becoming" – an alternative outlet that offers people a new or different way of being through the pursuit of their desired course of life (Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987). It has also been found that people "tend to be healthier and happier" when they have pursuits in which they have a high level of interest and participation, especially if these interests have a creative aspect (Dryden, 1987, p. 32). This means that creative writing could hold potential health and subjective well-being benefits for people.

2.8 SUMMATION

Subjective well-being is a cognitive and affective measure connected to a number of other constructs (Diener et al., 1997). Insight and self-reflection are significant elements of introspection that are often thought to bring about changes in people's lives, including, potentially, their subjective well-being, when actively employed with a genuine motivation to do so (Grant et al., 2002; Lyke, 2009). To investigate and enhance the action these aspects, elements of positive psychology, preventative psychology, cognitive theories of psychology and Narrative Therapy were combined into an amalgamated self-help programme. The cognitive theories and Narrative Therapy are concerned with the mediating effect which people's beliefs or narratives have on their lives, and the agency that may be achieved when people are aware of this aspect within themselves and their ability to control and change it (Cropley, 1967; Dryden, 1990; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Horowitz, 1998; Rappaport, 1994). The central belief of people's ability to learn and change and the significant role which these theories believe people play in their own psychological knowledge and well-being support notions of self-help (Corey, 2005; Drewery & Winslade, 1997). While different self-help programme are available in various mediums and operate in different ways, writing, in itself, is a richly diverse act which has been associated with a number of different benefits. It is also an accessible and tangible medium, through which it is expected people would be capable of both learning and experiencing new things (Freedman & Combs, 1996). However, to facilitate the

learning that can occur from a self-help programme, sufficient guidelines must be in place. The One Wish Journal was designed with these ideas at is core, in an attempt to empower people through their own abilities and skills and allow personal investigation intended to lead to greater insight and subjective well-being.

CHAPTER THREE: PROGRAMME

3.1 THE JOURNAL

The One Wish Journal was designed with the theoretical underpinnings of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, Rational-Emotive Therapy and Narrative Therapy at its core. It was also envisioned in line with the principles of positive and preventative psychology and self-help, aiming to educate participants about aspects of the field of psychology which pertained to them in their everyday lives, in an attempt to help them become more aware of themselves and develop a greater understanding of themselves and their internal processes. Elements from various sources were therefore borrowed in an effort to create a cohesive whole that enabled, empowered and inspired participants and aided them in achieving greater introspective skills and subjective well-being. The programme was presented and encouraged as a written format – materials were presented to participants in written hardcopy and on the associated website; and the programme itself requested and encouraged participants to explore the act of writing.

Positive and preventative psychological ideas were a significant inspiration behind the inception of the journal. Cognitive theories have demonstrated significant results for people, both within formal psychological settings, as well as when they are a part of self-help programmes (Carlbring et al., 2005; Frydenberg et al., 2004; Seligman, 2002b). The principles and effects of these theories were thus the foundation in the development of the self-help journal in the hope that similar achievements could be realised. Ideas from self-help theory were employed in the wording and presentation of materials to encourage clear understandings and personal exploration of each aspect of the programme.

The One Wish Journal consisted of six 'Personal Projects,' which are introspective tasks that were assigned for participants to explore within their personal journals (please refer to Appendix H); there were also four creativity tips (please refer to Appendix G). Physically, the journal was an A5 ruled book presented to participants to use throughout the programme, which was used, seen and accessed only by the participants. The first two pages of the book contained an introduction to some of the central notions of the journal

and the premise of the One Wish programme and also had a commitment form for participants to sign signifying their commitment to the programme (please refer to Appendix C). In the back of the book was an envelope with pieces of paper on which ideas about what to write about were printed (please refer to Appendix E), for the times when participants needed assistance in initiating or propelling their writing. There was also a bookmark (please refer to Appendix D) which was a laminated rectangle of paper printed on both sides with reminders of positive thinking and irrational thinking and how to promote and reduce them respectively.

The journal programme was designed for people to use for themselves and in reaction to everyday life. It was not intended, designed or promoted as a substitute for therapy or as a treatment for psychological disturbances – rather its aim was to help people understand themselves better, gain a more adaptive perspective to the everyday stressors of their lives and ideally enhance their psychological skills and sense of well-being.

The programme was named the One Wish Journal – a wish is usually something that people desire which they cannot bring about themselves. The programme aimed to help people to see themselves in new ways, to encourage them to feel more appreciative of themselves and to become more aware of their skills. It was therefore thought that once people had learnt more about themselves and their abilities, they would not need "three wishes" to attain the things they wanted or needed, instead one wish would suffice.

The agency and empowerment encouraged by self-help, cognitive theories and Narrative Therapy were emulated in the journal's intention to help people to recognise their own talents and to appreciate the local expertise they possess about themselves and their lives. The most basic premise of the journal was that people can learn and understand more about themselves through writing and reflecting on what they have written. Since empowerment is experienced through different means for different people, the journal aimed to encourage the experience of this feeling in a number of different ways – each task had slightly different introspective aims, attempting to evoke new realisations in the participants about themselves and their lives; and the creative writing tips challenged

people to venture into more imaginative realms of their minds, to practise using their creative mode of thinking and to see and understand more about themselves through the exercises.

The narrative influence led to the journal being designed in a way that aimed to help people to tell their own stories and learn from themselves – the journal encouraged participants to write freely, in any manner and about whatever content they wanted to write; it also provided suggestions of ideas of things to write about (please refer to Appendix E) to help facilitate the writing process in those who found themselves unsure of what to write or where to start; the creative writing tips (please refer to Appendix G) encouraged different kinds of writing and the exploration of different points of view, along with specific exercises to try to re-introduce people to themselves. The journals were also designed to remain in the possession of the participants. This element was hoped to encourage participants' unrestricted writing, knowing that no-one else would have access to any of their writing.

The cognitive theories contributed to the decision of having a commitment form in the front of the journal (please refer to Appendix C). Participants who took part in the study were asked to sign this 'contract' (which stayed in their possession) outlining their decision to take part in the study and their intention to use it for their own benefit. The form was devised according to principles of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, and served as a reminder of participants' initial interest in the project, as well as their desire to take part in the study and make use of the journal programme for their own benefits.

Writing has been appreciated for its various benefits, and in particular its ability to bring greater understanding and coherence to thoughts and emotions (Strongman, 2006). The ideal of the One Wish Journal was to enhance self-reflection and insight, ultimately leading to increased subjective well-being. Strongman (2006, p. 32) found that writing "emotionally based personal narratives appears to lead to increased insight, self-reflection, optimism and an increased sense of self-esteem [and] provides a very adaptive coping strategy…[which] can be used as a form of everyday therapy that could be

extremely beneficial." This points to the central tenet of the value of writing, however, simply keeping a record of events or ideas does not promote the gaining of insight; a journal-keeper must consciously engage with and analyse what s/he has written to attain a greater understanding of him/herself (Grant, 2003; Grant et al., 2002; Horowitz, 1998; Ryle, 1993).

This is perhaps why some studies have found that writing in a journal is not necessarily linked to greater insight (Grant, 2003). It has been found that people who keep journals have "higher levels of self-reflection, but lower levels of insight than did individuals who did not keep journals" (Grant, 2003, p. 256). It has been suggested that these results occurred because journal-keeping promotes self-reflection, but not necessarily self-regulation – people who use diaries may be focusing their thoughts inwards but are not necessarily using these thoughts in the action of their everyday lives (Grant, 2003; Grant et al., 2002). It is also suggested that not everyone who keeps a diary or journal uses it as a way to gain insight; many people use their diaries as a venue for cathartic expressions, "a strategy for discharging unpleasant emotions, rather than an explicit means of gaining insight" (Grant et al., 2002, p. 831). Self-reflection by itself does not necessarily produce insight or its associated results; it must be focused and purposeful in order to achieve these things. Instruction in self-regulation, however, has been found to improve people's insight. If people are guided along the way in using their self-reflection to attain insight and are motivated to do so, they are more likely to experience changes (Grant, 2003). This suggests that the instructional aspect of the journal could similarly help participants to come to greater insight, with its associated benefits. The One Wish programme thus worked to facilitate the links between writing and insight.

It is also thought that there are different levels of consciousness, starting with irretrievable memories and involuntary sensory perception of the unconscious and reaching a pinnacle of reflective consciousness in which people are self-aware and introspective (Horowitz, 1998; Weiten, 2001). Before reaching reflective consciousness, there is the level of primary consciousness in which people are aware of their thoughts and feelings, but do not subject these cognitions to analysis (Horowitz, 1998). The

journal aimed not only to introduce participants to self-reflection but to help them to move into primary consciousness and then ideally into reflective consciousness (Horowitz, 1998).

3.2 BOOKMARK

Borrowing ideas from the cognitive theories about irrational and negative thinking, and ideas from positive psychology, the bookmark provided tips to prevent irrational thinking on one side and tips to enhance positive thinking on the other (please see Appendix D). The 'prevention' side of the bookmark gave a short explanation of what irrational thinking is and the idea that it can be prevented in some cases and decreased in others. It gave five examples of irrational/negative thinking and for each example an idea of how to combat the thought. Unrealistic 'musts' and 'shoulds' were explained, and participants were reminded that these thoughts are often our preferences and do not reflect what is or will be (Dryden, 1987). The second point was about the negative effects of "awfulising," and drew attention to the way that people can minimise this way of thinking when they are more aware of it occurring (Dryden, 1987). The thought "I can't handle it" was the third point and the recommendation to participants here was to recall prior incidents when they felt similarly, yet overcame the difficulty despite the feeling (Dryden, 1987). This was intended to remind participants that they are capable, especially within their own lives, and that they can use their resources to overcome obstacles even when they may seem insurmountable. The fourth point reminded participants that people are complex, and by virtue of this fact they cannot be evaluated in a simple or one-dimensional manner (Dryden, 2009). The final points reminded participants that statements made about unknowable amounts of time, such as 'always' or 'never', are often unrealistic and frequently self-defeating (Dryden, 1987). Participants were advised to remind themselves that this type of thinking is unrealistic in an effort to encourage them to move away from such ideas.

The first point on the 'positive thinking' side of the bookmark could be seen as the converse of "I can't handle it" thinking, advising participants to look back and appreciate what they have achieved. It reminded them that for every obstacle they might be

currently encountering or anticipating in the future, there were accomplishments they had already achieved. Rather than warning participants about emphasizing their weaker points and minimising their stronger ones, the next point reminded participants that no-one is talented in every field and urged them to value their own talents and maximise their strengths. The third point advised participants that competing with other people or comparing their lives to others' would not bring them any resolutions or any greater success in their own lives and therefore suggested they rather focus on what they would like to achieve without comparison to anybody else. The fourth point urged participants to be appreciative – to try to see the positive side of difficult situations, as well as to show gratitude to people around them. The intention behind this point was for participants to start adopting a more appreciative perspective of life in general, other people and themselves and also to begin to naturally see positive things around them, as well as within themselves. The final point reminded participants that they are local experts and are therefore the best judge of what is and is not valid criticism of themselves. As pointed out in the section on Narrative Therapy, the narratives or perspectives of other people have a significant impact on us and this point served to remind participants that other points of view are just that – because people often forget that other people's assessments are simply their opinions this point was designed to reminded participants to trust their own judgement rather than simply accepting the evaluations of others.

3.3. PERSONAL PROJECTS

3.3.1 Personal Project 1

The first task asked participants to write out a quote that they found meaningful, to reflect on why it was important to them and to find out about the context of the quote. This Personal Project was designed to be a simple introduction to some of the key ideas of the One Wish Journal programme. It required participants to take a small amount of time to consider something that was personal and important to them. Asking participants to explore the meaning of their quote was included to begin to elicit participants' investigations into what was important to them and why. While this intention was very subtle in the first task, it allowed people to ease into their journal writing and start thinking about themselves and the things that are meaningful to them.

3.3.2 Personal Project 2

This task tried to enhance participants' awareness of their own views of themselves and help them appreciate their own skills and resources. Personal Project 2 came in two parts – the first part was stapled outside an envelope and asked participants to choose a person or people who they admired and to write down the qualities which they admired about their chosen person or people. The second part of the task was inside the envelope and participants were instructed to move on only once they had completed the first part of the task. The second part of the task asked participants to review the qualities they described and reflect on how many of these qualities they felt they possessed, with the added instruction to "try to appreciate these things more in yourself." In line with the theories used as a basis for the One Wish Journal, this Personal Project introduced participants to the notion that they have valuable qualities which they may not see in themselves. The format of the task, with the first part being separate from the second, hoped to encourage people to think freely about the qualities they most admired without censoring themselves. The second part of the task then allowed for a transference of thought from 'what others have' to 'what I have.' The intention was for participants to change or at least consider how their perceptions of themselves could be altered. It was thought that for at least some participants, this task would help them to become their own audience for a brief period in order to see the virtues they possessed, but which they might have previously not recognised within themselves.

The last point of this task asked people to think about the other qualities which they did not see in themselves and consider if there were ways to attain these merits. The emphasis remained on the positive, however the task did not ignore the fact that some participants might feel they lacked certain qualities – rather than focusing on these 'deficits,' the task urged appreciation of oneself and the way in which people are capable of working towards further goals. Theorists have suggested that people may achieve self-improvement when they act in ways that are in harmony with their ideas of admirable qualities; it was therefore hoped that this task would help synchronise participants' ideals with their behaviours (Gillham & Seligman, 1999).

3.3.3 Personal Project 3

The third Personal Project reminded participants of their commitment to the One Wish Journal programme and encouraged them to make more time for themselves in their daily lives. Rather than instructing participants as the previous two tasks did, this Personal Project asked participants to look at the appearance of their journals and consider what the appearance means to them and what it may reflect about their lives in general. It reminded them about the commitment form signed at the beginning of the programme where they agreed to participate in the One Wish Journal for their own benefits. It then urged participants to consider what the appearance of the journal meant – whether the decoration, or lack thereof, illustrated the way they treat other personal aspects in their lives and whether they contribute their time and efforts into what they need and desire or if other things take priority in their lives. Participants were therefore not required to change anything about the appearance of their journal, but to think about it and the potential meaning it had for other aspects of their lives. This task was the final of the more subtle Personal Projects, urging self-reflection about certain ideas in order to help participants come to realisations and possibly insight into themselves, their lives and their priorities.

3.3.4 Personal Project 4

The fourth Personal Project marked the move from more subtle tasks to those with more direct and overt instructions and intentions. As outlined in the principles of Narrative Therapy, the expectations which people hold might not be realistic, and it is therefore necessary to strike a balance between what is expected and what exists in reality (Monk, 1997; Sinclair, 2007). Based on this, the fourth task asked participants to think about and list the expectations they have for themselves, as well as their values. The next instruction asked for participants to list the expectations that they felt other people have of them. Participants were then asked to examine which items on their three lists overlapped, to consider from where their expectations originated and how much significance they allowed their values to play in their expectations and their lives.

As Monk (1997) points out, expectations often do not match our experiences and while unmet expectations can be frustrating, re-evaluating expectations can be an educational and enlightening endeavour. This task intended to focus participants' attention on what the actual circumstances, beliefs and values are in their lives and how these fitted with their expectations, as well as the expectations of others, in order to encourage participants to consider the driving forces behind their lives and assess whether changes needed to be made in their lives to better fit with their values rather than expectations. People's values have been linked to life satisfaction and subjective well-being – while these links are generally not direct or causal, it seems that people are more likely to experience greater subjective well-being when they live their lives in a way that is in harmony with their values (Haslam, Whelan & Bastian, 2009). It was hoped that participants would use this task to assert greater accord between the expectations and values in their lives and in this way experience greater internal comfort.

3.3.5 Personal Project 5

The fifth task was in some ways similar to Personal Project 4, intending to prompt participants to think more about the direction of their lives and the things they would like to achieve. In the cognitive theories' spirit of disseminating relevant information, this task began with an explanation of the way setting goals can impact a person's life and went on to differentiate between short-, medium- and long-term goals. It then asked participants to think about their personal goals and make a list of what they would like to achieve and to break down each goal into smaller parts so that each step towards a larger goal could be acknowledged as an achievement. As with the previous task, Personal Project 5 was much more explicit in its underlying intention and asked participants to tackle the central ideas in a 'head-on' fashion.

Similarly to Personal Project 2, this task also encouraged participants to see themselves in a positive light – separating goals into smaller 'sub-goals' allowed participants to potentially experience accomplishment in each step towards a larger objective, rather than having one target that may seem difficult to reach. It has also been found that when people have goals towards which they are actively working, they are more likely to

experience greater levels of life satisfaction and it is thought that they are also more likely to have greater well-being (Diener & Ryan, 2009; Sheu & Lent, 2009). Personal Project 5 therefore aimed to move people closer to attaining these results.

3.3.6 Personal Project 6

This task was the most direct in its intentions. Personal Project 6 was a retrospective, asking participants to reflect on their entire journal experience. It reminded participants that they had written both personal entries and completed Personal Projects and that "All of these entries can offer insight into your experiences and thoughts." To better facilitate this process, three main points were given as instructions: to compare written entries to memories of the recorded event and assess whether these two forms of recollections differed; to think about the emotions they were experiencing while writing and the emotions they felt in reviewing their writing; and to look for patterns in their writing that could reveal repetitive thoughts, feelings, behaviours or situations. Participants were then encouraged to write as much as they felt necessary to express what they had seen and learnt through this reflexive process. The processes recommended here derived from the cognitive theories and ideas from Narrative Therapy, offering clear instructions of how to reflect on previous thoughts and feelings. It was hoped that this review of their writing would help participants see things from a different point of view, to come to new understandings about themselves and their lives and to put these potential new discoveries into writing as a tangible record of what they had seen and learnt about themselves. The act of writing these reflections down also meant that participants had the ability to review their thoughts about the journal and what they had achieved through it at a later stage.

3.4 CREATIVITY TIPS

Four creativity tips were devised for the One Wish Journal programme (please refer to Appendix G). To introduce participants to ideas of creative writing, the first tip suggested that each participant write a character sketch of him/herself in the third person. This first tip started with an introduction exploring ideas of perspective, outlining the fact that we may lack perspective in our own lives because we are often 'too close' to see what might

be quite obvious from a more objective point of view. It then explained that writing things in different ways or with a different focus can bring about new or different ideas and ultimately new perspectives. While this was the ideal outcome of the exercise, the tip also added that it was an opportunity for participants to practise their creativity and that through it, participants could "live any life [they] can imagine." The intention here was two-fold. The potential for this tip to lead to different perspectives and possibly even self-discovery was not expected to necessarily manifest, thus even if this intention was not achieved, the tip still served as a creative exercise through which participants could achieve other results such as escapism or wish fulfilment. The second purpose was a subtle connotation to all participants that anyone is capable of creativity. The introductory section phrased the practice of creativity as "an opportunity to flex your creative talent," which implied that each participant has this talent. The next section of the tip, when the actual exercise was discussed, started with a notice that "Many people have difficulty with creative writing." This caveat aimed to make participants feel more comfortable and less pressured with the task at hand – although anyone is capable of creativity, many people feel that they are not, thus this introduction aimed to remind participants of their innate ability and reassure them that it is normal to feel unsure of their capacity for creativity.

The instructions of the tip then followed, reminding participants to write in the third person, in order to elicit a more exterior perspective. It broke down the character sketch into three parts – a description of the character's appearance, an outline of the character's back-story and the character's dominant personality traits. Examples were given for each component and a list of possible choices of adjectives for the appearance and personality aspects was included, as well as adjectives to describe participants' feelings and behaviour toward other people and suggestions of other facets that participants might want to have incorporated, including their hobbies or activities, their aspirations and their relationship status. These were all included to help participants with their character sketch, to facilitate the expression of their ideas and encourage them if they were feeling impeded in their writing process.

The second creativity tip was shorter and less in-depth than the first. It asked participants to report a conversation – participants were free to write in either direct or indirect speech, however they were asked to write creatively, to use emotive language and to write in the third person. Examples were given to demonstrate both the direct and indirect ways in which a conversation may be expressed. This tip was a way for participants to explore ways in which they perceive communication between people and the emotion behind these interactions. As with the previous tip, this exercise allowed participants to practise their creativity and encouraged looking at things from a different perspective.

The third tip asked participants to describe an occurrence from their lives, either recent or a memory. It was suggested that participants describe the setting of the event, including details such as the appearance of the place, the atmosphere there and the sensory experience of it. Then participants were advised to introduce the other 'characters' who took part in the situation; to give a brief character sketch of the other people involved in the occurrence they were describing, including some or all of the aspects used in the character sketches the participants wrote about themselves, for example, the appearance, mannerisms and background of the other people. The next step was for participants to describe that actual event and they were reminded to portray their explanation in a descriptive and expressive manner. While this tip was another practice of creativity, it was also an opportunity for participants to explore their thoughts about other people in their lives, places they have been and experiences they have had. This exercise was intended to help participants become more aware of the way they think and feel about the people, places and experiences and possibly introduce them to thoughts and feelings they previously did not realise they had about these things.

The fourth and final creative writing tip was centred on freedom of imagination and encouraged participants to write about their lives as they would like them to be. It reminded participants that although some things are impossible in real life and we cannot always have the things we want or achieve the things we strive for, the imagination allows anything to be possible. Participants were then invited to write about their lives with the small changes that they would prefer to be real or to write a piece that was

entirely fictional. This allowed participants to explore themselves and their lives in the manner in which they felt most comfortable and which they felt was most appropriate for themselves. This creativity tip was a means through which participants could achieve a form of wish fulfilment. It also held the potential to give some participants a sense of creative becoming – completing this exercise could introduce some participants to different perceptions of themselves; through creative writing they could be whoever they would like and achieve anything in their imagination. It was hoped that some participants could experience some of this in their writing, leasing to changes in their lives, to have these 'imaginary' aspects transfer into their real lives.

Overall, the One Wish Journal aimed to use a psycho-educational approach in order to instruct participants in the fundamental principles of cognitive theory and Narrative Therapy. This education intended to allow participants to learn about their internal processes, leading to greater self-awareness and the ability to change their thinking. A ripple effect of changes would then be anticipated as changes in thinking led to changes in behaviour and a positive cycle of growth and self-knowledge emerged. These qualities were then hoped to effect overarching improvements in people's coping skills and ultimately subjective well-being. While positive effects of such a programme may not last over a significant period of time, it is thought that the skills people learn through the programme would enable them to constantly reach for greater levels of personal insight and well-being.

3.5 THE CURRENT STUDY

The aim of the One Wish Journal was thus to allow people seeking self-improvement and growth the opportunity to attain greater introspective skills, in the hope that these abilities would lead to enhanced subjective-well-being. The current study therefore aimed to assess the impact of the OWJ programme on participants' levels of insight, self-reflection, life satisfaction, subjective happiness, positive affect and negative affect, as well as the subjective effects of the programme as experienced by the participants.

The study thus examined the relationships between the introspective scales of insight and self-reflection with the Subjective Happiness Scale, the Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule; and whether the One Wish Journal had an effect on the constructs measured by these scales. Characteristics of participants, patterns of participation and factors affecting this were also investigated.

Exploration of the differences between the experimental and control group, as well as the changes which occurred within each of these groups, were also undertaken to examine whether differences between the groups emerged and whether each group experienced changes throughout the study. Since introspection is internal and highly personal, participants' personal perceptions of the journal were also explored. Qualitative analyses were employed to further probe participants' experiences, to assess the subjective value participants felt the One Wish Journal held for them and to ascertain how they felt the programme impacted on their internal processes.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODS

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research was a longitudinal, mixed-method study that utilised both quantitative and qualitative methods. The longitudinal nature of the study may have been responsible for the high levels of attrition experienced through the course of the study; however it was necessary for the study to take place over a period of time in order to ascertain whether changes within participants' lives emerged while they took part in the journal programme.

Although the combination of quantitative and qualitative elements is not always preferable over the use of a single paradigm, in this study, both approaches were appropriate (Coyle, 2007). Quantitative methods were used to ascertain statistical results and trends in participants' responses on closed-ended measures in order to establish the effects of the One Wish Journal empirically. The use of qualitative methods is fitting when subjective experiences are being investigated and for this reason these methods were used to examine participants' personal experiences with the programme and their perceived effects of their participation (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott & Davidson, 2002). The two methods integrated therefore offered an opportunity to investigate the changes brought about by the One Wish programme from an external etic perspective as well as participants' emic perspective, which is vital for a clear understanding of a person's own reality (Fetterman, 1998). The combined approaches also allowed for triangulation, which is a useful means of verifying data and assessing whether different data sets converge on the same findings (Hastings, 2010). Combining different approaches may produce divergent results that can be difficult to align, however this challenge can be used by the researcher to probe further in the topic, to investigate whether his/her own biases have affected one of the data sets and to discover the meaning behind the results (Babbie & Mouton, 2004; Hastings, 2010).

4.2 SAMPLE

Samples for both the experimental and control group were taken from the population of students studying at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. This is a diverse population that consists of a wide variety of people with different life experiences and interests. Primary and secondary education facilities in South Africa still face many issues of segregation, along lines of gender, race, religion or wealth (De Kadt, 2010; Fiske & Ladd, 2004). Comparatively, the setting at the University of the Witwatersrand is one of diversity, making a student sample from this population more representative of the varied population of South Africa. The lifestyle at university is generally recognised as one that is stressful and challenging, requiring efficient management of time constraints, as well as effective coping skills.

The journal programme was designed for people with busy lifestyles who often have many different daily obligations. While it may be said that most people fit this description, students are a sample who have many duties and commitments and often need very effective time-management skills to cope with their responsibilities. A student sample is also one that is inclined to have relatively high stress levels because of the nature of tertiary education institutions. This population was also convenient for the researcher to access, which was an important factor because of the nature of the study and the continuous contact which was needed with participants.

Students from East campus (one of the main campuses of the university where classes for Humanities, Science and Engineering take place) were used as the experimental group and students from Education campus were chosen to act as the control for the study. Sufficient similarities exist between the students from the two campuses, allowing students from the Education campus to act as a control group in assessing any changes experienced by the experimental group.

Non-random purposive sampling was used in order to find people who would be interested in taking part in the study. The nature of participation was voluntary, but in an attempt to maintain the sample sizes throughout the study, attempts were made to find

participants who were genuinely interested in the study and would thus be more likely to continue with it. Working with volunteers is always difficult, especially when a study runs over a significant period of time, as interest tends to wane, and the voluntary nature of participation means that participants can choose to leave the study at any time for any reason. Volunteer participants have no obligation to the researcher or to the study, and this can be a contributing factor to levels of attrition. Despite this, it is usually the case that volunteers must be used in psychological research for ethical reasons to avoid problems of coercion (Goldenberg, Owens & Pickar, 2007). In the case of this study, particularly for the experimental group, it was very important that participation was entirely voluntary for the purposes of the actual research as well. Self-help materials are generally most effective for those people who are genuinely interested and invested in them. Thus, this study needed participants who did not feel obliged or pressured in any way to take part, but rather those who wanted to take part and were personally motivated to do so.

4.2.1 Experimental group

Participants in the experimental group were first-year to fourth-year students studying at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Initially there were ninety-nine participants; nineteen male (19.19%), seventy-eight female (78.79%) and two participants did not respond to this item (2.02%). Fifty-six participants were in their first or second year of study (56.57%), fourteen were in their third or fourth year (14.14%), and twenty-nine participants did not respond to this item (29.29%). The participants ranged in age from eighteen to thirty-seven, with an average age of twenty-two. Seventy-four participants reported English as a first language (74.75%), five of whom also listed Afrikaans as their first language and seven of whom also listed “Other” as their first language (the “Other” languages given were Italian, German, Greek, Portuguese, Gujarati, Polish and Hebrew). Six participants reported Setswana as their first language (6.06%); five reported Sepedi (5.05%), four reported isiZulu (4.04%), three reported Sesotho (3.03%), one reported isiXhosa (1.01%), one reported Tshivenda (1.01%) and one reported Xitsonga (1.01%). Four participants did not respond to this item (4.04%). When asked about their relationship status, forty-six participants described themselves as

single (46.46%); forty-three as being in a relationship (43.43%), six as married (6.06%) and four participants did not respond to this item (4.04%). Participants were also asked if they had experienced recent life changes and the significance of these changes to them. Fifty-four participants reported experiencing life changes (54.55%), forty-one did not (41.41%) and four participants did not respond to this item (4.04%). Of the fifty-four who experienced life changes, twenty-six reported negative changes (48.15%) and twenty-eight reported positive changes (51.85%); sixteen reported that these change were not important (29.63%), while thirty-seven did consider them to be important (68.52%) (one person did not rate the importance of their life changes).

At the end of the study, there were only eleven participants remaining in the experimental group, nine of whom were female (81.82%), one male (9.09%) and one who did not respond to this item. Six of the final participants were in their first or second year (54.55%), while only one was in third year (9.09%) (the other four participants (36.36%) did not respond to the item). The age range at the end of the study was between eighteen and twenty-four; the average age was twenty. Of these final eleven participants, eight reported English as their first language (72.73%), two of whom also listed an additional first language, Greek and Sesotho, respectively. Two participants reported Sepedi as their first language (18.18%), and one participant did not respond to this item (9.09%). For marital status, five participants described themselves as single (45.45%), two as being in a relationship (18.18%), and four participants did not respond to this item (36.36%). At the end of the study, three participants reported experiencing life changes (27.27%), two of whom reported negative changes and one of whom reported positive changes. All changes were rated as important.

4.2.2 Control group

The control group consisted of students from the Education Campus of the University of the Witwatersrand. These students were chosen to act as the control for the study as they were of a similar age and mix of ethnicity to the students in the experimental group. Their campus is separate from the University of the Witwatersrand main campus and it was

therefore unlikely that members of the experimental and control groups would interact in any way and compromise the nature of either group.

Initially there were forty-five participants in the control group, of whom thirty-six were female (80%) and nine were male (20%). Participants were between eighteen and twenty-five, with an average age of twenty-one. Of these initial forty-five, thirty reported English as their first language (66.67%) – two of whom reported Hebrew, one of whom reported isiZulu and one of whom reported Afrikaans as their other first language. Five participants reported Setswana as their first language (11.11%), and Afrikaans, isiZulu, isiNdebele and Greek were each reported once (2.22%). Six participants did not respond to this item (13.33%). Under relationship status, twenty participants reported being single (44.44%), eighteen were in relationships (40%) and seven participants did not respond to this item (15.56%). Seventeen participants reported experiencing recent life changes (37.78%); twenty-six did not report life changes (57.78%) and two participants did not respond to this item (4.44%). Despite not reporting a life change, one participant filled in the question about the rating of the change, resulting in an even split of eight positive changes and eight negative changes. All changes were described as important.

Only seven participants in the control group completed the final feedback, five of whom were female (71.43%) and two of whom were male (28.57%). They ranged in age from nineteen to twenty-three, with a mean age of twenty. In this final group, three participants reported English as their first language (42.86%), two reported Setswana (28.57%), and two did not respond to this item (28.57%). At the end of the study, three participants reported being in relationships (42.86%), two reported being single (28.57%) and two participants did not respond to this item (28.57%). Only one person in this last group reported experiencing a life change (14.29%), which was negative and important, however another participant who did not express that she had experienced a life change gave a rating of something being positive and important.

4.3 MEASURES

Self-developed questionnaires were devised to attain feedback from participants about each task (please refer to Appendix I) and, at the end of the study, feedback about the entire journal programme (please refer to Appendix J). Part of the task feedback questionnaires was a section assessing participants' life changes through the course of the study. As mentioned, the complexity of introspection is difficult to measure, thus the Self-Reflection and Insight Scale (SRIS) was used, which measures engagement in self-reflection, need for self-reflection and insight. Subjective well-being is generally considered as being comprised of at least three distinct components – life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). Thus the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), and Positive and Negative Affect Schedule – Expanded Form (PANAS-X) were used to measure these constructs. The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) was also used as a general measure of participants' perceived happiness.

4.3.1 Feedback questionnaires

The feedback questionnaires (please refer to Appendix I), given to participants after they had completed one task and before they were given the next task, asked if participants had completed the previous task, with closed-ended responses supplied and space for an open-ended answer provided if they had not completed the task. Those who had completed the task then were asked if they had enjoyed the task and whether or not they had found it valuable or useful. Under each of these closed-ended questions was space for open-ended responses. There was also an open-ended question about changes that participants would have liked to make to the task they had just completed. The next item asked participants what additional types of entries they had written in their journal between the time of the previous and current tasks and offered eight closed-ended options. This was followed by questions asking about participant use of the bookmark and suggestions, which had both closed- and open-ended options. The final question was an open-ended item where participants were invited to comment on anything they felt that they would like to make known or simply mention.

The final feedback form asked questions about participants' experiences with their journals – it queried their motivation and enjoyment of the journal with closed- and open-ended items. It then asked participants questions about their feelings about writing before and after their use of the One Wish Journal and whether they planned to continue their journals after the programme. These items also provided participants with closed- and open-ended options for their answers. Closed- and open-ended questions were posed about participants' experiences with and opinions of the bookmark, the suggestions and the creativity tips. The next items dealt with the Personal Projects, asking whether there were any tasks that were particularly liked or disliked and again gave closed- and open-ended options for the answers. An additional open-ended item was provided where participants could comment on anything else they felt was pertinent. After these items, an open-ended question asked participants to comment on anything they felt that they would like to mention or comment on after reading through the debriefing. A balance between open- and closed-ended items was attempted as closed-ended items specify particular answers, which are easier to analyse statistically, however they may restrict participants' responses (Fife-Schaw, 1997).

4.3.2 Demographic and life changes questionnaire

A self-developed questionnaire (please refer to Appendix K) was created to collect demographic information from participants and to assess their life changes at the beginning of the study. The demographic section asked participants about their gender, year of study, home language and marital status. During the first administration of the questionnaire, the section about life changes had a closed-ended item asking whether participants had experienced any major life changes in the past few months. When participants completed the life changes component in the task feedback questionnaires in the middle and at the end of the study, the wording of this item was changed to ask about major life changes in the *last* month. If participants had experienced life changes, there were open spaces provided for them to describe the change and closed-ended items for them to rate the severity and significance of the change. This was done in order to try to ascertain whether changes which emerged from participants' test results could have been affected by external life events. It was chosen to assess life changes this way instead of

through the Life Changes Index under the assumption that some participants may have experienced certain events as major changes or as more significant than a standardised test would allocate options – for example, as was found in the study, one participant reported the death of her pet as a major change in her life that was very significant to her. Since it is difficult to compare measure people's responses to and experiences of life changes, the close-ended items were presented as a Likert scale (Fife-Schaw, 1997).

4.3.3 Self-Reflection and Insight Scale (SRIS)

The Self-Reflection and Insight Scale (SRIS) (Grant et al., 2002) (please refer to Appendix L, printed with permission) consists of three sub-scales, which are assessed using twenty items measured on a six-point Likert-type scale. This scale was designed to be a more reliable measure of assessing changes in self-reflection and insight brought about from an external condition than the Private Self-Consciousness Scale (PrSCS) (Grant et al., 2002). The sub-scales measure participants' self-perceived levels of Engagement in Self-Reflection, Need for Self-reflection and Insight respectively (Grant et al., 2002).

Most studies use the two self-reflection subscales together as an overall measure of self-reflection, however a validation study of the SRIS revealed that at least 6 items loaded on each subscale and each scale had a high level of internal consistency (Roberts & Stark, 2008). The Cronbach Alphas for engagement in self-reflection, need for self-reflection and insight were 0.83, 0.87 and 0.85 respectively (Roberts & Stark, 2008). Need for self-reflection and engagement in self-reflection have been found to be strongly related ($r = 0.77$), however insight has been found to only have a relationship with need for reflection ($r = 0.22$) (Grant et al., 2002; Roberts & Stark, 2008). The motivation behind seeking self-reflection is linked to insight; the process of self-reflection does not necessary result in insight (Grant et al., 2002; Roberts & Stark, 2008). For the purposes of the current study, all three subscales were employed and measured separately in order to gauge the effect of the journal programme on each of the three subscales.

The insight subscale demonstrates convergent validity through its positive correlation with cognitive flexibility and the ability to self-regulate, as well as its negative correlation with measures of stress, anxiety and depression (Grant et al., 2002). Over seven weeks, the test-retest reliability was found to be 0.77 for self-reflection and 0.78 for insight (Grant et al., 2002). No significant differences were found between scores of men and women (Grant et al., 2002). Previous research utilising the SRIS in a South African context could not be located.

The two self-reflection subscales together (as an overall measure of self-reflection) were found to be positively correlated with anxiety and stress, which led the test developers to think that the self-reflection subscale "may be tapping a dysfunctional rumination or self-focused style of self-reflection" (Grant et al., 2002, p. 830). However, other studies found a weak relationship between self-reflection and well-being, suggesting that self-reflection is unlikely to have a significant effect on well-being (Lyke, 2009). A more comprehensive view of this construct was offered by Elliot and Coker (2008), who suggested that self-reflection may have different effects for different people depending on their individual levels of happiness.

4.3.4 Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener et al., 1985) consists of five items measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale: strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, neither agree nor disagree, slightly disagree, disagree or strongly disagree (please refer to Appendix M). The SWLS is designed to assess people's global life satisfaction, rather than looking at the frequency of negative and positive affect (Diener et al., 1985). Although the subjective nature of this test may be seen as a weakness, it was specifically designed to reflect the individual's own assessment of his/her life according to his/her own criteria (Diener et al., 1985).

The SWLS converges with other measures of subjective well-being and life satisfaction and is inversely correlated with measures of negative affect, most notably presenting a strong negative correlation ($r = –0.72$) with Beck's Depression Inventory (Pavot &

Diener, 1993). It has been found to be positively correlated with extraversion, marital status, self-esteem and health and negatively correlated with neuroticism (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Studies have also illustrated the discriminant validity of the SWLS, as it does not correlate with individual characteristics that are associated with the affective aspect of subjective well-being, such as impulsiveness and intensity of emotions (Pavot & Diener, 1993). It is also a sensitive measure of subjective well-being that can detect both positive and negative changes in the construct and has been specifically mentioned as a useful instrument to measure "change in subjective well-being and intervention outcomes" (Pavot & Diener, 1993, p. 170).

The test-retest correlation after two months is 0.82, however over a greater length of time this decreases to 0.54 (Diener et al., 1985; Pavot & Diener, 1993). Studies conducted around the SWLS have indicated that the inter-item correlation lies between 0.57 and 0.81 (Diener et al., 1985; Pavot & Diener, 1993). The short format makes it a convenient and time-efficient scale (Pavot & Diener, 1993).

A study about levels of subjective well-being around the world used the SWLS to compare levels of life satisfaction and happiness across 178 different countries (White, 2007). This study emphasized the correlation between subjective well-being and levels of health, wealth and education levels, and found South Africa to have a medium subjective well-being level compared to other nations (White, 2007). Westaway, Maritz and Golele (2003) also conducted a pilot study to investigate the applicability of the SWLS in South Africa. Although they concluded that their local results were in line with those of other Western countries, their sample was very small (n = 54). Further support, however, has been offered for the use of the SWLS in South Africa in a study by Wissing et al. (2010), which established a Setswana version of the scale as valid and reliable for a sample of seven hundred and thirty-eight Setswana-speaking people, although they did indicate that there were aspects of the scale's performance that were slightly different in an African context. The scale was also used successfully in a very large sample of Setswana-speaking people in Keyes et al.'s (2008) study (n = 1050) and a mixed sample in Wissing and Van Eeden's (2002) study (n = 550).

4.3.5 Positive and Negative Affect Schedule – Expanded Form (PANAS-X)

The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule – Expanded Form (PANAS-X) (Watson & Clark, 1994) consists of 60 emotive adjectives (please refer to Appendix N, printed with permission). Respondents rate the extent to which they have experienced each of the 60 descriptive terms over a given period of time on a five-point scale (Watson & Clark, 1994). The scale is designed to measure a number of emotional responses, of particular interest in this study were its negative and positive affect "higher order" subscales (Watson & Clark, 1994). Most people complete the scale in approximately 10 minutes, making the PANAS-X a concise and convenient measure (Watson & Clark, 1994).

Principle component analysis revealed 60 items that could be used to effectively measure affect, and further factor loading uncovered 10 items for each of the higher order scales (Watson & Clark, 1994). These items produced a strong loading on one factor and a minimal loading on the converse factor, and Cronbach Coefficient Alphas of between 0.83 and 0.90 for Positive Affect and between 0.84 and 0.90 for Negative Affect were found (Watson & Clark, 1994). Regression-based estimates revealed the converging correlation to be between 0.90 and 0.95 for Positive Affect and between 0.92 and 0.95 for Negative Affect (Watson & Clark, 1994). Consequently, the higher order scales demonstrate moderate to good correlations with other measures of positive and negative affect (Watson & Clark, 1994).

The inter-item correlation for this measure is 0.45 (Watson & Clark, 1994). The PANAS-X is a reasonably stable scale, demonstrating test–retest reliability ranging from 0.41 to 0.71 over two months for the higher order scales, and reliabilities of 0.43 and 0.39 for Negative Affect and Positive Affect respectively over the period of a few years (Watson & Clark, 1994). At the same time, the PANAS-X is a sensitive measure, picking up fluctuations in positive and negative affect, and has been used to investigate changes in individuals' moods (Watson & Clark, 1994). The PANAS-X can be used to assess people's feelings over various time periods, ranging from a momentary evaluation to a general assessment with no time constraints, and none of the time frames specified in the PANAS-X appears to alter the results significantly (Watson & Clark, 1994). In this study,

the PANAS-X was initially used with “the past month” as the time constraint; during the second and third administrations of this test, the time constraint was given as “the past two weeks” This test has also shown no significant gender differences, and most people, regardless of culture, tend to score higher for Positive Affect and lower for Negative Affect (Watson & Clark, 1994). Prior research utilising the PANAS-X in a South African context could not be located.

4.3.6 Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)

The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) consists of four items measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale designed to assess people’s subjective evaluation of whether or not they are happy (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999; please refer to Appendix O). The first two items require respondents to think about how happy they are and to rate how happy they are in relation to other people, while the last two describe characteristics of happy and unhappy people respectively and ask respondents how well these descriptions match themselves (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). The small number of items makes this a concise measure that is quick to complete (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999).

The SHS has been shown to have a high internal consistency, ranging from 0.79 to 0.94, as well as good test-retest reliability for both short and extended periods of time (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). Retesting between three weeks and a year after the original administration of the test revealed test-retest reliabilities ranging from 0.55 to 0.90 (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). This measure has been found to converge with other measures of happiness, with correlations ranging between 0.52 and 0.72 (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). It is also positively correlated with other measures of happiness or well-being and reports a moderate correlation with qualities associated with happiness, such as self-esteem and life orientation (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). It has been used with a variety of different population groups and no significant age, culture or sex differences have been reported for the measure (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999).

The SHS seems to have only been used in one other piece of research in South Africa (cf. van der Westhuizen, 2009), however this test was designed to be applicable across age, gender and education levels, meaning it should be valid for use in the South African context (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999).

4.4 PROCEDURE

Data collection took place during the third and fourth quarters of the year, from July to November.

For the experimental group, students were addressed in class by the researcher and an initial meeting between the researcher and potential participants was set up for later in the same week. At the initial meeting, students were given a more in-depth explanation of what the journal programme required of them and were again reminded that participation was voluntary and could be stopped at any time. Participants then filled in the demographic questionnaire, as well as the SWLS, SHS, PANAS-X and SRIS. Most participants took a maximum of 20 minutes to complete the forms, after which they were given their journals, together with Personal Project 1. Due to the low number of participants attained in this manner, the researcher also approached students between classes, giving the same explanation of the study as was given to students in lectures. Those who were interested were given the questionnaires immediately and subsequently their journals.

At the beginning of the study, the researcher met with participants every fortnight at a pre-arranged meeting place to hand out the next task, as well as a feedback questionnaire about the previous task. When participants completed the feedback questionnaire, they were given the new task. The researcher was available to participants during both tea-breaks and the lunch break in order to allow all participants an opportunity to receive all new materials. For those who could not meet on a day when material was handed out, copies were left in the Psychology Office, where participants could retrieve them at their convenience.

The researcher also set up a website in an attempt to make the journal programme more accessible – all the information about the programme was included on the site. Each new task was made available online at the programme's website from the night before it was handed out in hard copy. The feedback questionnaire was also available in an online format and participants were asked to complete it before starting on their next task. The website address was written on the bottom of the cover of the journals, and was handed out on a piece of paper to participants.

When participation began to decrease, the researcher then met with participants every week in order to try and keep interest levels in the project high. The creativity tips were also distributed in the same way – there was initially three weeks between each distribution of these, which was then changed to two weeks once participation declined. After participants had received the first three Personal Projects, they were then given the same questionnaires they had initially completed before being given Personal Project 4. These were given out and completed at the same prearranged place at which the researcher always met the participants and could also be done online. After all six Personal Projects had been distributed participants were again given the same questionnaires as well as a feedback questionnaire about the final task and the One Wish programme as a whole. These forms were also available on the website.

All the participants in the experimental group had the option of giving their cellular telephone numbers, without any other identifying details, to the researcher in order to receive reminders about when and where to pick up new materials (please refer to Appendix F). Most participants did give their numbers and were sent a text message shortly before the first tea-break each week when new tasks and/or creativity tips were available.

Students from the Education Campus, who constituted the control group for the study, were also addressed during class to ask for participants. These participants met with the researcher straight after the lecture to fill in the demographic questionnaire, as well as the SWLS, SHS, PANAS-X and SRIS. These participants were given calendars with the

following two dates on which they would be required to fill in the forms again. Few students responded to the researcher's initial address, thus when the researcher returned to the Education Campus to give the initial respondents follow-up questionnaires, she also made contact with students who were not in class and explained the five questionnaires that would need to completed for the study in order to attain more participants for the control group.

As with the experimental group, all the participants of the control group were given the option of giving the researcher their cellular phone numbers to be reminded of the dates on which to meet (please refer to Appendix F). These participants received text messages before the first tea-break on each of the two following occasions when the researcher visited their campus to have them fill in their second and third follow-up questionnaires.

The researcher was present for those participants who completed their questionnaires and feedback forms in person – this was in part so that forms could be collected immediately, and partly to ensure that if participants did not understand any items they could receive assistance from the researcher.

4.5 ETHICS

Approval was granted by Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) for the study to be carried out (Ethics Clearance Number: H070516; please refer to Appendix P). First, second and third year supervisors and lecturers of courses in the Department of Psychology granted permission for the researcher to address their students to find participants for the experimental group. Similarly supervisors and lecturers from the University of the Witwatersrand Education Campus were contacted and they too granted the researcher permission to address their students to find participants for the control group.

Participants from the experimental group were told that the study being conducted was investigating the benefits of journalling. Participants in this group were not informed that this was a study specifically linked to subjective well-being however they were informed

that the journal programme ideally intended to improve their self-understanding, self-development and perceptions of themselves. In order to match repeated responses from the same people while still maintaining their confidentiality, participants were required to include a code at the top of all forms they completed. To avoid participants forgetting their code and thereby not being able to track their responses, the researcher stipulated the formulation of the code to be used, consisting of three letters and two sets of numbers. Each participant was instructed to use the first letter of their mother's name, the first letter of their father's name and the first letter of their own name for the beginning of the code and the day and year of their birth in numeric form to complete their code. Through this system, participant responses could be tracked through the study without the researcher being able to identify participants. In this way, although the nature of the study required the researcher to meet with participants face-to-face, the anonymity of the responses linked to each participant was preserved. In addition, the researcher was the only one who met with participants and confidentiality was guaranteed. The wording of all materials given to the experimental group as part of the One Wish Journal programme was given extra attention to ensure that nothing emotionally evocative or inflammatory was distributed.

After the final questionnaires were completed by participants, they were given a written debriefing (please refer to Appendix J) explaining the intentions of each of the tasks they had completed.

Participants from the control group were told only that the research was about subjective well-being. After these participants had completed the questionnaires three times, they were informed about the rest of the study and offered the opportunity to take part in the One Wish Journal programme. Three participants from this group chose to take part in the programme. Participants in the control group also used a code to track responses from the same respondents without revealing the identity of any participant. Their code was the reversal of the experimental group's code, that is, each participant used the day and year of their birth (in numeric form) and then the first letter of their mother's name, the first letter of their father's name and the first letter of their own name. This was done in order

to ensure that the control group's data could be easily identified as separate from that of the experimental group.

A cover letter appeared on the front of both sets of questionnaires (experimental (please refer to Appendix A) and control (please refer to Appendix B) reminding participants of the confidentiality of their data and their freedom to withdraw from the study at any point. It included contact details for the researcher and her supervisor. The experimental group's cover letter also included a reminder that the journal was not a form of or substitute for psychological treatment and the contact numbers of three psychological 'help lines' (Lifeline, SADAG, and SADAG Suicide Helpline).

Only the researcher and her supervisor had access to data provided by participants (from both groups). It should be noted that this data did not include access to individual journals – these were seen only by the relevant participant and were kept by the participant throughout and after the study. The data provided, namely the completed evaluation forms and SRIS, SHS, SWLS, PANAS-X scales, continue to be stored in a secure location and will be destroyed upon completion of the thesis. The website was maintained for a suitable period after completion of the study and then shut down.

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The intention of the study was to investigate the effects of the One Wish Journal on introspection and its associated outcomes, specifically its effects on life satisfaction, subjective happiness, positive affect and negative affect. In order to grasp the effects of the programme, objective measures of these constructs were obtained and analysed, and participants' personal experiences of the programme were explored. Quantitative analyses were run to assess who took part in the study, the factors affecting participation, the differences which occurred within the control and experimental groups respectively, and the differences which emerged between the two groups throughout the study. Qualitative investigations were also carried out to gain an understanding of participants' thoughts, feelings, experiences with and reactions to the journal programme.

Small sample sizes and insufficient demonstration of normal distributions (please refer to Appendix Q) necessitated the use of non-parametric analyses. Throughout the study the numbers of participants also fluctuated for each assessment because some participants either did not complete all of the questionnaires or only partially completed some questionnaires, with the result that the sample numbers in the statistical analysis also shifted. To assess participation rates throughout the study, simple statistics were run to compare participation numbers throughout the study. More in-depth analyses were used to assess demographic characteristics of participants – Mann-Whitney U tests were run to see if differences emerged for participants according to demographic traits. The Mann-Whitney U test is a non-parametric measure generally used to investigate differences and changes in central tendency and was thus useful is comparing demographic traits of participants (Howell, 1999).

The relationships between the introspective constructs and other measures were assessed using Spearman's Correlation Coefficient. This nonparametric test is useful as it offers a means of investigating monotonic relationships between variables (Howell, 1999).

Descriptive statistics were then carried out to trace participants' scores through the course of the study and identify trends in their results. Although some interesting trends emerged, few significant findings emerged to support these patterns. Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed Ranks tests were run to compare the changes which occurred within the control and experimental groups respectively. As a distribution-free nonparametric test, Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed Ranks test allows the central tendencies of two matched samples to be compared (Howell, 1999). Man-Whitney U tests were used to compare results between the experimental and control groups during the course of the study.

To evaluate participants' personal responses to the programme qualitative analyses were run. There are a number of qualitative research methods, most of which are "concerned with meaning, sense-making and subjective experience" (Storey, 2007, p. 51). This privileged position of participants' perspectives is a useful feature which allows the

researcher access to a wealth of emic information that may otherwise not be accessible through quantitative means (Fossey et al., 2002). Through the researcher's interpretation, individual responses can be linked to broader theory and used to answer research questions (Murray, 2006). Qualitative methods therefore have the potential to allow a more in-depth exploration and contextual understanding of questionnaire responses (Fossey et al., 2002).

Analyses of qualitative items were investigated to explore participants' perceptions of the One Wish Journal and its components, as well as their experiences of the programme. Without leading participants, their introspective experiences and emotional outcomes as a result of the programme were probed, through their responses to open-ended items. Participants were asked whether they enjoyed each task, whether they found each aspect of the programme useful or personally valuable and why they did so; they were also asked about what changes they would suggest making to Personal Projects.

To investigate these topics, content analysis and narrative analysis were employed. Content analysis is a way of classifying open-ended data and is comprised of mechanical and interpretive aspects as data is condensed and organised into categories before it is analysed (Wilson, 1997). There are qualitative and quantitative forms of content analysis; both were used in the study. Qualitative content analysis groups relevant and connected data together and focuses on meanings to reveal themes from which inferences can be made which can aid in answering the research questions (Fossey et al., 2002; Millward, 1997). This analysis was used to interpret participants' open-ended responses to feedback questions. Quantitative content analysis produces numeric information which can then be analysed statistically (Millward, 1997). Frequency analyses were carried out for closed-ended items, as well as the identified themes and categories to statistically establish trends in the data.

Narrative analysis stresses the interpretive role which the research plays in analysing data (Lyons, 2007; Murray, 2006). Qualitative methods also appreciate the significance and nuance of participants' diction and language; as such the researcher is expected to

actively engage with participants' responses in order to come to a meaningful understanding of the data which can be expressed in a coherent and comprehensible manner (Fossey et al., 2002; Lyons, 2007).

While qualitative analyses have benefits, there are also short-comings to these methods, including researchers' potential biases. These types of analyses are usually highly subjective and may consequentially be subjected to the partialities which a researcher holds (Smith, 2008). Efforts must therefore be made by the researcher to be aware of his/her own context and biases when analysing data and make efforts to ensure that these do not interfere with the quality of the analysis.

Being a person who has always kept a journal, found the practice to be beneficial, and based the idea of One Wish Programme on the positive aspects of this activity, the researcher spent a significant amount of time looking for disconfirming evidence of her own positive experiences with journalling in order to avoid bias in the analyses. Possible interpretations of the data were also discussed and debated with the research supervisor, as a 'disinterested outsider' who had not been involved significantly in journaling prior to the study, allowing for a degree of peer evaluation (Fossey et al., 2002). Nevertheless, it is possible that the researcher's perspective influenced the final interpretation of the results, and, as such, the potential impact of this should be kept in mind when drawing conclusions from the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: STATISTICAL ANALYSES

5.1 UPTAKE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Table 1: Patterns of Attrition

	Experimental group sample size	**Drop-out rate per admin.**	**Control group sample size**	**Drop-out rate per admin.**
First admin.	99 (100%)		45	
Second admin.	16 (16.16%)	83 (83.84%)	15 (33.33%)	31 (68.89%)
Third admin.	12 (12.12%)	4 (25%)	7 (15.56%)	8 (53.33%)

As seen in Table 1, originally there was a fair amount of interest in the One Wish programme with just under a hundred students (n = 99) volunteering to take part. However, after three Personal Projects, only sixteen participants were still taking part and this number dropped to twelve for the final feedback after all six Personal Projects (one of the participants who gave feedback after the last task did not complete the questionnaires used for statistical analyses, thus the final sample size for the calculations was n = 11).

While some degree of attrition was anticipated, the rate at which it occurred in this study was not expected. Only two participants who left the study informed the researcher of the reasons for their departure from the programme. One participant informed the researcher that she had dropped out of university and would therefore no longer be taking part; the other participant also stopped attending university and had a new full-time job. It is possible that other participants stopped studying during this time and were therefore not on campus and/or busy with life changes that prevented them continuing with the journal programme.

Another reason which seems very likely for the high drop-out rate is the timing of the study. The One Wish Journal was implemented at the end of the first week of the third semester in late July. At this point, the Personal Projects were being given out once every two weeks, thus participants were scheduled to receive the first four tasks of the programme before the September university break and the final two tasks when they

returned from the break during the fourth semester. After the second and third Personal Projects, when participation was seen to be declining, the time between tasks was changed to one week in an attempt to maintain interest and participation. The fourth semester was shorter than the previous three and is generally considered a high stress period for students because of the final end-of-year exams which follow. It therefore seems that the timing of the administration of the study may have been problematic, with participants feeling that the programme required too much time and energy when their priority was their university work.

Similarly, another possible reason that so many participants stopped taking part in the study may be that some of those who were initially interested in participating did not fully realise how much of a commitment the journal was and, once they had started it, felt that they did not have the time or energy to devote to the programme. It is also possible that some participants simply lost interest in the programme or forgot about it. This seems somewhat unlikely as fifty-two participants gave the researcher their cell phone numbers in order to be reminded of One Wish Journal updates (including the handing out of new Personal Projects and creativity tips). This seemed to indicate more than half the initial participants were genuinely interested in the project and wished to stay informed about it. Nevertheless, participants experiencing a genuine loss of interest in the programme or having perceptions or expectations which were different to the actual experience of it cannot be ruled out as possible explanations for the high rate of attrition.

To conclusively understand why the drop-out rate was so high, the participants who stopped taking part would need to be asked about their reasons for ceasing their participation. The voluntary nature of the study, however, as well as participants' free choice to stop taking part in the programme at any point, meant that this information was not accessible.

Similar trends (high drop-out rates) were observed in the control group (please refer to Table 1 above). This group had only forty-five participants in the beginning, which fell to fifteen during the second administration of the tests and fell again to seven at the end of

the study. While the second and third numbers of participants were similar to those of the experimental group, the lower initial sample size means that the drop-out rate from the first to second administration of questionnaires was 68.89% compared to that of the experimental group, which was 83.84%. Between the second and third administrations, however, the drop-out rate for the control group was 53.33%, while the rate for the experimental group was 25%. Although the numbers being used during the second and third administration of questionnaires are small and may not depict meaningful trends, the similarity in figures between the experimental and control groups makes the figures somewhat comparable and conclusions may be drawn that the control group had a much higher rate of drop-out between the second and third stages of the study than the experimental group.

Participants from the control group who did not continue with the study did not give reasons for this cessation. All participants from this group supplied their cellular phone numbers to the researcher and were reminded of the dates and location when the follow-up questionnaires would be given out, however this did not seem effective in maintaining participation. In the case of the control group, it seems quite likely that participants lost interest in the study. Since they were only told that the study was about subjective well-being and required the filling out of forms, it is possible that students who initially volunteered to take part were not particularly motivated to continue with the study.

5.2 COMPARISON OF THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED AND THOSE WHO DID NOT

Mann-Whitney U tests were run to see if there were particular differences in the experimental group between those who took part in the journal programme until at least half-way through and those who ceased participation before this point. Participants who completed two or more tasks were regarded as having ‘high journal participation’, while those who completed less than this were regarded as having ‘low journal participation’. This led to fifteen participants being classified as having ‘high participation’ and eighty-four participants being classified as having ‘low participation’.

Although the instruments used were measured on an interval scale, the insufficient demonstration of normal distribution and small sample size made non-parametric tests the most appropriate to use. The Mann-Whitney U test is appropriate for comparing two independent groups but does not makes assumptions about the distribution of a sample (Howell, 1999); this technique was therefore used to compare scores of the fifteen participants who completed two or more Personal Projects against those of the initial participants who dropped out of the study before this point. Results are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of high and low journal use at time one

	n (High)	**n (Low)**	**Wilcoxon statistic**	**Z**	**p-value**
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	15	84	907.5	1.54	0.12
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	15	84	711	-0.38	0.71
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	15	81	606	-1.22	0.22
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	15	81	572.5	-1.56	0.12
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG)	15	84	867	1.14	0.25
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Need for Self-Reflection (IND)	15	84	699	-0.49	0.62
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Insight (IINS)	15	84	902	1.48	0.14

The Mann-Whitney U tests showed no significant differences for any of the seven scales during the first administration of the questionnaires, meaning that there were no significant differences for satisfaction with life, subjective happiness, negative affect, positive affect, engagement in self-reflection, need for self-reflection or insight between those who had had a “high” use and those who had a “low” use of the journal. Had there been a significant difference for any of the scales, there may have been some suggestion that people with certain qualities were more likely to continue participating than others, however, since the Mann-Whitney U tests did not reveal any such differences, no such inferences can be made. As discussed when looking at uptake and implementation of the

programme, there is not enough evidence available to sufficiently explain why there was such a large level of attrition in the study.

5.2.1 Demographic analysis

Mann-Whitney U tests were also run to ascertain whether any demographic factors affected the results. The demographic categories looked at were: gender, year of study, home language, relationship status, life changes and the participants' rating in terms of the nature of their life changes and significance of these changes. These tests were run for the original experimental group (n = 99) and also for the original control group (n = 46) on the results obtained during the first administration. Tables with no significant results are presented in the appendices.

5.2.1.1 Experimental group

No significant differences were found between men and women for all seven measures (please refer to Table 3 in Appendix R); however there were only nineteen men who took part in the study, compared to seventy-eight women who participated. Although no differences in scores were anticipated for these measures based on gender, it is possible that the results might be different for a sample with a more balanced distribution of males and females.

Twenty-nine participants did not respond to the item asking for their year of study, thus the first category of first- and second-year students consisted of fifty-six participants, while the second category of third- and fourth-year students consisted of only fourteen participants. No significant differences were found between the two groups (please refer to Table 4 in Appendix R), suggesting that participants' level at university did not impact their results for any of the seven measures. The small number of participants in their third and fourth years of study may have affected these results. In a larger sample, those in the higher university levels may be expected to have higher introspective scores due their greater life experience however it is uncertain whether such a pattern would emerge.

For the home language item, a majority of participants (n = 74) indicated that their first language was either English or English and another language. Three participants did not respond and the other twenty-two participants listed numerous languages as their first language (please refer to the Sample section of Chapter 4 for details), with too few respondents from any other single language group to carry out meaningful analyses. For these reasons, home language was divided into two categories: 'English' and 'other'. No significant differences were found for any of the measures according to home language (please refer to Table 5 in Appendix R), suggesting that a participant's home language did not have an impact on any of his/her results.

Due to the breakdown of relationship status among the experimental group (please refer to the Sample section of Chapter 4), two categories were created: 'single' (n = 46) and 'in a relationship' which included those who were married (n = 49). No significant differences were found for any of the seven scales (please refer to Table 6 in Appendix R), suggesting that relationship status did not have an impact on these constructs for this group of participants. This was an unexpected finding as many studies have made a link between marriage and higher levels of happiness (cf. Stack & Eshleman, 1998). However other forms of relationships, such as cohabitation without marriage, do not display the same results which could also contribute to these results. Since only six participants of those who labelled themselves 'in a relationship' were married, these results may be in line with other findings, namely that marriage offers different psychological effects compared to other forms of relationships (Stack & Eshleman, 1998).

Although the item about life changes during the time between the administrations of the questionnaires was given a more specific time frame, participants were asked more generally about life changes at the beginning of the study. Participants were asked if they had experienced any life changes in "the past few months" to allow for life changes that might have long-lasting effects. Some life changes, such as a death in the family or moving house, are generally considered to have more potent effects than others (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). It was therefore left to participants to determine the time frame to which

this question applied to allow for those changes which participants felt had had an impact on their lives, even if they were not very recent.

Tests for the differences between those who had experienced life changes (n = 54) and those who had not (n = 41) produced a significant result for engagement in self-reflection ($z = 2.42$; $p = .02$) (please refer to Table 7 in Appendix R). The median for those who had experienced life changes ($Md_{LCIENG1} = 23$) was lower than that of those who had not experienced life changes ($Md_{NLCIENG1} = 28$).

These findings could potentially be as a result of people's coping behaviours. When experiencing life changes, most people consciously process what is happening and actively work with their situations. This conscious effort may make people less inclined to self-reflection, as they are more involved in dealing with their current circumstances in more practical ways and may thus lack the time and possibly even the emotional energy to become as involved in self-reflection. Conversely, this finding seems to also suggest that when people have not experienced recent life changes they are more inclined to look inwards to examine their lives and themselves. This fits with Cognitive Behavioural Theory and Narrative Therapy models which suggest that people's identities are constantly evolving and fluid (Crossley, 2007; Drewery & Winslade, 1997); it is possible that when there is a state of more or less stasis in people's lives, this calmer time is used for self-reflection.

Of those participants who experienced life changes, participants with negative life changes (n = 26; $Md_{NEGIND1} = 31$) had a significantly higher need for self-reflection ($z = 2.35$; $p = .02$) than those with positive changes (n = 28; $Md_{POSIND1} = 28.5$). This could also be a feature of people's coping behaviours – when faced with negative experiences people may try to make sense of these and develop a greater need for self-reflection in order to do this. In comparison, people who have undergone positive changes may be less likely to need or experience the same kind of introspection.

No significant differences were found on the basis of participants' ratings of the importance of their life changes. All changes described during the first administration were rated as either "somewhat important" or "very important." This slight variation was not be expected to produce significant results, and it does seem that the differentiation between "somewhat important" and "very important" is not substantial enough to have had an impact on any of the measures.

5.2.1.2 Control group

Similarly to the experimental group, the control group showed no significant differences in scores for any of the seven scales based on gender. This group also had a very uneven number of men (n = 8) compared to women (n = 31), which could have affected the results. There were also no significance differences based on year of study (please refer to Tables 8 and 9 provided in Appendix S).

Unexpectedly, a significant difference was found for the Satisfaction with Life Scale for home language ($z = -2.6$; $p = .01$) although none of the other scales showed any significant differences (please refer to Table 10 in Appendix S). The satisfaction with life median of the English first-language participants ($Md_{ESWLS1} = 26$) was lower than the participants who had 'other' home languages ($Md_{OSWLS1} = 28$). It is not known why such a result emerged, although the discrepancy between the sizes of the categories may have contributed, as thirty participants reported English as their first language while there were only nine participants who reported having 'other' first languages.

No significant differences were found for any of the scales based on participants' relationship status (please refer to Table 11 in Appendix S). The number of participants who described themselves as single (n = 19) and the number who described themselves as being in a relationship (n = 18) was very close and the lack of significant differences found here seemed to confirm the same pattern seen in the experimental group. None of these participants reported being married and this could be another demonstration of the differing effects of marital commitment to those of other forms of relationships (Stack & Eshleman, 1998).

Only one significant difference was found between participants with life changes and those without (z = -1.99; p = .05; please refer to Table 12 in Appendix S). Those who reported life changes had a lower median score for satisfaction with life (Md_{CSWLS1} = 24) than those who did not report experiencing life changes ($Md_{NCSWLS1}$ = 28). No differences were found between those who reported negative versus positive changes (z = -1.32; p = .19), suggesting that all life changes experienced by the group led to lower life satisfaction. This is a surprising result as the split between changes described as positive and those described as negative was the same (n = 8; one participant did not respond to the item), and it was not expected that the positive life changes would also result in decreased life satisfaction scores. However, even positive changes can disrupt a person's life and this could be part of the reason that the rating of change did not produce any significant differences. All participants who reported experiencing life changes rated the changes as important, thus no comparisons could be made.

Having run analyses of the scores at time one, very few significant differences emerged in either the control group or the experimental group on the basis of any demographic factors. While it was expected that some demographics would not create significant differences, it was thought that others, such as relationship status, might affect the results for some scales. Three significant changes were found according to participants' life changes for engagement in self-reflection and need for self-reflection in the experimental group and for satisfaction with life in the control group. None of the results contributed to an understanding of the study's high attrition rate. Greater sample sizes may have produced different results for the other factors.

5.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSTRUCTS

Table 14: Spearman's Correlations: initial results for experimental and control groups combined

	n	Engagement in self-reflection (IENG)	Need for self-reflection (IND)	Insight (IINS)
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	143	***0.20***	-0.01	***0.3***
		0.01*	0.88	***0.0003****
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	143	0.11	0.06	***0.34***
		0.17	0.51	***<.0001****

Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	138	-0.02 0.84	0.15 0.08	***-0.40*** ***<.0001****
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	138	***0.23*** ***0.01****	***0.17*** ***0.05****	***0.22*** ***0.01****

Many ideas underpinning the One Wish Journal programme are based on the notion that introspective qualities interact with and have an effect on other constructs. The relationships between the introspective subscales (engagement in self-reflection; need for self-reflection; insight) and the other scales used in the study (the SWLS which assessed satisfaction with life; the SHS which assessed subjective happiness; and the PANAS-X, which assessed positive and negative affect) were therefore investigated.

The distribution of scores, which was skewed for most of the variables, made Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficients a more appropriate statistical technique to use for analysing this data. The lack of normal distribution for any of the scales or subscales precluded the use of parametric tests whereas Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficients make no distribution assumptions and are less influenced by outliers, making them a more appropriate test to use with the data (Miles & Banyard, 2007). Data for the experimental and control group were pooled for this test, as the focus of this question was the relationship between the constructs in the entire sample.

As shown in Table 14 above, engagement in self-reflection correlated significantly and positively with satisfaction with life ($r_s = 0.20$; $p = .02$) and positive affect ($r_s = 0.23$; $p = .01$). These were both relatively weak correlations, meaning that higher scores for engagement in self-reflection might be expected to be linked to higher life satisfaction and positive affect however these relationships are not strong and scores for engagement in self-reflection may not necessarily provide good predictions of how scores for life satisfaction and positive affect will perform.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale was designed to be a "conscious evaluative" measure, distinct from measures of emotional well-being (Pavot & Diener, 1993, p. 101). In contrast, positive affect is an "emotional experience" (Watson & Clark, 1994, p. 1). The

relationship between engagement in self-reflection and these two constructs therefore suggests that this construct is related to both the cognitive and emotional elements that compose subjective well-being. These relationships seemed to have played out in the comparison of participants in interesting ways. Engagement in self-reflection was higher for those participants who reported not experiencing any recent life changes. It is possible that engagement in self-reflection operates similarly to self-actualisation. Maslow's hierarchy of needs maintains that lower, basic needs must be met before a person can move up towards actualisation (Weiten, 2001). It seems that when participants were comfortable and stable in their lives with no life changes, they engaged more in self-reflection. It is possible that when people experience periods of instability their cognitive and introspective energies are occupied in other activities that must be prioritised over engagement in self-reflection.

A significant correlation was also found for need for self-reflection and positive affect (r_s = 0.17; p = .05). However, this was a very weak positive correlation, implying that increased scores for need for self-reflection have an unreliable association with positive affect scores. Although the positive nature of the relationship suggests that as one set of scores increases, so the other will and vice versa, the relationship is so weak that it will not be a sufficient predictor of the influence of one construct on the other. Need for self-reflection was not expected to have particularly significant relationships with the other constructs, as needing self-reflection does not necessarily indicate that self-reflection is sought or achieved (Grant et al., 2002). Self-reflection also demonstrates a complex relationship with subjective well-being; the outcomes of self-reflection are not always predictable and may affect people differently depending on their individual characteristics (Elliot & Coker, 2008).

Insight, on the other hand, had significant correlations with all four of the other scales, supporting one of the central premises of the One Wish Journal, namely that increases in insight can lead to benefits in other areas of people's lives. The correlations found between insight and satisfaction with life (r_s = 0.3; p = .0003), subjective happiness (r_s = 0.34; p = .0001) and positive affect (r_s = 0.22; p = .01) were all weak and positive. This

means that an increase in insight is linked to each of these three constructs and that as insight increases, each other construct (satisfaction with life, subjective happiness and positive affect) could also be expected to increase; similarly changes in any of the three constructs may be expected to result in parallel changes in insight. It was expected that the relationships between these constructs would be found, and while it is disappointing that the correlations here were weak, Lyke (2009) has put forward that only high levels of insight would be capable of asserting meaningful connections with other constructs.

Insight also had a moderate negative correlation with negative affect (r_s = –0 .40; p = .0001), implying that when insight increases, negative affect can be expected to decrease and vice versa. This negative relationship between the constructs was expected and supports the tenet of the One Wish programme that enhanced introspective qualities can be linked to greater subjective well-being. The relationship demonstrated here also shows the converse of this notion; that greater introspection, specifically insight, can be linked to less negative affect.

The correlations demonstrated some results that were anticipated and others which were unexpected; however the most important of these results are those of the insight scale's relationships with the other constructs. The presence of these relationships supports the premise of the One Wish Journal and suggests that changes which affect insight could be expected to impact satisfaction with life, subjective happiness and positive and negative affect.

5.4 TRENDS AND PATTERNS IN DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics (mean, median, standard deviation and range) were calculated for all measures used in the study and separated for the experimental and control groups as a whole, as well as for those who took part in the study until its conclusion for comparison purposes. The results are presented below.

5.4.1 Self-reflection and Insight Scale

Table 15.1: Descriptive statistics for Self-Reflection and Insight Scale – experimental group

	n	Mean	Median	Std Dev	Range
Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG) First admin	99	25.17	25	6.5	27
Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG) Second admin	13	28.38	28	2.75	9
Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG) Third admin	11	26.36	28	6.67	19
Need for Self-Reflection (IND) First admin	99	28.77	30	5.39	30
Need for Self-Reflection (IND) Second admin	13	30.38	30	2.8	11
Need for Self-Reflection (IND) Third admin	11	28	28	4.92	16
Insight (IINS) First admin	99	28.43	27	7.37	33
Insight (IINS) Second admin	13	32.15	32	7.71	24
Insight (IINS) Third admin	11	34.64	34	7.28	22

Average engagement in self-reflection for the experimental group increased between the first and second administration but dropped between the second and third administrations (please refer to Table 15.1 above). The mean was highest for the second administration (M_{EIENG2} = 28.38) with the lowest standard deviation and range. It decreased for the final administration (M_{EIENG3} = 26.36), although it still remained higher than the initial mean (M_{EIENG1} = 25.17). The median also increased from the first to the second administration (Md_{EIENG1} = 25 to Md_{EIENG2} = 28) but remained the same for the final administration. This suggests an overall increase in engagement in self-reflection.

Table 15.2: Descriptive statistics for Self-Reflection and Insight Scale – final eleven experimental group

	n	Mean	Median	Std Dev	Range
Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG) First admin	11	26	27	5.46	16
Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG) Second admin	5	28.4	28	2.88	8
Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG) Third admin	11	26.36	28	6.67	19
Need for Self-Reflection (IND) First admin	11	28.09	28	4.55	18

Need for Self-Reflection (IND) Second admin	5	30.2	30	1.92	5
Need for Self-Reflection (IND) Third admin	11	28	28	4.92	16
Insight (IINS) First admin	11	29.73	29	6.08	20
Insight (IINS) Second admin	5	30.2	29	7.85	21
Insight (IINS) Third admin	11	34.64	34	7.28	22

As shown in Table 15.2 above, the mean engagement in self-reflection for the final eleven participants was also highest during the second administration ($M_{EIENG112} = 28.4$), but for the final administration dropped to $M_{EIENG113} = 26.36$, which was virtually the same as the mean for the initial administration ($M_{EIENG111} = 26$). As with the experimental group as a whole, the median increased during the second administration and then remained the same, although in this case it only increased by one point (from $Md_{EIENG111} = 27$ to $Md_{EIENG112} = 28$). The standard deviation and range were also lowest for the second administration and then increased for the final administration. Overall, there does not seem to be convincing evidence of a positive trend for engagement in self-reflection in the final eleven of the experimental group.

Table 15.3: Descriptive statistics for Self-Reflection and Insight Scale – control group

	n	**Mean**	**Median**	**Std Dev**	**Range**
Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG) First admin	44	25.95	26	5.23	18
Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG) Second admin	15	25.4	26	7.40	24
Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG) Third admin	7	27.71	27	6.21	16
Need for Self-Reflection (IND) First admin	44	27.18	27	5.39	27
Need for Self-Reflection (IND) Second admin	15	24.27	25	7.19	23
Need for Self-Reflection (IND) Third admin	7	25.57	27	6.63	18
Insight (IINS) First admin	44	30.45	31	6.79	33
Insight (IINS) Second admin	15	31.13	29	8.26	27
Insight (IINS) Third admin	7	29.86	29	6.20	18

In comparison, as shown in Table 15.3 above, average engagement in self-reflection in the control group decreased slightly between the first and second administration (from

M_{CIENG1}= 25.95 to M_{CIENG2} = 25.4) and then increased for the third administration (M_{CIENG3} = 27.71). The median remained the same between the first and second administration and then increased slightly for the final administration.

Table 15.4: Descriptive statistics for Self-Reflection and Insight Scale – final seven control group

	n	Mean	Median	Std Dev	Range
Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG) First admin	7	27.57	27	6.02	16
Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG) Second admin	7	28.29	28	6.99	20
Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG) Third admin	7	27.71	27	6.21	16
Need for Self-Reflection (IND) First admin	7	29.86	32	5.37	14
Need for Self-Reflection (IND) Second admin	7	25.86	25	6.39	20
Need for Self-Reflection (IND) Third admin	7	25.57	27	6.63	18
Insight (IINS) First admin	7	30.86	29	4.88	15
Insight (IINS) Second admin	7	34.43	36	6.35	19
Insight (IINS) Third admin	7	29.86	29	6.20	18

For the final seven participants who completed all three questionnaires (please refer to Table 15.4 above), the pattern of changes to the mean was similar to the pattern of changes for the final eleven in the experimental group – the mean increased for the second administration (from $M_{CIENG71}$ = 27.57 to $M_{CIENG72}$ = 28.29) and then dropped for the third administration to a value very similar to the initial mean ($M_{CIENG73}$ = 27.14). For this group of seven, the median also increased during the second administration ($Md_{CIENG72}$ = 28), but, unlike the median for the final eleven in the experimental group, dropped at the end of the study ($Md_{CIENG73}$ = 27). In contrast to the final eleven of the experimental group, the final seven of the control group had a higher standard deviation and range during the second administration, which could account for the increased results at this stage and subsequent decrease during the third administration. It is not clear why engagement in self-reflection would increase for the control group over time, however this could be the result of the scores for the final seven participants. These participants had higher means and medians for engagement in self-reflection during the first and

second administrations. Their final mean is consistent with the previous means, especially taking into account the standard deviation and range increases during the second administration. It thus seems that the final engagement in self-reflection mean for the control group is more indicative of the results for the final seven and does not necessarily demonstrate a trend for the control group as a whole.

Average need for self-reflection in the experimental group followed a very similar pattern. Both for the group as a whole and for the final eleven, the mean increased in the middle of the study and then dropped to a similar value as at the beginning of the study. It is difficult to interpret the trends in this data because the sample was so small, especially during the second administration when the sample size for the final eleven dropped to n = 5. The higher scores for insight at the end of the study might have contributed to this finding. It is possible that as participants began to feel that they had greater insight into themselves and their lives they felt less of a need for self-reflection. However, there is too little evidence to establish whether these were the reasons for the changes seen.

For the control group, average need for self-reflection decreased between the first and second administrations (from M_{CIND1}= 27.18 to M_{CIND2} = 24.27) and then increased for the third administration (M_{CIND3} = 25.57), but still remained lower than the initial mean. The median followed a similar pattern. For the final seven participants, the mean also decreased between the first and second administrations (from M_{CIND71} = 29.86 to M_{CIND72} = 25.86) but did not change greatly for the third administration (M_{CIND73} = 25.57). The median moved from Md_{CIND71} = 32 to Md_{CIND72} = 25 between the first and second administrations and then rose to Md_{CIND73} = 27 for the final administration. This suggests that need for self-reflection decreased for the control group across the course of study, however larger samples would be needed to establish whether this is a real and replicable trend.

Average insight for the experimental group showed a positive trend. The mean for the first administration was M_{EIINS1} = 28.43, which increased to $M_{EIIINS2}$ = 32.15 during the second administration and increased again to M_{EIINS3} = 34.64 for the third administration.

The median also showed a progressive increase (moving from Md_{EIINS1} = 27 to Md_{EIINS2} = 32 and finally Md_{EIINS3} = 34) and the standard deviation remained similar for all three administrations. The range of scores also decreased across the study, with scores clustering more closely together as the study progressed. During the final administration, there were only two scores which fell between 20 and 29 for the insight subscale – all other scores in the sample were between 30 and 49. The mean for the final eleven also increased over the three administrations however the median stayed the same between the first and second administrations ($Md_{EIINS111}$ = 29 and $Md_{EIINS112}$ = 29) and only increased for the final administration ($Md_{EIINS113}$ = 34). The range of data also increased slightly through each administration for the final eleven. This indicates that there was an increase in levels of insight for participants who took part in the One Wish Journal programme. This is a trend which is supported by the findings in the qualitative data.

For the control group, the mean increased between the first and second administrations, from M_{CIINS1} = 30.45 to M_{CIINS2} = 31.13. The control group therefore started with a higher average for insight than the experimental group, however the means at the second and third administrations for the control group were lower than those of the corresponding administrations for the experimental group. The median for the control group also started higher, at Md_{CIINS1} = 31, however it subsequently fell to Md_{CIINS1} = 29 and remained the same for the third administration. Means for the final seven behaved similarly, however the median began at $Md_{CIINS71}$ = 29, increased to $Md_{CIINS72}$ = 36 during the second administration and then returned to $Md_{CIINS73}$ = 29 for the final administration. Although the means for this group increased during the second administration, they decreased below their initial values at the third administration. This could indicate that this group had a slight decrease in levels of insight although larger sample sizes would be needed to confirm this.

5.4.2 Satisfaction with Life Scale

Table 16.1: Descriptive statistics for satisfaction with life – experimental group

	n	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Range
First admin.	99	23.08	23	5.88	26
Second admin.	15	24.53	28	6.46	19
Third admin.	11	25.18	25	2.96	10

As in Table 16.1 above, mean satisfaction with life increased across the three administrations for the experimental group, with the averages moving from M_{ESWLS1} = 23.08 to M_{ESWLS2} = 24.53 to M_{ESWLS3} = 25.18. Although this increase was not very large, it did indicate a slight increasing trend of satisfaction with life amongst users of the One Wish Journal. In contrast, the median increased during the second administration of the questionnaires (from Md_{ESWLS1} = 23 to Md_{ESWLS2} = 28) and then decreased at the end of the study (Md_{ESWLS3} = 25). There was, however, a much higher standard deviation about the mean for the second administration in comparison to the third, and a greater range of values. Scores for life satisfaction during the second administration included three very low values (13, 16 and 17) and three rather high values (30, 31 and 32). These more extreme scores, particularly those on the lower end, combined with the small sample size (n = 15), suggest that the median was higher than the mean because the data was negatively skewed. The range of scores for the third administration of the Satisfaction with Life Scale was much smaller (20 – 30), and the mean and median were extremely similar, suggesting that the data was more normally distributed. On the whole, despite variations due to small sample sizes and skewing, there did seem to be a slight positive trend for satisfaction with life in the experimental group.

Table 16.2: Descriptive statistics for satisfaction with life – final eleven experimental group

	N	**Mean**	**Median**	**Std. Dev.**	**Range**
First admin.	11	23.82	23	5.38	16
Second admin.	6	23	20.5	5.73	15
Third admin.	11	25.18	25	2.96	10

For the eleven participants who completed the journal programme (please refer to Table 16.2 above), the mean decreased slightly between the first and second administration (from $M_{ESWLS111}$ = 23.82 to $M_{ESWLS112}$ = 23) but increased during the third administration ($M_{ESWLS113}$ = 25.18). The median displayed the same pattern, decreasing between the first and second administrations (from $Md_{ESWLS111}$ = 23 to $Md_{ESWLS112}$ = 20.5) and increasing during the third administration ($Md_{ESWLS113}$ = 25). As seen with the experimental group as a whole, during the second administration of the test there was a larger range of scores and a small sample size (n = 6), which could have affected the results. In contrast to the

entire experimental group, for the final eleven during the second administration, the median ($Md_{ESWLS112}$ = 20.5) was lower than the mean ($M_{ESWLS112}$ = 23). Looking at the overall pattern, both the mean and median increased for the final administration in comparison to the first administration, indicating a slight positive trend of increasing satisfaction with life.

Table 16.3: Descriptive statistics for satisfaction with life – control group

	n	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Range
First admin.	46	24.93	27	6.29	25
Second admin.	15	24.13	24	5.17	16
Third admin.	7	22	23	8.94	25

In comparison, as seen in Table 16.3 above, the control group showed a decline in both the mean and median over the three administrations. The median decreased from Md_{CSWLS1} = 27 to Md_{CSWLS2} = 24 and then to Md_{CSWLS3} = 23. The range of scores during the third administration was also very high (5 – 30), especially in relation to the range for the experimental group (20 – 30). This greater spread of data from the control group means that patterns are more difficult to detect or establish, particularly because the sample shrank to such a small size (n = 7) by the third administration. Despite this, there does seem to be a slight trend indicating that satisfaction with life decreased for the control group over the course of the study. This trend was duplicated for the seven participants who completed all three administrations, as seen in Table 16.4 below.

Table 16.4: Descriptive statistics for satisfaction with life – final seven control group

	n	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Range
First admin.	7	24.71	27	6.73	19
Second admin.	7	23.86	24	5.76	15
Third admin.	7	22	23	8.94	25

5.4.3 Subjective Happiness Scale

Table 17.1: Descriptive statistics for subjective happiness –experimental group

	n	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Range
First admin	99	19.78	20	4.04	19
Second admin	16	20.81	20.5	4.43	12
Third admin	11	20.36	22	2.91	9

Table 17.2: Descriptive statistics for subjective happiness – final eleven experimental group

	n	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Range
First admin	11	19	19	4.22	13
Second admin	6	18.67	18	4.03	10
Third admin	11	20.36	22	2.91	9

For subjective happiness, there were generally less fluctuations for the experimental group, although while the mean and median were shown to increase between the first and second administrations for the whole experimental group (please refer to Table 17.1), the mean and median for the final eleven participants decreased over the same timeframe (please refer to Table 17.2). This discrepancy could have been due to the small size of the latter group (n = 6) in conjunction with the relatively high range (15 – 27). The differences between the first and third means and medians for subjective happiness, however, were similar for both groups. In both cases, the mean and median increased for the third administration, which seems to indicate that there was a slight positive trend across the study.

Table 17.3: Descriptive statistics for subjective happiness – control group

	n	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Range
First admin	45	22.04	23	4.1	22
Second admin	15	21.67	23	4.15	16
Third admin	7	20	22	6.4	17

For the control group, on the other hand, there seemed to be a slight negative trend for subjective happiness, as seen in Table 17.3 above. The mean decreased from M_{CSHS1} = 22.04 to M_{CSHS2} = 21.67. The mean dropped further to M_{CSHS3} = 20 during the third administration. The median remained the same between the first and second administrations but decreased between the second and third administrations (from Md_{CSHS2} = 23 to Md_{CSHS3} = 22). During each administration the median was higher than the mean and the standard deviation increased with each administration. The range of scores however decreased between the first and second administrations (from 22 to 16) and increased for the third administration (to 17). It is possible that because the initial sample size was small (n = 45) there were outliers which created a greater range of scores during the first administration.

Table 17.4: Descriptive statistics for subjective happiness – final seven control group

	n	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Range
First admin	7	21.86	23	4.6	12
Second admin	7	20.71	23	5.35	16
Third admin	7	20	22	6.4	17

Data from the final seven participants show a slight decrease in subjective happiness, however both the standard deviation and range increased at each administration (please refer to Table 17.4 above). Both the control group and the final seven demonstrate a slight negative trend in subjective happiness.

5.4.4 Positive and Negative Affect Schedule

Table 18.1: Descriptive statistics for positive and negative affect – experimental group

	n	Mean	Median	Std Dev	Range
Negative Affect (PNN) First admin	96	24.95	24	8.01	37
Negative Affect (PNN) Second admin	13	26.77	25	8.86	28
Negative Affect (PNN) Third admin	11	19	19	4.75	19
Positive Affect (PNP) First admin	96	33.95	35	6.49	32
Positive Affect (PNP) Second admin	13	32.62	32	6.16	21
Positive Affect (PNP) Third admin	11	31.45	31	6.59	19

Table 18.2: Descriptive statistics for positive and negative affect – final eleven experimental group

	n	Mean	Median	Std Dev	Range
Negative Affect (PNN) First admin	11	24.45	25	9.02	31
Negative Affect (PNN) Second admin	5	28.4	29	7.99	21
Negative Affect (PNN) Third admin	11	19	19	4.75	19
Positive Affect (PNP) First admin	11	31.18	34	5.46	17
Positive Affect (PNP) Second admin	5	31.4	31	5.32	13
Positive Affect (PNP) Third admin	11	31.45	31	6.59	19

For negative affect in the experimental group, the mean was found to increase between the first and second administrations (from M_{EPNN1} = 24.95 to M_{EPNN2} = 26.77) and then dropped considerably for the third administration (M_{EPNN3} = 19). The median followed a similar pattern, and the same pattern also applied to the means and medians of the final eleven participants (please refer to Table 18.1 and Table 18.2 respectively). The increase in negative affect during the second administration could be the result of the life changes reported during this time. Overall there was a positive pattern of decreasing negative affect from the beginning to the end of the study.

For the experimental group as a whole, both positive affect means and medians decreased slightly across the three administrations, which seem to indicate that there was a slight negative trend for positive affect (please refer to Table 18.1). However, as seen in Table 18.2, for the final eleven participants the positive affect means stayed almost the same over the three administrations ($M_{EPNP111}$ = 31.18; $M_{EPNP112}$ = 31.4; $M_{EPNP113}$ = 31.45). The median decreased between the first and second administrations (from $Md_{EPNP111}$ = 34 to $Md_{EPNP112}$ = 31) but remained constant for the third administration ($Md_{EPNP113}$ = 31). The results for the final eleven could thus have impacted the trend for positive affect seen in the experimental group.

It seems possible that the positive downward trend of negative affect scores and negative downward trend of positive affect scores could have been affected by participants' life changes. Seven of the thirteen participants who completed the questionnaires the second time described experiencing life changes, and five of these seven described their changes as negative ones. The five participants with self-described "negative life changes" had increased scores for negative affect and decreased scores for positive affect. The other two participants who experienced life changes described their changes as positive, however only the one participant's score lowered for negative affect (from 41 to 29), while the other participant's score increased by one point (from 22 to 23). The first participant's positive affect score stayed the same (40) and the second participant's score increased (from 33 to 40). Scores for the rest of the group who did not experience life

changes fluctuated within about five points on either side of the original scores, except for one participant whose score decreased by nine points (from 34 to 25).

Of the eleven participants who filled in the questionnaire during the final administration, only three reported life changes, with two describing their life changes as positive. The participant with negative life changes had a higher negative affect score and lower positive affect score compared to her original scores. Those with positive changes both had lower negative affect scores at the end of the study, however, the one participant's positive affect score decreased (from 40 to 31) and the other participant's positive affect score increased (from 32 to 36). This seems to indicate that life changes can have an effect on people's positive and negative affect, although the impact of these changes seem to be more predictable on negative affect than positive affect. Larger sample sizes would be needed to confirm these trends.

Table 18.3: Descriptive statistics for positive and negative affect – control group

	n	Mean	Median	Std Dev	Range
Negative Affect (PNN) First admin	43	19.98	19	7.16	29
Negative Affect (PNN) Second admin	15	18.4	18	6.4	21
Negative Affect (PNN) Third admin	7	20.57	17	9.73	24
Positive Affect (PNP) First admin	42	36.72	37	7.03	26
Positive Affect (PNP) Second admin	13	32.93	32	7.65	25
Positive Affect (PNP) Third admin	7	31.43	28	8.98	27

Table 18.4: Descriptive statistics for positive and negative affect – final seven control group

	n	Mean	Median	Std Dev	Range
Negative Affect (PNN) First admin	7	20.14	21	8.67	24
Negative Affect (PNN) Second admin	7	20.14	21	8.41	20
Negative Affect (PNN) Third admin	7	20.57	17	9.73	24
Positive Affect (PNP) First admin	7	34.86	32	8.51	23
Positive Affect (PNP) Second admin	7	30.43	32	5.06	14
Positive Affect (PNP) Third admin	7	31.43	28	8.98	27

For the control group, average negative affect decreased slightly between the first and second administrations (from M_{CPNN1} = 19.98 to M_{CPNN2} = 18.4) and increased during the third administration to M_{CPNN3} = 20.57 (please refer to Table 18.3). As seen in Table 18.4, for the seven participants who completed the study, the mean stayed the same between the first and second administrations and increased very slightly during the third administration (from M_{CPNN72} = 20.14 to M_{CPNN73} = 20.57). The median for the control group decreased over each administration (from Md_{CPNN1} = 19 to Md_{CPNN2} = 18 and then Md_{CPNN3} = 17) and the standard deviation decreased during the second administration but increased during the third administration. The final range of scores was higher than the range for the second administration, but lower than the range during the first administration. This suggests that although mean negative affect was higher for the final administration than the first administration, this may have been due to the relatively small sample size and skewing in the data.

Average positive affect, on the other hand, showed a steady decline for the control group (M_{CPNP1} = 36.72 for the first administration, M_{CPNP2} = 32.93 for the second administration and M_{CPNP3} = 31.43 for the third administration). The median also decreased for each administration, while the standard deviation increased at each point. The range for the positive affect was almost the same throughout the three administrations, although the final range (50 – 23 = 27) was higher than previous two (48 – 22 = 26 and 47 – 23 = 25). As with negative affect, there was evidence of skewed data for the final administration for both the control group and the final seven, although the final seven showed a slightly different pattern of results, with the mean decreasing between the first and second administrations (from M_{CPNP71} = 34.86 to M_{CPNP72} = 30.43) but increasing for third administration, although this final mean was still lower than that at the first administration (M_{CPNP73} = 31.43).

Only three participants in the control group reported life changes between the first and second administration of the questionnaires. The participant reporting a negative change had an increased negative affect (from 26 to 31) and decreased positive affect (from 29 to 24). The other two participants who reported positive changes both had a lower negative

affect score during the second administration (from 14 to 10 and from 23 to 18 respectively). Both these participants also had a one point difference for their positive affect scores, although one participant's score went down by one point (from 47 to 46) while the other participant's score increased (from 46 to 47). The rest of the group's scores on this measure generally differed by two or three points on either side of their initial scores, although three participants had higher differences of six, nine and eleven respectively. Only one participant reported life changes between the second and third administrations – this participant described the change as "breaking up with my first love and finding out that he has a fiancée". The participant described the change as "somewhat positive", however her negative affect increased from 21 to 34 in the time since the previous administration and her positive affect decreased from 32 to 28. The rest of the participants who completed the study had scores for the negative affect and positive affect which were similar to their previous scores.

The positive trends of increasing insight, life satisfaction and subjective happiness and decreasing negative affect in the experimental group seem to offer support for the One Wish programme, however their accuracy may be imprecise due to small sample sizes.

5.5 CHANGES WITHIN GROUPS

All instruments used in the study were measured on an interval scale. This criterion would allow the data from the study to be analysed using parametric tests, however distribution concerns precluded this. None of the scales or subscales demonstrated a normal distribution – in particular, SWLS scores and the need for self-reflection subscale of the SRIS were skewed to the right and the insight subscale of the SRIS was skewed to the left. In addition, the sampling process employed in the study made efforts to be random and independent, however convenience sampling was used for easier access to potential participants and participation was based on people volunteering to take part for ethical reasons. As discussed, sample sizes obtained were also extremely small, particularly for the third administration of the scales ($n = 11$ and $n = 7$ respectively for the experimental and control groups)**.** For these reasons, non-parametric tests were used.

To assess whether scores for the seven scales changed significantly over time within the experimental and control groups respectively, Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed Ranks tests were run for each construct over each time interval. That is, results for each scale were compared over the first and second administrations, the second and third administrations and the first and third administrations for both the experimental and control groups.

5.5.1 Self-Reflection and Insight Scale

Table 19: Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed Rank Tests for engagement in self-reflection (IENG), need for self-reflection (IND) and insight (IINS)

		n	T-positive	T-negative	p-value
IENG:	Experimental	13	18	27	0.65
Time 1 – Time 2	Control	15	31.5	46.5	0.57
IENG:	Experimental	5	3	0	0.5
Time 2 – Time 3	Control	7	12.5	15.5	0.81
IENG:	Experimental	11	25.5	29.5	0.85
Time 1 – Time 3	Control	6	11	10	1
IND:	Experimental	13	41	25	0.52
Time 1 – Time 2	Control	15	36	84	0.19
IND:	Experimental	5	5	10	0.63
Time 2 – Time 3	Control	7	16	12	0.81
IND:	Experimental	11	27.5	27.5	1
Time 1 – Time 3	Control	7	3	25	0.08
IINS:	Experimental	13	55.5	10.5	***0.05****
Time 1 – Time 2	Control	15	47.5	43.5	0.89
IINS:	Experimental	5	15	0	0.06
Time 2 – Time 3	Control	7	10.5	17.5	0.58
IINS:	Experimental	11	48	7	***0.04****
Time 1 – Time 3	Control	7	10.5	17.5	0.58

As seen in Table 19 above, none of the SRIS subscales showed any significant differences for the control group for either self-reflection or insight over the course of the study. For the experimental group however, there were significant differences for the insight subscale between the first and second administrations ($p = .05$) and again between the first and third administrations ($p = 0.04$). Between the first and second administrations, the level of insight increased significantly, fitting with the experience participants from this group described having in the qualitative feedback. Seven participants described going through life changes in the interval between the first and

second test administrations. These changes included: a death in the family, financial problems, emotional worries, the end of a long-term relationship, changes in living arrangements and changes in sleeping patterns. None of these changes seem likely to be the reason behind the increased levels of insight, supporting the notion that this change emerged at least in part due to the use of the One Wish Journal.

Between the first and third administrations, insight also increased significantly. While there was no significant difference between the second and third administration, the change between the first and third administration suggests that overall there was an increase in insight for the experimental group over the course of the study. These results also suggest that the last three tasks were possibly not as effective as the first three; this links to qualitative findings that Personal Projects 4, 5 and 6 were not as well-received as the first three.

5.5.2 Satisfaction with Life Scale

Table 20: Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed Rank Tests for satisfaction with life

		n	T-positive	T-negative	p-value
SWLS:	Experimental	15	84	36	0.19
Time 1 – Time 2	Control	15	53	52	1
SWLS:	Experimental	6	14	7	0.56
Time 2 – Time 3	Control	7	8	20	0.38
SWLS:	Experimental	11	37.5	17.5	0.32
Time 1 – Time 3	Control	7	13.5	14.5	0.94

As seen in Table 20 above, satisfaction with life for the experimental group showed no significant difference over any of the time differences. This suggests that trends identified (please see the descriptive statistics section) were not statistically significant. The control group had a similar lack of significant difference over all three time intervals (despite the slight negative trend identified in the descriptive stats). This implies that satisfaction with life remained more or less constant for both groups over the course of the study.

5.5.3 Subjective Happiness Scale

Table 21: Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed Rank Tests for subjective happiness

		n	T-positive	T-negative	p-value
SHS:	Experimental	16	76	29	0.15
Time 1 – Time 2	Control	15	39.5	51.5	0.68
SHS:	Experimental	6	13	2	0.19
Time 2 – Time 3	Control	7	5.5	15.5	0.31
SHS:	Experimental	11	49	17	0.17
Time 1 – Time 3	Control	7	5	10	0.63

The Subjective Happiness Scale also demonstrated no significant differences for either the experimental or control group during any of the time intervals (please see Table 21 above). This suggests that subjective happiness did not change significantly for either group across the study and that trends identified in the descriptive statistics were not significant.

5.5.4 Positive and Negative Affect Schedule

Table 22: Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed Rank Tests for positive and negative affect

		n	T-positive	T-negative	p-value
PNN:	Experimental	13	56	22	0.20
Time 1 – Time 2	Control	15	45	60	0.67
PNN:	Experimental	5	0	15	0.06
Time 2 – Time 3	Control	7	14.5	13.5	0.94
PNN:	Experimental	11	6	39	0.05
Time 1 – Time 3	Control	7	9.5	11.5	0.84
PNP:	Experimental	13	19	47	0.24
Time 1 – Time 2	Control	15	16.5	88.5	***0.02****
PNP:	Experimental	5	11	4	0.44
Time 2 – Time 3	Control	7	11	17	0.69
PNP:	Experimental	11	27.5	27.5	1
Time 1 – Time 3	Control	7	6.5	21.5	0.22

As shown in Table 22 above, negative affect did not alter significantly for either the experimental group or the control group across any of three time intervals, despite differences identified in the descriptive statistics (for example, for the experimental group the initial mean for negative affect was $M_{EPNN1} = 24.95$ and for the third administration $M_{EPNN3} = 19$). This suggests that none of the trends discussed (please see the descriptive statistics section) were significant.

Positive affect did not reveal any significant differences for the experimental group. There was, however, a significant difference for the control group between the first and second administrations (p = .02), suggesting a decrease in positive affect for the control group across this time span.

Five participants from the control group reported experiencing life changes during the second administration of the questionnaires. Not all the described changes were negative ones however, as discussed in the life changes section in the demographic section, life changes can have a negative impact even if the changes themselves are not negative.

Thus, for the experimental group, the only significant differences found were for insight, which increased between time one and time two and also between time one and time three. This pattern offers some support for the One Wish programme, however there was no difference between time two and three for insight and no other significant changes for the other measures were observed. These findings were disappointing, although some results may have been affected by the small sample sizes. Except for the difference in positive affect between time one and time two for the control group, no other significant changes were found, as was expected. The change in positive affect was not anticipated and could be due to the small sample sizes or other extraneous variables.

5.6 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUPS

Due to the assumption of normality not being met by the measures, non-parametric Mann-Whitney U tests were run for each construct at each point in the study comparing the scores of the experimental group with those of the control group.

Table 23: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of experimental and control group at time one

	n (Exp)	**n (Cont)**	**Wilcoxon statistic**	**Z**	**p-value**
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	99	46	3825	1.98	***0.05****
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	99	45	4064.5	3.47	***0.0005****

Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	96	43	2268.5	-3.38	***0.0007****
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	96	43	3463	2.06	***0.04****
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG)	99	44	3246	0.34	0.73
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Need for Self-Reflection (IND)	99	44	2672.5	-2.17	***0.03****
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Insight (IINS)	99	44	3620	1.98	***0.05****

As shown in Table 23 above, the most interesting differences between the experimental group and control group emerged in the first administration of the questionnaires. Significant differences were found for satisfaction with life ($z = 1.98$; $p = .05$), subjective happiness ($z = 3.47$; $p = .0005$), negative affect ($z = -3.38$; $p = .0007$), positive affect ($z = 2.06$; $p = .04$), need for self-reflection ($z = -2.17$; $p = .03$) and insight ($z = 1.98$; $p = .05$). During the first administration, the median for satisfaction with life for the control group was $Md_{CSWLS1} = 27$ while that of the experimental group during the same time was $Md_{ESWLS1} = 23$. The median for subjective happiness for the control was $Md_{CSHS1} = 23$; for the experimental group the median was $Md_{ESHS1} = 20$. For positive affect, the median for the control group was $Md_{CPNP1} = 37$ and the experimental group had a median of $Md_{EPNP1} = 35$. Medians for negative affect were $Md_{CPNN1} = 19$ for the control group and $Md_{EPNN1} = 24$ for the experimental group. It was interesting to note that the control group scored higher on all these measures except for negative affect, for which the experimental group had a higher median.

The lower tendency for measures of 'happiness' and higher tendency for negative affect for the experimental group could suggest that participants in this group took part in the study as a result of feeling the lack of some aspects in their lives. This idea is further supported by the need for self-reflection medians ($Md_{CIND1} = 27$ for the control group and $Md_{EIND1} = 30$ for the experimental group) and insight means ($Md_{CIINS1} = 31$ for the control group and $Md_{EIINS1} = 27$ for the experimental group). Lower insight and higher

need for self-reflection seem to indicate that members of the experimental group were seeking, and had the potential to improve, their introspective skills.

Table 24: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of experimental and control group at time two

	n (Exp)	**n (Cont)**	**Wilcoxon statistic**	**Z**	**p-value**
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	15	15	234	0.04	0.97
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	16	15	253.5	0.52	0.61
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	13	15	244.5	2.56	***0.01****
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	13	15	187	-0.05	0.96
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG)	13	15	218.5	1.37	0.17
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Need for Self-Reflection (IND)	13	15	242.5	2.48	***0.01****
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Insight (IINS)	13	15	196	0.32	0.75

At time two, the experimental group again had a significantly higher median than that of the control group for negative affect ($z = 2.56$; $p = .01$; $Md_{EPNN2} = 25$; $Md_{CPNN2} = 18$) and need for self-reflection ($z = 2.48$; $p = .01$; $Md_{EIND2} = 30$; $Md_{CIND2} = 25$) (please refer to Table 24 above). These findings were not expected however as mentioned in the positive and negative affect section of the descriptive statistics, seven of the thirteen experimental participants who completed the questionnaires during the second administration described experiencing negative life changes which seemed to impact their negative affect scores and this could be a factor behind these findings. The small sample sizes could also have affected the results.

Table 25: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of experimental and control group at time three

	n (Exp)	**n (Cont)**	**Wilcoxon statistic**	**Z**	**p-value**
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	11	7	61.5	-0.41	0.68
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	11	7	68	0.09	0.93
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	11	7	66.5	0	1.00
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	11	7	61.5	-0.41	0.68
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG)	11	7	72.5	0.5	0.62
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Need for Self-Reflection (IND)	11	7	58	-0.73	0.47
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Insight (IINS)	11	7	49.5	-1.5	0.13

No significant differences were found for any of the scales or subscales between the experimental and control group during the third administration (as seen in Table 25 above). This result may be a consequence of the small sample sizes.

The significant differences found between the experimental and control group at the beginning of the study showed interesting patterns that were not expected before the study began. It would be expected that the results and directions of these differences would change as the study progressed, however no such findings were established, possibly due to the small sample sizes. It therefore seems that people who feel they are lacking in certain aspects of their lives may be more susceptible to taking part in self-help, however, the possible effects of the One Wish programme in meeting these needs were not able to be assessed statistically because of the severe attrition which occurred throughout the course of the study. It is also possible that the lack of similar starting points between the groups masked the effects of the programme later on – if the control group stayed the same but the experimental group got higher, the results would not indicate any differences between the two groups as the experimental group reached a similar level to that of the control group.

Overall, due to the extreme attrition from both the groups, meaningful patterns of difference on a statistical level were very difficult to detect. This compromised the value of the statistical analysis in addressing the research questions posed, and raises important questions about whether the quantitative findings represent a realistic portrayal of the effects of the programme or merely the effects of the small sample sizes and high attrition rates. Given the difficulty in meaningfully interpreting the quantitative results, careful and in-depth consideration of the findings demonstrated in the qualitative assessment and the effects of the programme as identified by the participants themselves thus became particularly important.

CHAPTER SIX: QUALITATIVE ANALYSES

Qualitative analyses were utilised to assess participants' experiences of the One Wish programme. These analyses delved into participants' enjoyment of the journal and their assessments of its use and value. Without asking them directly, responses referring to personal experiences of self-reflection, emotional well-being and insight were sifted out of participants' open-ended responses to explore the multi-faceted impact the journal programme had on different participants.

6.1 ANALYSIS OF THE PERSONAL PROJECTS

After each Personal Project, a feedback form was distributed asking participants about their experience with the task (please refer to Appendix I). The form was a combination of open- and closed-ended items and requested feedback from participants about their interaction with the Personal Project, as well as the other components of the journal: the bookmark, the writing topics suggestions and the other types of entries they wrote.

Frequency analyses were conducted on close-ended items, while open-ended items were investigated through content analysis and narrative analysis (Lyons, 2007; Millward, 1997). Content analysis was used to condense and categorise participants' responses. Both content analysis and narrative analysis were used to interpret the qualitative findings and elucidate the significant themes and connotations which emerged.

6.1.1 Task completion and assessment

Participants were asked if they had completed the task and were given closed-ended options of 'yes' and 'no,' with the 'no' item having additional closed-ended options about the reasons for the task not being completed. There was also an open-ended item for those who did not complete the task and for whom the given options did not apply.

Those who did complete the task were then asked whether they enjoyed the task and whether they found it useful/valuable (closed-ended 'yes' or 'no') and each of these

questions was followed by an open-ended item for participants to explain their answer. An open-ended item also asked participants what changes they would make to the task.

6.1.1.1 Task 1: Quote

For Personal Project 1, thirty out of forty-two (71%) respondents completed the task, and twelve (29%) did not. Of those who did not complete the task, nine said that it was because they lacked the time, with one participant specifically saying he was "too caught up in school and forgot," fitting with part of the hypothesis of the research, that people often become ensconced in the "musts" or "shoulds" of everyday life. This frequently leads them to refrain from doing other things which they might like to do, often in lieu of pursuing those activities which offer them financial or academic incentives (Ellis, 1969). One participant said she lacked motivation to complete the task, and two mentioned they could not find an adequate quote, with one saying that she "struggled" to find one that was meaningful to her and the other mentioning not being able to find a quote that "inspired" her. Despite these participants feeling that they were unsuccessful in completing the task, their two responses still indicate that some effort was made. On the other hand, one participant mentioned that "I don't have a quote that I live by or have a quote that I like" which would seem to indicate that this person was either not interested in the task or did not find it appealing and therefore did not attempt to complete it, seeing no further value than what the immediate task suggested.

Of those who completed the task, twenty-eight out of thirty (93.33%) reported enjoying it; the two participants who did not enjoy this Personal Project seemed to have very different experiences with it. One participant seemed to think that the task was simplistic and commented that it "Just makes you think about what you value." On the other hand, the other participant who reported not enjoying the task felt that he had learnt about the impact that one decision can have on multiple aspects of his life. These two comments seem to demonstrate the range of experiences which participants had with this task. The latter participant's response indicates the potential which existed for participants to learn valuable lessons from the task, while the former comment demonstrates a more surface-level interaction with the Personal Project.

Three participants (10%) also reported that they did not find this first Personal Project useful. These participants also did not seem to engage with the task in any profound manner. One of the participants who responded in the negative as to the usefulness of the task felt that she understood her quote easily and did not feel any further analysis was necessary. The other participant reported that the task brought about "No noticeable difference in [her] life." The first participant's response seems to point to a superficial interaction with the project and it does not seem as if she delved into the meaning or personal significance of her quote, while the second participant's response seemed to imply that she wanted to see or feel immediate effects from the task. The desire for immediate gratification points to the unrealistic expectations some people may hold of self-help materials (Starker, 2009).

However, this second participant did report enjoying the task despite not finding it useful. This was an interesting finding, as it seems to suggest that even if participants did not feel that a particular task was useful, they could still possibly take something from it through their enjoyment of the exercise; in other words, although their surface assessment of the task might not have been positive, it is possible that even without realising that they had achieved something, participants experienced at least part of the intentions of the tasks through their participation. While enjoyment of a task might not necessarily lead to greater self-reflection or insight, one of the aims of the One Wish Journal was to provide participants with an outlet for thoughts and feelings, as well as an escape from activities strictly tied to everyday obligations and necessities. Enjoyment of a task may therefore signify that participants experienced the latter effect of a temporary escape or reprieve even if they did not achieve any other introspective purposes.

The specific intention of the task was to elicit investigation by the participants into themselves, their lives, their priorities and way of seeing the world. These aims were not put forth explicitly, which could be part of the reason why some participants neglected to engage with the task in a more in-depth and meaningful manner. Responses from three participants seemed to demonstrate this more superficial level of engagement with the task – these participants commented that they enjoyed the task as it allowed them to look

at a quote, which was “interesting” to them. Although this term may be linked to a positive and enjoyable experience for participants, it does not signify a deeper involvement with the task and it is thus unlikely that these participants experienced any significant benefit from the first Personal Project.

A couple of participants seemed to engage with the task on a more academic level, commenting about what they learnt about the quote itself, although one of these participants also added that she found “deeper meaning” – it is unclear whether this was a greater understanding of the quote itself or the meaning which the quote had within her own life. While it is unclear how much psychological benefit these more literary investigations of the quotes produced, the interaction which these participants had with their quotes demonstrated a more engaging and active dealing with the Personal Project and suggests that these participants were more personally invested in this task.

It is possible that because this was the first task, some participants started off in uncertain territory, unsure of how to use the task other than simply following the exact instructions which they were given. It does seem that with later tasks participants applied more of themselves to what they were writing and used their writing as a way to reflect on themselves.

There were however some participants who had already started using this manner of interacting with the tasks from the beginning, with a number showing varying levels of meaningful engagement. While some participants mentioned the task allowing them to look deeper into their own lives without describing exactly how they applied the quote to themselves, many linked their exploration of their quote to the investigation of their own values and goals. One participant described how this Personal Project allowed her to “assess what is important to [her] and why” and another commented that it allowed him to “reflect on what [he] found valuable.” The choice of the word “reflect” is a positive sign that some participants may have already started using the tasks in a genuine attempt at introspection. The use of the task to investigate their values and ambitions also suggests that some participants’ experiences with earlier tasks pre-empted the coming

ones. Particularly interesting was another participant who felt that she learnt a number of things about herself through the task, including what inspired her and the motivation she could achieve from "people of greatness." This comment is noteworthy as the participant's feelings about the first Personal Project link to the aims of the second Personal Project, which she had not yet seen. For this one participant at least, the progression from the first to the second task therefore seemed especially coherent and meaningful. All three of these responses seem to offer support for the arrangement and content on the tasks and indicate the developing nature of the tasks, although not all participants experienced this cultivation of ideas in the same way.

A few responses in particular seemed to indicate that there were a number of participants who experienced some of the exact intentions of the Personal Project – one participant explained how the task "helped [her] realise more about what one of [her] goals are and helped push [her] in the right direction again to reach it." Another participant found that the task provoked contemplation about her "current situation" and also "motivated [her] to move forward." These are very positive responses as it shows that the participants not only used the task as a tool to reflect on their lives but also that the task provided them with propulsion within their lives. Further introspective value taken from the task seemed to emerge from other comments, including a participant who described the way she felt the quote helped her to understand herself and her personality better; and a second participant mentioning a similar feeling of having "learnt more about [her]self" through the task. Writing has been associated with the pursuit of self-understanding and it is possible that these two participants were experiencing this, at least to some degree (Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987).

Another participant described how the task had "re-ignited the self-confidence [he] once had" and helped him **"**rediscover what self-love and appreciation is." Self-help has been linked to greater self-confidence and the use of the word "reignited" suggests that this participant experienced a powerful re-emergence of this quality within himself (Checkoway et al., 1990; Luke et al., 1994; Mains & Scogin, 2003). This participant also demonstrated the self-discovery aspects which writing can offer – this feature of writing

has been linked to self-realisation and while the participant may not have accomplished realisation, he did feel that he had come to love and appreciate himself more which seems to indicate that he was on a journey of finding greater self-acceptance (Bolton et al., 2000; Wyngaard, 1998). Since one of the specified aims of the One Wish Journal was to assist participants in becoming more appreciative of themselves, it seems that this participant was experiencing multiple levels of Personal Project 1 and the journal as a whole in their intended ways.

It is not known what caused the different levels of engagement with the task – it could be that some participants were simply more interested in the Personal Project and were thus motivated to interact with it on a more meaningful level; it is also possible that this pattern may be linked to psychological mindedness. Since those who are invested in self-help are more likely to continue using it and attaining benefits from it, it seems likely these people would also be the ones who would engage more actively with the self-help material (Kingree & Ruback, 1994; Mains & Scogin, 2003). It could, however, also be that some people are more predisposed to the types of activities and thinking which compose the journal and its Personal Projects – those who are more "psychologically minded" may be naturally inclined to engage in the types of introspective investigations which the programme promotes and therefore display greater engagement with tasks (Grant, 2001). This pattern of varying levels of engagement with tasks and the journal as a whole continued throughout the feedback of all Personal Projects and warrants further investigation.

In terms of changes to the first task, some participants felt that it would have improved the task if they were to find more than one quote. Several participants described adding this element themselves, however other responses seemed to indicate that some participants felt that they needed to stick very precisely to the instructions. This links to issues related to the presentation and comprehension of self-help materials. While it has been discussed that one potential pitfall associated with self-help is people not following or misinterpreting instructions, the above responses demonstrate a converse problem wherein some self-help users may feel that instructions are set-in-stone and may not be

altered in any way (Morgan & Jorm, 2009; Watkins, 2008). This lack of flexibility could counteract the potential effects and benefits of self-help materials. It is certainly positive that participants read the instructions and tried to follow them carefully, however, wanting to change a minor detail, such as adding extra items to their task but not doing so, seems to show a lack of ownership over the journal. This was the first task and it is possible that participants were still finding their feet in the journalling process, however the participants who made minor changes to the task to better suit themselves seemed to show a more active engagement with the task and the programme in general. This might also be a function of the journal being presented in the context of a research project. Although participants seemed internally motivated to take part in the study, the nature of it being a research project could have made participants feel that the ideas and instructions were absolute and that variations were not permitted.

Other suggestions seemed to indicate that some participants would have liked the task to be more interactive and/or to involve other people, for example, one participant wanted to "include other people's views on this same quote, or…to include what others think the quote means to them," while another suggested that participants could have written "[their] own quote and how [they] would like it to hold meaning for another person." These ideas seem more personal to the participants who made the suggestions, and would not necessarily be suited to all participants, however they do seem to indicate a significant amount of thought which some participants put into the task.

It is not surprising that different participants had these various responses to the task as people perceive, understand and react differently to the same stimuli (Cropley, 1967; Deci & Ryan, 2000). However, it would be useful to investigate the underlying basis of these response differences, such as individual participant's characteristics that make them more likely to respond in certain ways. As mentioned above, individual levels of interest and psychological mindedness may be impacting factors, however knowing more precisely what characteristics make participation, and particularly active and engaged participation, more likely would help answer questions around the use and applicability of the One Wish Journal, and possibly also other self-help materials.

6.1.1.2 Task 2: Qualities of Self and Others

Thirty-one participants gave feedback on Personal Project 2, of whom twenty-six (83.87%) completed the task. Twenty-four participants reported enjoying the task (92.31%), one participant did not enjoy the task (3.85%) and one participant did not response to this item (3.85%). The same twenty-four participants also reported finding the task personally valuable (92.31%), while two participants did not feel that it was useful to them (7.69%). Five participants reported not completing the task (16.12%), three giving "lack of time" as their reason, while the other two participants each had their own specific reasons for not completing the task.

One participant described spending a significant amount of time thinking about the task, but not being able to "commit [her] feelings to the page in black and white." The programme intended participants to write since the written form offers a tangible end-product and allows exploration, re-experiencing of and reflection on thoughts and feelings (Freedman & Combs, 1996). However participants were also told that in a case where they knew they would not be able to complete a Personal Project in writing, they should at least read what it required of them and think about how they would respond to it. This was done in anticipation of some participants having time constraints which would inhibit their participation and in the hope that in at least considering the task in a meaningful way, participants might experience some of the intentions of the task. This participant's response therefore seemed to indicate that she did indeed make some effort towards the task and her participation in this task was not entirely incomplete.

The other participant who did not complete the task explained that she did not complete it because she "did not feel [she] could face not being at the level of [her] role-model." This response could be indicative of problematic effects of the task in its potential to raise feelings of inferiority, which may have been the case for this particular participant. However it is also possible that this participant did not give enough consideration to the task – the task was presented in two separate parts, and while it is feasible that the participant guessed what the second part of the instructions would be (to investigate which admired qualities she possessed in herself), it seems more likely that she read all

the instructions at once and decided that she preferred not to complete the task. In later feedback, many participants describe being surprised by the effects of the tasks, and it is possible that this participant might have experienced something similar if she had completed the task. Thus it cannot be known exactly what effect this task may have had on the participant.

The only other comment in a similar vein came from a participant who mentioned that the task propelled her to the "Realisation that I admire qualities I don't possess." This participant did however still report finding the task both useful and enjoyable. It is therefore difficult to assess how negative this comment is and what the particular connotations were for this participant. Another reason that the interpretation of this response is somewhat ambiguous is due to feedback from other participants.

There was a variety of responses to this Personal Project, ranging from the superficial to the deeply engaged, as well as both positive and negative assessments of the task itself. Of particular interest in relation to the above comment, however, was a suggestion from one participant who felt that she would have derived more benefit from the task if she had "focused on some of the negative qualities about myself and others and asked, "How can I improve those qualities about myself and accept the negative in others?" Her suggestion is an intriguing one – while this aspect could not be added to the task due to its potentially upsetting nature, it is interesting that a participant would want to engage in this type of personal investigation and especially that she felt this additional layer of inquiry would strengthen the experience of the task. Thus while the former participant's comment about realising what qualities she felt she did not possess seems negative on the surface, it is possible that she felt similarly to the latter participant and was not necessarily distressed by this realisation, but merely commenting on an observation which she had made.

As with Personal Project 1, there were some simplistic responses in answer to the value of the task. Some participants again seemed to take the task at its most surface level and their open-ended responses read like a paraphrase of the task instructions. One participant

gave the simple response of "I knew that already," which implies that this participant felt that he knew what the task was about and possibly decided not to make further investigations into the personal meaning of it within his own life. It is hard to know whether this was the correct course of action for this participant without further detail. Somewhat conversely, one participant complained that the task "made [her] think too much." For these participants, it is doubtful that much introspective value was taken from the task. Again, it seems likely that individual levels of interest and psychological mindedness may be key factors in these participants' experiences of the task and their responses to it.

An important critique which emerged from one participant was her suggestion of greater guidance. This participant commented that "[she] would have changed the task by putting ways that [would] help [her] have the qualities that [she] want[s]." Throughout the programme there were periodically comments from some participants who seemed to want more active supervision. Generally, people using self-administered materials value their independence as part of the self-help process and most participants seemed satisfied with the amount of interaction associated with the journal (Den Boer et al., 2007; Scogin, 2003). In addition, it was thought that by working through the ideas and instructions of the task, participants would exercise their own introspective and cognitive resources, potentially leading them to see and appreciate their own skills and even learn new skills, in line with Narrative Therapy, which advocates the effort of the client in his/her own introspective processes to become active agents within his/her own life (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Monk, 1997). However, as with all self-help materials, there will always be some users who have different needs. In the case of this participant, she seemed to want very specific directions in order to move forward with the task. Although this participant felt that she would have received greater benefit from this task had she been given steps that could lead her to achieve her described qualities, she did still feel that she had received some useful aspects from this Personal Project. She described the task as assisting her in "finding qualities that [she] lack[s]," which she felt helped her in "knowing [her] personality." Thus although not wholly satisfied with this

task, this participant still managed to take some value from it, using it to reflect upon and learn about herself.

Another participant also mentioned that she "would have liked to have actively identified the qualities in aspects of [her] actions." As with Personal Project 1, it seems that this participant wanted to add another dimension to the task, but felt restricted by the nature of the instructions. The rest of her comment outlines her enjoyment of the task and the fact that she felt that the task was "done perfectly." Other comments that seem to show similar feelings include those of one participant who felt that photographs could have been included in the task, and another participant who wanted to compare two people whom she admired. Again, these are personal additions to the task that participants could have added through their own volition. It seems that the journal may have benefited from conveying to participants that the instructions of the task focused on particular outcomes and that participants were free to add additional elements to the task as long as they did not change it to a drastic extent.

There were, however, ten very positive responses to the task and it seems that participants who gave positive feedback focused on and used the task as it was intended – pointing out to themselves those qualities they appreciated in others and acknowledging how they could attain these features within themselves. Some participants mentioned how the task allowed them to see how they could possess qualities that they admired. One participant mentioned quite specifically how the task encouraged her to look at herself and her life, and work at becoming "the best person [she] can be." This is precisely in line with the theory that acting in accordance with qualities which one finds admirable can lead to self-improvement (Gillham & Seligman, 1999). Fitting with one of the fundamental beliefs of self-help, that people are capable and possessing of internal resources of which they themselves are not always aware, another participant described coming to a "profound realisation" that she possessed qualities that she admired about others (Checkoway et al, 1990). A number of other participants mentioned a similar realisation; that they already had traits which they valued in others. The first mentioned participant's use of the word "profound" also suggests that this experience was intensely meaningful, as the word

carries connotations of a significance realisation that had powerful meaning. Although the realisations experienced by other participants were not described this way, it seems possible that they a similar experience, as a realisation in itself suggests the people were presented with a new understanding of themselves which they did not previously possess. This awareness can be empowering and has the potential to lead participants to greater agency within their lives, especially if it was coupled with a conscious effort to use their acknowledged strengths effectively and efficiently (Checkoway et al, 1990).

Other responses seemed to indicate that a number of other forms of personal insight were experienced by participants. Some participants seemed to embrace this task as a tool to learn more about themselves and their direction in life – one participant mentioned that the task reminded her of "what kind of person [she] think[s] [she] want[s] to be" and another felt that the task helped him find "who [he] would like to be and which aspects of [his] personality [he] would like to change." Narrative Therapy believes that people's identities are dynamic and changing and these participants seem to be expressing the experience of this fluid nature of identity (Crossley, 2007; Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Payne, 2006). Both these participants consider their imagined future selves and the types of people they would like "to be," indicating an awareness that their perception of their identities and their identities themselves are not fixed. The forward-looking narratives adopted here illustrate the evolutionary nature of identity; the fact that these participants became more aware of this process within themselves makes it seem more likely that they will bring about changes in their lives and within themselves. There is some uncertainty in the first participant's view of her future self, demonstrated in her use of the disclaimer "think," revealing that she is not entirely sure of the type of person who she would like to become. However, this in itself shows introspection and some insight into self, as she is acknowledging that she has embarked on self-exploration and is in the process of discovering who it is she would like to be.

Other participants experiencing introspective gain include one participant who felt that the task helped her to know herself better and another who described the task as giving her "more insight into [her]self." These comments reinforce the notion that self-help

materials can lead people to greater personal insight, especially because of the second participant's specific use of the term 'insight' (McKendree-Smith et al., 2003). It seems that the writing process of this Personal Project influenced some participants towards greater introspection. This is seen again in another participant who felt that the task gave him a greater awareness of his actions, as well as the actions of the people around himself. Self-awareness is a quality which has been thought of as one of the possible results of self-reflection and insight and has also been linked to the generation of greater self-understanding (Horowitz, 1998; Lyke, 2009). It certainly seems that for these participants that the One Wish Journal was beginning to have its desired impact.

There were also other comments that seem to point to additional positive experiences that some participants went through that were not predicted when devising the task. One of these participants mentioned feeling more open to learning from other people, another commented about learning not to judge people and appreciating the similarities which exist between people, while a third described how the task reminded him "why [he] want[s] to achieve [his] goals and why [he's] actually at university." While these responses were not necessarily expected, it is clear to see how these participants could have arrived at these realisations. It seems that upon investigation of the qualities they admire in other people, these participants delved into further introspective enquiry and challenged themselves to apply ideas from the task to their everyday lives. For these participants it seems that Personal Project 2 was used as a tool to learn more about themselves and how they perceive people around themselves – the second participant seems to have used the task as a reminder that people who seem different are often more similar than they appear and the third participant's response implies that his experience of the task served to invigorate his motivation through encouraging him to consider the people and qualities he admired and wished to emulate. It also seems that the third participant was experiencing at least some part of the process of empowerment through this task – people are thought be empowered when they have greater power and control within their lives and a component in attaining this control is the contemplation and setting of goals in one's life (Adams, 1990). This participant's embracing of his goals

and purpose for acquiring further education suggests that he is in the process of aligning his world with his own values, an idea developed further in Personal Project 4.

6.1.1.3 Task 3: Journal Appearance

Fifteen out of the sixteen respondents to Personal Project 3 reported completing this task (93.75%). The one participant who did not complete the task commented that she "prefer[s] writing [her] thoughts and feelings down, rather than decorating and expressing [her] feelings through pictures, etc." This is the same participant who decided not to take part in the second task – for Personal Project 2 this participant seemed to anticipate a negative experience while it seems here for Personal Project 3 she felt that the task held no benefit or value for her. This participant's possible motives for not doing certain tasks will be discussed later.

All the participants who completed the task rated it as enjoyable and useful/valuable and many seemed to have experienced its intentions. Again, there were a number of simplistic responses, indicating a more surface level interaction with the task – a few participants made comments about how "fun" the task was, or how they enjoyed personalising their journals. While enjoyment of the tasks and participants feeling a more personal connection with the journals are positive outcomes, these types of responses do not signify a deeper level of engagement with the task. It therefore seems unlikely that these participants, despite having a positive experience of enjoying the task, took very much psychological benefit from the task.

However there were also a number of positive responses to the task; these responses were quite varied, demonstrating again how different people can have different experiences of the same stimulus (Cropley, 1967; Deci & Ryan, 2000). One participant explained that the task "really made [her] realise how little time and effort [she] really dedicate[s] to [her]self," reflecting the intentions of the task. Another participant seemed to have taken this feeling one step further, using the task as a catalyst to not only reflect on and review her priorities, but also to help her figure out "what [she] should be doing. Not only in this book but in [her] life – fixing it up, trying to make it better." This participant's comment

supports the Narrative Therapy idea that cognitive exploration can lead people to understand themselves better, and from this knowledge have a greater ability to assess what they need to improve their lives (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Another participant also felt that this task brought to her attention things which she, up until that point, "didn't realise meant so much." These latter two responses seem to indicate that some participants engaged with the task on a meaningful level and allowed it to lead them to more in-depth thought about other facets of their lives. One of the smaller aims of the task was to offer participants a respite from everyday activities, which can be monotonous and restrictive, and one response seemed to show this goal being achieved quite precisely. The participant, a Bachelor of Science student, described how this Personal Project enabled her to "escape from all the sciences and use [her] creative side."

Other responses that demonstrated the variation of experiences included one participant who felt that this Personal Project helped her to learn more about herself, and another who mentioned how it made it easy for her to see things in a different way. While these are positive responses, they are somewhat vague – it would have been useful to know more about what the first participant felt she had learnt about herself and how, as well details about the new perspective at which the second participant arrived. It is possible that their realisations were quite simple and in line with the task's targets, that is, that the participants learnt where their priorities lay and how and where they should spend their energies. In the case of the second participant, these notions could have led her to a new way of seeing things, as she may have reviewed what was given precedence in her life. However, it is also possible that what the first participant learnt about herself and the second participant's new perspective were something else entirely.

Either way, however, it seems positive that the latter participant felt she could see things in a different way – the cognitive theories and Narrative Therapy both champion the evaluation of perspectives (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Weishaar, 1993). A person's perspective can often be altered to create a more adaptive outlook on life and with such changes often come greater changes in the rest of the person's life (Horowitz, 1998; Weishaar, 1993). It therefore seems that this participant may have begun to embark on a

meaningful investigation of her life that could lead her to further knowledge and insight about herself. This participant's new grasp of perspective, as well as the Bachelor of Science participant's response, also indicate the different ways of thinking and experiencing that can emerge through creative exercise (Sinnott, 1959).

Another unexpected response came from one participant who mentioned that this task made her think of her past, which she enjoyed. It is interesting that the task could bring about feelings of nostalgia, however again the details of how the participant came to these feelings were not given. The participant did not provide any further information about what elements of her past the task reminded her of or how the task evoked these memories. Nostalgia was not an anticipated effect of this Personal Project although the nature of the action of decorating the journal could be linked to earlier experiences, specifically those in childhood, of creative projects assigned in school or extracurricular activities, such as art classes.

One participant who specifically enjoyed the creative aspect of this task described how he used everything of his own creation to decorate his journal rather than using existing materials; feeling that "this better expressed the journal as being [his] and made the whole thing more a personal experience." This seems to be a positive indicator of the meaningful ways in which some participants interacted with their journals and the personal investment they made in the tasks and the programme as a whole.

Another participant who seemed to be invested in the programme mentioned being "impressed with the direction the journal is taking," describing how she felt that the journal was taking on its own form – this seems to suggest that this participant experienced an evolution of the journal and possibly even the journalling process as a whole. This participant also described the journal as being "a comfort" for her. This is a significant word to be used as it suggests that, at least to this participant, the journal was more than simply a writing tool or pleasant experience; the word 'comfort' suggests soothing and solace, and these are powerful psychological elements that could

significantly impact a person. For this participant then, it seems that the journal brought her a sense of ease, safety and well-being.

Although this was still one of the earlier tasks, one of the participants felt that Personal Project 3 should have been one of the first tasks. It is understandable how some might feel a task which focuses on the appearance of the journal should be one of the first two tasks, however part of the reason it was left until approximately halfway through the study was to point out to participants how some aspects of their lives might be neglected. Had this task been assigned earlier, it is possible that its deeper meaning may have been lost. The timing could have also had beneficial effects on those participants who did decorate their journals before being given this task. One of the participants who took the initiative to change her journal's appearance before receiving the task expressed her appreciation for not having had any pressure on her to decorate her book, which was something she wanted to do of her own accord, and that she was glad to have had the opportunity to do so without feeling like it was an obligation.

An interesting suggestion made by one of the participants was for the task to specify that people decide on a theme to use in the decoration of their journals. The participant recommended that people choose a theme relative to their own personalities when changing the appearance of the journal. This could be a useful suggestion to put forward as a voluntary extra level of the task; participants keeping their own specific theme in mind when decorating their journals could potentially encourage them to form cohesive links within their own minds between their personality and they way they see their personality projected onto the outside world. Also, since patterns in thought can be revealed when re-reading what one has written, using a theme in decorating the journal could similarly make patterns of thoughts and ideas more apparent to participants (Dryden, 1990; Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987).

Although some participants wanted more guidance in the previous tasks, this was the first time a participant conveyed the desire for in-depth and personal feedback about the contents of the task and the way in which she tackled it. The participant felt that "it would

be ideal to have a form of feedback" and expressed the desire to "get an opinion on many things." This participant did not express why she would have like feedback and without further information it is difficult to know how important this interaction would have been for her. It is possible that she could have discussed the task and her approach to it with someone within her own circle of friends and family, however, it is also possible that the participant wanted a more objective and possibly more unbiased person's view. All participants were supplied with the researcher's contact details, as well as those of her supervisor, however this form of contact was anticipated to be an avenue for queries about the research itself. It seems that this participant was seeking more interaction than this. Self-help is generally administered without contact with participants and even bibliotherapy may be implemented with minimal contact (McKendree-Smith et al., 2003). There is consensus that materials which people administer individually within their own lives can be successful if they contain sufficient guidelines for participants to follow and most participants did not seem to have trouble with the One Wish Journal instructions or level of guidance (McKendree-Smith et al., 2003). For participants such as this one who felt she would benefit from more interaction regarding the journal and its tasks, it is difficult to say what the recommendations should be. All participants were informed at the beginning of the study that they would not be receiving individual feedback about any of their involvement in the programme, but this participant's use of the word 'ideal' seems to signal a yearning for contact. While it is possible that this participant simply wanted an outside opinion about her writing, this desire for contact about her internal ideas with which she was dealing could indicate that this participant might benefit more from an intervention that involved face-to-face interaction with a professional.

For the participant who chose not to do this task, it seems that she was pre-empting what would and would not be useful to her. While all participation was voluntary, it can be problematic when participants decide which parts of the self-help material they wish to use and which they do not. Some participants may have felt that they fully understood a Personal Project when first reading the task instructions, however it is very possible that the reasoning behind the task, its intended outcomes, and potential impact could not be

anticipated by the participant. The problem which then arises is that participants may have missed out on some potential benefits that a task might have offered had it been attempted. This demonstrates again the issue of motivation for users of self-help – in cases where participants felt a task did not hold value for them, some were not motivated to take part in it or took part without a deeper level of engagement; this kind of participation was more likely to not have beneficial results for the participants, potentially leading them to feel that the programme was not useful, thereby creating a cycle of non-engagement and no or limited psychological results (Kingree & Ruback, 1994; Mains & Scogin, 2003).

Participants' responses seemed to show that this cycle can be avoided if participants are open-minded about the exercises which they are doing. There were several occasions when participants described not having an initial interest in a Personal Project or desire to complete it, but through participation in the task ended up with a positive experience. Some participants felt they easily understood the tasks and their intentions, or did not find the premise of a task appealing, however all those who continued with the task despite these feelings seem to have reported an enjoyable experience and most also reported learning from the task. Thus it is impossible to know whether this participant made the correct choice in opting not to do certain tasks, or whether she would have gained greater benefits from following the journal, even those aspects which she did not feel applied to her. While she had her own reasons for not taking part in certain tasks, it is possible that the experience of the task would have been different to what she expected of it.

Looking again specifically at Personal Project 3, it also seems as if the participant who chose not to decorate her journal did not fully understand the purpose of the task, as the instructions indicated to participants that they should consider the appearance of their journal and what it reflected about other aspects of their lives. Had this participant done this, she possibly still would not have altered her journal's appearance however she would have had the opportunity to engage with the deeper meaning of the task all the same. As discussed, self-help materials face the obstacle of participants' misinterpreting them (Morgan & Jorm, 2009; Watkins, 2008). It seems that this could have been what

happened here, as the task's intention was not necessarily about changing the physical appearance of the journal, but rather to lead participants to an understanding of the way their time and efforts were prioritised.

This participant's manner of dealing with the tasks also leads to more questions of how people interact with self-help materials and the impact that their interaction may have on the effects of the materials. It has been discussed that people who are more inherently invested in and committed to self-help materials generally achieve greater benefits from them (Kingree & Ruback, 1994; Mains & Scogin, 2003). It thus stands to reason that if people using self-help materials are resistant to the materials themselves, or parts thereof, they would not be fully embodying the investment linked to the attainment of benefits and thereby would be less likely to achieve those things set out by the self-help material. In the case of the One Wish Journal, it seems equally viable that a participant, such as the one discussed above, may have not felt compelled to fully engage with aspects of the programme s/he deems unnecessary and through this process may have missed an opportunity which s/he did not recognise.

There is also the additional implication that if a participant is not fully committed to the self-help material with which s/he is working, his/her outcomes and assessments may not be an accurate reflection of the general value or workings of the self-help material that other participants may experience. On the other hand, this programme may have simply been ineffective for this participant. Since different people react differently to the same stimuli, one programme cannot be expected to be well-suited to all users and it is possible that this programme was not the most appropriate to affect meaningful introspection for this particular participant (Cropley, 1967; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

6.1.1.4 Task 4: Values and Expectations

Ten out of the twelve participants who gave feedback for this task completed Personal Project 4 (83.33%). The other two participants both reported a lack of time as the reason for not completing the task, with one explaining that she had been under excessive stress. What is interesting about this latter participant's response is that she explained that the

reason she had not completed the task was because she "didn't set aside time to do it" – as opposed to blaming the other stressors in her life, this participant made a point of noting that she did not schedule time for the task. This seems to demonstrate one of the key points of the journal programme, that is, that people often do not make time for things they would like to do in lieu of those things they *have* to do or feel they have to do. Had the participant left her response at the level of 'not having time due to stress', she would simply be illustrating that she was caught in the rush of everyday life, however her acknowledgement of 'not setting aside time' asserts the notion that some things need to be specially scheduled into everyday life in order for them to take place.

Of the ten participants who completed the task, all reported enjoying it, although only nine reported finding it useful. The one participant who reported not finding it useful felt that she was already aware of the way in which expectations had an impact on her and she had already come to the conclusion that she should rather try and fulfil her own expectations, in line with her own values. This participant did however still report enjoying the task, suggesting that she may have still taken some value from it. Even though she felt she was already aware of the workings and intentions of the task, it is possible that this Personal Project acted as a reminder of notions and ideas she had already dealt with, and allowed her a review of those thoughts and feelings, possibly reinforcing them in her own mind.

In a similar vein, another participant also described having thought quite a bit about the content of this task before being assigned it, that is, prior to being given this task, she had already thought about expectations and their impact on her personal values. However, this participant described feeling "a lot better" as a result of getting her thoughts "down on paper." She seems to have experienced a significant sense of relief at relocating her thoughts from within herself to an external venue, which is an element of the emotional benefit that writing can offer (Bolton et al., 2000; Esterling et al., 1999; Whitaker, 1987). This participant also mentioned a sense of clarity which she achieved from having her thoughts written down, which she felt made them more tangible and manageable. The physical nature of writing's end-product is a significant feature of writing which has been

associated with the ability to see and understand things in a different way and indeed this participant mentioned feeling that her goals and desires in life had became clearer to her through this task (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

As with previous tasks, some participants seemed to take this task more simplistically, mentioning that they found it "useful" or "interesting" to look at their values and expectations without delving further into conclusions or realisations that they could apply to their everyday lives. However, there were those who expressed that writing down their values and expectations crystallised some ideas within their own minds, and many mentioned that they saw more clearly exactly what they valued in their lives. Writing has been thought of as a means to achieve self-understanding and it seems that this is at least part of what these participants were experiencing (Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987).

One participant mentioned identifying differences in the expectations which she had for her life compared with those that family members had and felt that there were both negative and positive differences between these expectations – she felt that she would like to meet some of her family's expectations which she felt she was not meeting, however, she also was satisfied with other aspects of her life even though they did not fit with her family's expectations. This participant seemed to show an understanding of the role society plays in forming one's values, beliefs and ideas about what is 'normal' – in an effort to balance her own beliefs with those around her she was willing to accept some expectations placed on her from her family, while rejecting those that she felt did not fit with her own belief system (Freedman & Combs, 1996). This shows a thoughtful investigation and understanding of the nature of norms which are passed down through society and the necessity to negotiate them in order to come to personal conclusions about the acceptance and application or possible rejection of these ideas (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Such recognition and investigation of external influences suggests that this participant has a strong comprehension about the nature of expectations and ways in which they have the potential to affect people, as well as a good grasp on ways of mediating these expectations within her own life. For the participants such as this one, it

thus seems the task was at least somewhat useful in guiding them in reflection of the values and expectations acting within their lives.

There were also some participants who mentioned how the task had impacted them on deeper levels. One participant felt compelled to "re-assess" his values and his perception of his responsibilities – this has positive implications, as it suggests that this participant worked to actively apply what he had learnt from the task in his everyday life. Another participant described coming to the realisation that some of the values and expectations that guided her life did not make her happy. Although this participant did not mention making changes to her values and expectations, it seems likely that having discovered that she was following certain principles that did not correspond with her own value system, she would be compelled to re-evaluate them and potentially alter some of them which she felt did not adequately reflect her own views. Another participant mentioned how the task helped her to "prioritise [her] values and see which expectations were out of [her] reach and how [she] could bring them into closer contact." This response is another example of how some participants began viewing things in a more introspective light – for this participant, rather than merely observing what she had not or could not achieve, she resolved to actively make changes in order to make her values, expectations and way of living life more compatible. It is also significant to note that she did not necessarily plan on discarding her expectations, but rather she expressed the intention to ensure that her expectations were more realistic and congruent with her life.

These participants' responses seem to indicate that some participants were motivated by the task to make changes, or at least consider the changes they could make in order to have their lives fit more harmoniously with their own values, which was a central aim of this Personal Project. Since self-help is generally known to offer greater benefits to those who are intrinsically motivated to use such materials, it seems that these participants translated their investment in this task into introspective results and, in some cases, the opportunity to effect meaningful changes in their lives (Kingree & Ruback, 1994; Mains & Scogin, 2003; Tucker-Ladd, 2006). The cognitive theories often propose the use of homework exercises for clients as a means of improving their abilities to assess the need

for changes in their lives, and to subsequently implement the alterations which are deemed necessary and these notions seem to be clearly demonstrated here (Ellis, 1969; Horowitz, 1998; Kazantzis, 2005).

One response in particular demonstrated how well the intentions of this task came across to some participants. The participant wrote:

> *I realised that sometimes I allow myself to be influenced by other people's thoughts about me and my life and that I should rather direct my life according to my values and expectations rather than others' values and expectations.*

This response in particular, as well as some of the other comments above, seem to support Monk's (1997) theory that re-evaluating one's expectations can be educational and enlightening – it seems that many of these participants came to new understandings and realisations about themselves and their lives.

Asked about changes that could be made to this Personal Project, one participant felt that the task was too long and did not see the necessity of including the values. The task, however, was designed for participants to investigate their expectations in relation to their values and it was important that both these aspects be explored within their own rights and in relation to one another. It is possible that for this participant, there was meaning in the expectations aspect of this task while she felt that the values side of it was superfluous, however the combination of both elements was important to the outcomes of the task. This was the only complaint about the task being too long, so it seems most likely that other participants did not have a problem with the length of the task. There was, in fact, another participant who described writing more than was required by the task itself and through this process felt that she "got a whole lot more than what was required of [her] off [her] chest." The length of this task therefore seems to be more a matter of individual participants' opinions. Also of note in this participant's response is her description of using the task to get things "off her chest" – this phrase implies the lifting of a burden, one that is generally associated with relief upon removal, suggesting

again the emotional relief that some participants experienced through their writing (Bolton et al., 2000; Esterling et al., 1999; Whitaker, 1987).

It should also be noted that this Personal Project marked the move into the second half of the study. The tasks from this point onwards were more straightforward in their instructions and more clearly aimed at introspective investigation without the metaphor aspects of previous tasks attached. It was expected that by this point in the programme only those participants who were interested and invested in the programme would still be participating and would enjoy a more in-depth task, building on the Personal Projects which had come before. This change in format and task tone may have also contributed to the first participant's response to the task.

6.1.1.5 Task 5: Goals

There was another decrease in participant response for this task, with only nine participants giving feedback, seven of whom completed the task (77.78%). "Lack of time" was the reason given by both the participants who did not complete the task. It is worth noting that by the time participants got to this task, the semester was almost at an end and most participants were preparing for exams. Although it is unknown precisely whether this affected the response and participation of participants, it seems likely that the impending examinations and additional work due for the end of the semester had an impact on journal participation. While the 'musts' and 'shoulds' that distract people from other activities that they might prefer doing have been discussed, end-of-year examinations and the associated workload are quite exceptional. The participants who were still taking part at this point in the study were very stressed and pressed for time, and it is possible that there were other participants who would have liked to continue with the study but could not manage to do so due to the other university work which they needed to complete. Had the timing of the One Wish programme not fallen over this time period, or if the sample were not comprised of university students, the results of the study, especially those for the later Personal Projects, may have been quite different.

All seven participants who completed the task found it valuable, while six reported enjoying it – the one participant who did not respond "yes" to this item said that she "sort of" enjoyed the task as she was not usually a person who set goals due to her uncertainty of exactly what she wanted to do with her life. This is not necessarily a negative response, as the participant did not report disliking the task – the fact that she was generally not a goal-setting person, yet completed the task and found some aspect of it positive, implies that she was willing to explore a new side of herself and attempt things in her life in a different way. She also commented that she planned to start setting herself more goals, specifically short-term goals, but felt that she would like to work toward mid- and long-term goals. This is a promising response, as it seems to indicate that this participant, who was not in the habit of setting goals, may have committed herself to more goal-setting behaviour as a result of the Personal Project. It is believed that people can learn new skills that allow them to make changes in their lives and for this participant it seems that she had experienced both – from this Personal Project she seemed to have learnt to set goals for herself and seemed to be using this new skill to effect changes in her life (Tucker-Ladd, 2006).

None of the participants who completed the task described any associated feelings of accomplishment. While the use of goals ending in accomplishment would have been ideal for this task, there was only a week between its distribution and the feedback, which is not a realistic amount of time for many goals to be achieved, particularly long-term goals. Accordingly, participant responses seemed more indicative of their having found the goal-setting behaviour useful, rather than prompting any particular feelings of achievement through attaining objectives.

However, one of the other aims of this task was to assist participants in working towards greater direction in their lives and this aim seems to have been achieved in large part. Most participants felt that this task helped them focus more precisely on the future – where they would like to be in the coming days, months and years and what they would like to accomplish. This suggests that participants thought intently about what their short-, mid- and long-term goals were and used them to create a guideline for where they

saw their lives going. One participant described how the task helped her to "get [her] aims and goals all mapped out" and another felt that it "helped [her] establish [her] desires for the future." The first comment suggests that what this participant assembled for herself was not simply a list of things which she would like to achieve, but a planned strategy – her use of the word "map" suggests an ordered arrangement based on a thought-out plan for her future. The second participant's choice of words is also interesting as it implies that the task assisted her not only in identifying what her desires were, but also in guided her in setting up what her future ambitions should be. Another participant mentioned the opportunity which this task gave her to investigate the plans she had for the future; she also felt that the task allowed her a clearer perspective of the things in life she would like to change and in what ways she would "like them to be different." This response seems to indicate that through her internal investigation, this participant experienced the attainment of a new perspective and the propensity to elicit changes in her life, which is in line with predictions made by the cognitive therapies (Weishaar, 1993).

The above responses also seem to indicate that participants were actively using this task not only to set goals for themselves, but also to begin to achieve these goals. Overall it therefore seems that this task had some success in encouraging participants' introspective qualities although it did not seem to have the same personal or emotional resonance as previous tasks. There were also no suggestions of changes made for this task. This could be because participants felt there was nothing they would alter, however it could be a further sign that this task was not as rousing as the ones that came before it.

6.1.1.6 Task 6: Reflection

Twelve participants gave feedback for the final task – seven of these completed the task (58.33%). Three participants did not complete the task because of a lack of time, one forgot to pick up the task when it was being distributed and one participant said that she also did not pick up the task (she did not describe forgetting to get the task, so it is uncertain whether it was an oversight or choice) and did not know what the website address was. The journal had the researcher's contact number on the back cover and

participants could have contacted the researcher had they not been able to access any items of the journal; the first participant may have forgotten the number was there or it may not have occurred to her to contact the researcher for this reason. The website address of the One Wish programme was distributed as a separate piece of paper and it is possible that this was lost; it was also written on the bottom of the back cover the book, although this might have been covered over if the participant covered her journal with paper.

Five of the participants who completed the task found it useful, one did not and one responded "yes and no" to the item, qualifying her answer by saying that she "wish[ed] [she] had more time to look back on how [her] thoughts and feelings have come across. More time to reflect and look back." This remark makes the participant's answer of "yes and no" somewhat difficult to understand, as her comment suggests that she liked the idea of the task and would have liked to have engaged with it on a deeper level had she had the opportunity to do so. In this case it would be expected for her to report finding the task useful; possibly the "no" was because of the lack of time she had for the task, which led to her feeling as if she had not attained the maximum experience which she thought she might have otherwise had.

One somewhat negative response came from a participant who felt that this task "summed up" the difficulties of what she was going through and this was a saddening experience for her. This participant had described some major life changes at the beginning of the programme, including the loss of her mother. It seems that for this participant, re-reading her previous entries did not give her any consolation and it seems likely that the events of her life and what she had written in her journal were still too close for her time-wise to have any other feelings or perspective (other than those of her original loss and grief). On the other hand, another participant who had lost a parent before the start of the programme described the process of looking back on what she had written as cathartic, even those things which she described as "painful" and "sad". Some people can experience relief at the release of their thoughts and feelings and it seems that this is what happened for this participant as she explored the experience and meaning of

her loss, while the former participant seems to have only re-experienced her grief (Bolton et al., 2000; Esterling et al., 1999; Whitaker, 1987). It is not known exactly when these participants lost their respective parents, however it seems likely that the experiences of their loss and ways of coping are different and would affect them in different ways. It also therefore seems likely that the effects of this task may be determined more by the person him/herself and the content of their writing. It is likely that people who have experienced more emotionally challenging life events would write more emotionally-laden content and their reactions to their written material would thus be quite different to those whose life experience and entries were less impassioned. These factors make generalisations about this task's effects difficult to predict. It also seems to point to the significance of life events which can impact the efficacy of self-help programmes. Aside from the fact that different people react to the same stimulus in different ways, extraneous factors may affect an individual and his/her reaction to the self-help programme in unforeseen ways (Cropley, 1967; Deci & Ryan, 2000). These factors should therefore always be taken into account as they may have a significant and unexpected impact.

Other comments from this task seem to indicate that some participants experienced the intentions of the task, coming to new understandings of themselves. A few responses showed participants' new appreciation of their thoughts and feelings, as well as the way in which time minimises the effects of some events and emotions. One participant described how, through reading back over what she had written, she realised that she sometimes overreacted and had subsequently learned to "rethink" about her feelings. This demonstrates an emotional awareness which she did not seem to possess before – this participant used the task to learn more about herself, her behaviour, her feelings and the way that she thinks about things. Following the notions of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, it seems that this participant learnt that it is her interpretations of events that determine her feelings about them and subsequent reactions to them (Corey, 2005; Dryden, 1990; Turner, 1993). She also seemed to have committed herself to altering her A-B-C pattern of response to one that she felt could be more appropriate. Her use of the word "rethink" also connects to ideas of self-reflection, as it implies that this participant

intended taking strides to investigate and consider her thoughts, rather than simply following them. It also supports the theory of Narrative Therapy that people do not necessarily require the same knowledge or expertise that therapists have in order to improve their lives; this participant may not have had the jargon to describe her introspective processes, however the effects experienced in her life are the same no matter the language she uses (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Using her personal terms to express the principles and thoughts of psychological theory demonstrates the way some psychological thought can be learnt and used constructively by lay-people. Overall this participant's comment seems like an insightful response and it is thus possible that this participant used and will continue to use what she learnt from the journal programme to promote her own insight into herself.

Another participant mentioned how re-reading his journal showed him "how intense some thoughts are." One of the instructions of this task advised participants to compare the emotions expressed in their journal entries with those they felt as they re-read their writing. This response seems to show that the participant was reminded of how powerful some reactions can be. Had the participant had the same level of response to the events about which he was reading, he would probably have felt that his writing was a factual representation of the event, however, the observation of his own thoughts being "intense" seems to suggest that he may have forgotten to some degree how he felt at the time of writing some entries. It is especially interesting to note that the participant describes the thoughts as being "intense," rather than the events being described as such. Again, this seems to demonstrate a grappling with the A-B-C of emotional and behavioural responses (Wessler & Wessler, 1980). The participant made the observation that his thoughts were intense, implying that he was aware that he had interpreted the spurring event in a powerful way. Although he did not go further in his response, it seems possible that through this observation and realisation of his own writing, the participant was beginning to come to an understanding that the way he experienced certain events was his interpretation of them and with the distance of time and perspective of looking back at the experience, he could see things in a different way. This participant's response is in line with Narrative Therapy, which believes that people may be put into a greater position

of understanding when they reflect on past experiences (Freedman & Combs, 1996). His response also demonstrates the way that the same stimulus may be attributed new understandings or seen from different perspectives through the process of reflection (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Payne, 2006).

Another participant specifically mentioned that she found it interesting to "revisit [her] entries with a different perspective." This participant did not offer as assessment of her entries or an explanation of how her perspective was different between the times of writing the journal entries and re-reading them, but it is possible that she practised being her own audience. The different perspective this participant is talking about may have been a symptom of the re-experiencing that can occur when reviewing recorded thoughts; however this participant's wording seems to imply that she approached her writing from a different perspective when re-examining it, rather than coming to a new point of view after doing so (Freedman & Combs, 1996). If the former is the case, it certainly seems that the participant had become aware that her point of view was only one of the many that could be applied to any situation and that she was attempting to view things from a more objective, outside or 'audience' perspective (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Payne, 2006). This response, together with those of the above-mentioned participants, seems to be a positive indication of participants using the task to actively reflect on past events and journal entries to come to new understandings of themselves and their internal processes. Insight has been linked to writing through the process of re-reading and is itself generally understood as the arrival at self-knowledge (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Wyngaard, 1998). The reflective processes which the participants describe here are active and direction-oriented, making them the type of reflection that is more closely linked to the achievement of personal insight – since self-reflection which is undertaken as a means to achieve insight is often successful in its endeavour, it seems likely that at least some of these participants attained some level of personal insight (Grant et al., 2002).

The enjoyment rating of this task was split, with four participants reporting enjoying the task and three reporting not enjoying the task. One participant described how she did not like reading things that she had written, explaining that this was "what has kept me from

journalling in the past…[and that it makes her] feel uncomfortable re-reading some of the entries." She did not go into further detail about why her writing made her feel uncomfortable and, while this response may indicate a somewhat negative consequence of the task, it is not unusual for clients to experience some discomfort in traditional therapy – therapy clients may be resistant to change, and changes that do occur can lead to feelings of discomfort (Fehr, 2003). Obviously it is not known whether the discomfort being described by the participant is the same kind as that which sometimes arises in formal therapy however it is possible that there were similar mechanisms at work in this situation. It is also possible that although the participant did not enjoy the feelings evoked during the task, she was experiencing new thoughts or perspectives which were leading her to change, and this is what caused the discomfort. This participant was the only one who gave a rationale behind why she did not enjoy Personal Project 6, but it is feasible that other participants experienced similar feelings of discomfort. Re-reading things that they had written, especially deeply personal and/or emotional pieces, could have been difficult for some people, and it is possible that participants who enjoyed the tasks and even the journal programme itself would not enjoy re-reading their past entries. While this could have meant that some participants may have experienced distress during this task, no mention was made of such a feeling by any of the participants and it is unlikely that any dislike of or discomfort caused by this task would have had long-term damaging effects.

In terms of changes to the task, one participant felt that she would have benefited from more guidance, saying that she would have preferred "overt" instructions of exactly what to write. As seen with feedback from other Personal Projects, most participants found the tasks suitable with the instructions that were supplied however there were a few participants who wanted more guidance. Since people have different expectations of self-help materials and use them in different ways, it does not seem likely that any such material would be able to sufficiently meet the wants and needs of all its users.

The fact that most participants felt task instructions were sufficient seems to indicate that the majority of people interacting with the programme would find the tasks suitably

understandable. In the case of this particular task, instructions were given in a way that was not too specific in order to allow participants to write freely. The intention of Personal Project 6 was not a perfectly structured analysis; the vital activity for this task was for participants to re-read their entries with a critical eye in order to gain a greater understanding of themselves, their way of thinking and the way that they interact with the situations in which they find themselves. This type of reflection and analysis could have been compromised if specific and strict guidelines were enforced, as this task was meant to be personal and to allow participants to grow from their own perceptions and understandings of themselves.

As mentioned above, communication between participants and the researcher was a complicated issue however this participant could have contacted the researcher about the task instructions if she felt they were insufficient in order to receive some more guidance on how to tackle the task. Although the participant could not have been advised on exactly what to write, the process of completing this task could have been explained to her in a more direct way, which may have improved her feelings about the guidance around the task.

Other comments from participants in answer to the changes they would make to the task were more positive, with one participant saying that she would not make any changes as this Personal Project had been "meaningful and useful" to her and another participant mentioning how much he had enjoyed this task and all the previous ones as well. Overall it therefore seems that this final task received mixed reviews. Some participants seemed to have enjoyed it and taken value from it, while for others it seems that the task was perhaps too literal.

The first three tasks seemed to have been enjoyed more than the last three and a significant difference between these sets is that the former one had an element of metaphor while the latter was more straight-forward. The first three tasks were presented in a way that had participants confront ideas via other related activities (for example, Personal Project 3 which had participants use their journal appearance as a metaphor for

their life priorities). It seems that participants were more inclined to enjoy tasks that had these multiple dimensions – it could be that the reflected meanings and ideas of the first three tasks were easier for participants to consider and digest, while the last three tasks were so direct that participants had to confront these ideas head-on without the cushioning of a related activity. It is also possible that the distinction between the first and last sets of tasks lay with the timing of the programme. The proximity of the last three tasks to the end-of-year exams and associated workload could have also been a contributing factor to participants' enjoyment of them, as participants may have been experiencing greater stress levels at this time and also had less time to devote to these tasks. Had these external pressures not been present it is possible that participants may have spent more time on these latter three tasks and potentially enjoyed them more without the time pressure and with an opportunity to explore their ideas more thoroughly.

6.2 USE OF BOOKMARK

Participants were also asked about their use of the bookmark which was provided with the journal. Each Personal Project feedback questionnaire asked participants if they had used their bookmarks in a closed-ended item, followed by an open-ended item asking participants to comment on their experience with the bookmark if they had used it.

During the first Personal Project, fifteen participants out of the responding forty-two reported using the bookmark (36%); of these fifteen there were eleven comments made describing positive experiences with the bookmark. The most common remarks made were about the value participants found in the positive thinking tips and the way in which the bookmark helped them to alter their way of thinking. Such comments include: "It helps me stay positive and thinking rationally;" "It alters my frame of mind when I've had a bad day;" and "Helps put things in perspective." These are very encouraging responses as they indicate not only that the bookmark was being used as it was intended but also that it had significant value for a number of participants. It was interesting to note that participants were focusing on the positive impact the tips could provide. These self-described experiences with the bookmark also highlight the way in which participants applied the bookmark's ideas in their lives – they clearly understood the tips and easily

transferred the ideas into active use within their lives. The responses seem to show that the participants were not passively reading the tips, but rather actively comprehending them and applying them to their lives to effect changes to their cognitive processing. The active process of organising one's thoughts, and reaching new understandings of one's internal processes and ability to change one's way of thinking are key aspects of insight (Grant et al., 2002). The responses from participants seem to point to the way in which participants were entrenched in these activities and suggest that they were moving towards insight.

Looking more closely at the individual responses, the first shows the fundamental intention of the bookmark in its use as a tool to increase people's positive thoughts and to both encourage and enhance rational thinking. The second response features the phrase "alters my frame of mind" – it seems that this participant used the bookmark tips to actively change the way she was thinking. This has positive connotations, as it is possible that this participant was learning to think in a different way and, of particular potential benefit, was teaching herself how to alter her thinking to be more adaptive when faced with challenging experiences – this seems to be indicative of this participant's greater awareness of her internal processes, as well as an attempt to move to a more adaptive narrative (Dawes, 1988; Donigian & Hulse-Killacky, 1999; Monk, 1997). As Dawes (1988) theorises, these changes in thinking can lead to further changes in experience and behaviour, as new ways of seeing and understanding the world can contribute to a person feeling differently about the world around him/herself, consequently leading to different ways of behaving, as well as different ways of experiencing things. The third response also indicated another of the intentions of the bookmark being realised, as this participant felt that the tips helped her attain perspective. While this participant did not express directly how the tips aided in her attainment of perspective, the bookmark encouraged participants to look at things in a different way and it seems likely that this practice assisted the participant in this process (Horowitz, 1998; Weishaar, 1993).

Another participant described how the bookmark helped remind her of what was important to her in her life, saying, "I often read over it and remember the positive

aspects in life – what to value and what to let go of." The fact that she mentions reading the tips repeatedly demonstrates the use of the bookmark as an everyday tool participants could use in their lives.

Another participant made a similar comment, describing the bookmark as a "...daily reminder which really helps to just regain control of reality and not just get swamped by negative thoughts." Here again the participant is specifically mentioning using the bookmark every day. Her further use of the bookmark is also significant, as she was not using the tips solely as a means of thinking differently, she explained using it as a means to "regain control of reality," seeming to imply that she used the tips on the bookmark as a way to take active control in her life. The general process of reflection has been known to be used as a means of re-acquainting people with their agency and it is possible that this is what occurred for this participant when she considered the bookmark's ideas and their relevance in her life (Drewery & Winslade, 1997). The choice of the word "reality" is also interesting as it might be expected for a person to describe taking control of his/her life, rather than reality. While there is great philosophical debate over the nature of reality, Narrative Therapy proposes that people create their world and their understanding of the things and people around themselves through their perceptions and narratives (Drewery & Winslade, 1997). Narrative Therapy also stresses the consequential multitude of realities which are available to a person at any given time, due to his/her capacity to choose which narrative to employ in his/her life (Freedman & Combs, 1996). This means that, at least according to Narrative Therapy principles, a person's reality is the world as s/he has created it within his/her own narrative. For this participant then, it seems that she grasped the script of her life, understood her ability to change it, enacted active control over the creation of her narrative, and in this way came to feel that she had control over *her* reality.

There are also ideas of empowerment connected to this participant's experience. Empowerment is often seen as the course of development people experience when they "become able to take control of their circumstances" and for this participant, it seems that she was in this process of asserting her control (Adams, 1990, p. 43). She also goes on to

mention the way the bookmark reminded her not to get "swamped" by negative thoughts – the implication behind this is that she may have sometimes felt inundated with irrational thinking and used the tips on the bookmark to emerge from the deluge. This seems to indicate that the participant was also learning principles of the cognitive theories, as her description seems to demonstrate a strategic investigation of her thoughts, leading to an evaluation of their validity and the subsequent ability to differentiate between her rational and adaptive thinking, as opposed to her negative and irrational thinking (Goldfried, 1979; Horowitz, 1998; Weishaar, 1993; Wessler & Wessler, 1980). This participant therefore seemed to have attained significance introspective and psychological benefit from the bookmark and also demonstrated the way a layperson can benefit from fundamental psychological principles, even if they do not realise that they are doing so.

Other positive responses included a participant who expressed how the bookmark allowed her to think about her life and the way in which she thinks, and another participant who felt that the bookmark "helped [her] rethink about [her] current thoughts." These responses seem to demonstrate that the bookmark encouraged more introspective thinking and greater reflection on participants' lives and cognitive practices. The use of the word "re-think" is also of note here, which is a term that was used by a different participant in the feedback for Personal Project 6. Its use again re-iterates the way in which people can experience aspects of psychological theory even if they are not aware of it; although they are not described in strictly psychological terms here, the participant's diction carries connotations of the process of reflection and internal investigation (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Grant et al., 2002). Different participants having similar experiences with different aspects of the journal also seem to indicate that the journal was successful in using different methods to engage participants and aid them in their introspective journeys. This again demonstrates the way in which different people react to the same stimulus; and points to the varied reactions different people may have to similar things as a result of their distinct internal processes and innate differences (Cropley, 1967; Deci & Ryan, 2000). As discussed in the design of the One Wish

Journal, it was intended that there were different mediums of experience in the programme so that different types of people had a greater potential of attaining benefits.

In the feedback for the second Personal Project, twelve respondents reported using the bookmark (39%), and nine of these participants gave comments which were all positive. Five participants described appreciating the tips, with four of these describing the tips as helping them to be more positive and one using them to "dispel negative emotions and negative thinking." It is interesting to note that greater focus was again placed on the tips for positive thinking. It seems that for many participants, although they found the tips on how to adapt their negative thinking useful, they had a greater appreciation of learning how to promote their positive thinking.

Another interesting comment came from a participant who described the bookmark's tips as being useful to her in her "day-to-day life when properly applied." Not only did she support the idea that the bookmark is useful in everyday life, she also pointed out that it had to be used in an appropriate manner in order to have effect. Her observation that the bookmark was effective when used "properly" suggests that she realised that simply reading the tips was not sufficient to engender change and that it was only when she had engaged with the bookmark in a personal way and worked to actively apply its ideas in her life that she discovered its value within her daily life. This participant seemed to have had a good understanding of the One Wish programme and how it operated and this fits with Checkoway et al.'s (1990) notion that effective and efficient use of self-help materials can assist in leading to greater self-management.

One participant also found the tips made her more appreciative of her life. This response may have emerged as a function of the bookmark's attempt to change participants' perspectives and encourage their focus on the more positive aspects of life. Cognitive theories make use of positive self-talk as a means to improve clients' perceptions of themselves and it seems that this participant may have been experiencing something similar using the tips on positive thinking (Wessler & Wessler, 1980). Self-talk has the potential to help people change the way they view themselves, as well as the world

around themselves (Weishaar, 1993). This participant's feeling that she had become more appreciative seems to indicate a shift in her perception of her world and her life, brought on by her interaction with the bookmark. Another participant commented that she appreciated the bookmark because "You can find yourself." Although she did not go into more detail, the idea of using the bookmark's tips to "find herself" suggests that she entered into personal introspection as a result of her interaction with the bookmark and learnt about herself through this course of action. This process fits the description of self-reflection, and while it is uncertain exactly how much this participant felt she learnt about herself through this course of introspective investigation, her sentiment of self-knowledge seems to indicate that she acquired at least some personal insight (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Grant et al., 2002; Reber & Reber, 2001).

Eleven of the sixteen respondents who gave feedback for Personal Project 3 reported using the bookmark (69%). One participant commented that she used the bookmark "to think but not for the tasks" – this should be considered use of the bookmark, as the bookmark operates independently from the tasks. This comment does however raise the question of whether other participants experienced a similar misunderstanding of the use of the bookmark. As mentioned in the tasks analyses, although every effort was taken to ensure that all parts of the journal were clear and understandable, problems of misunderstanding are a feature of self-help that may sometimes emerge, often from a participant's misinterpretation, which seems to have been the case here (Morgan & Jorm, 2009; Watkins, 2008).

Positive comments about the bookmark again included those about the usefulness of the tips and the general positivity which it promotes. One participant specifically mentioned that the bookmark had made her more aware of her thoughts "in any situation," suggesting that she used its ideas in her everyday life; she also described "spend[ing] more time "rationalising"" her irrational thoughts, which also shows an active employment of the bookmark's tips and effort to adapt her irrational thinking. This is another participant who demonstrated learning the cognitive skills of evaluating her

thinking processes and how to differentiate rational and irrational thoughts (Goldfried, 1979; Horowitz, 1998; Weishaar, 1993; Wessler & Wessler, 1980).

Other comments about the bookmark included one participant calling it "an inspiration," and another using it as a decision-making tool. The participant who felt the bookmark was an inspiration did not give any further information about what made her feel this way, however the word itself is quite significant in its meaning as it connotes a deeply-felt motivation. It is possible that the participant felt inspired about something particular in her life, however since she was describing the bookmark without specific reference to anything, it seems more likely that she felt the bookmark was inspirational in an overall capacity within her life. Given that she did not mention why she felt this way about the bookmark, it can only be surmised why this participant felt such value emerging from the bookmark. From the other participants' responses up until this point, the general feedback seems to indicate that people used the bookmark to help them change their way of thinking, to look at things from a more positive point of view and to look at things from a different perspective. It can therefore be conjectured that this participant experienced some, if not all, of these benefits and they served a motivational purpose for her.

For the participant who used the bookmark to assist her in her decision-making, she described how the tips helped her to stay focused and think clearly before making a decision. Self-reflection and insight have been linked to improved decision-making practices; it is possible that this participant engaged in internal investigation that led her to explore and understand situations more thoroughly, which in turn may have assisted her in making decisions more carefully and with greater consideration of their outcomes (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Horowitz, 1998). This participant also mentioned "evaluating how I'm feeling at the time when I'm making my decisions." This seems to be growth on the original intention of the bookmark – not only did this participant use it to focus her thinking and become more attentive to her decision-making methods, she also learnt to be aware of her emotions when faced with a decision. Emotions have been known to affect people's decisions, and greater awareness of one's emotions therefore seems likely to aid people in making their decisions more carefully and efficiently

(Dolan, 2002). This comment therefore seems to point to introspective growth as the participant's description shows an active effort to be more aware of her internal processes, and to use this knowledge to change aspects of her life (Dawes, 1988; Donigian & Hulse-Killacky, 1999).

One participant commented that the bookmark reminded her of what she had set out to achieve with the programme. For this participant it seems that the bookmark, acting in line with the ideas behind the contract, provided a means of staying on track with the One Wish Journal, as well as reminding her of her own personal goals and purposes for being involved in the programme (Dobson & Dobson, 2009). This is one of the few specific feedback comments depicting more precisely how and why the bookmark was being used.

Five participants of the twelve who responded to Personal Project 4 reported using the bookmark (41.67%); six (50%) reported not using it and one participant (8.33%) did not respond to this item. A few positive remarks were made, covering similar ideas already seen in previous feedback comments. One participant mentioned that the bookmark helped her to feel more positive and she found this "encouraging." Her use of the word encouraging suggests that this participant not only used the bookmark to enhance her positive thinking, but also that she found this practice to be a spur – although she did not specify in what way she found the tips on positive thinking encouraging, it is possible that it was a broad feeling she experienced, assisting her to feel more heartened in everyday life. Indeed, another participant mentioned thinking about the bookmark's tips and trying to employ them in her life "every day," again lending support to the notion that the bookmark was used by some as a tool in their day-to-day lives. Another response came from a participant who felt that the bookmark was "very motivational." Echoing the participant in Personal Project 3 who mentioned gaining inspiration from the bookmark, this participant's comment seems to suggest that the bookmark contributed enthusiasm to her life view. This seems to suggest that for some participants the tips on the bookmark acted as a catalyst and even possibly a support system.

Of the nine participants who gave feedback for the fifth Personal Project, four reported using the bookmark (44.44%), four did not use it (44.44%) and one participant (11.11%) did not respond to this item. Almost all the comments made about the bookmark concerned the tips about positive thinking, a trend which will be discussed later. The only other comment which was made concerned introspection. This participant was intrigued by the act of introspection, the complexity of thought which it brings and its captivating nature. He also noted that introspection leads to "deep" thoughts. It certainly seems that for this participant the bookmark was a portal to personal investigation, the exploration of his cognitions and a newfound appreciation for introspection.

For the last Personal Project's feedback, five out of the twelve participants reported using the bookmark (41.67%); two responded "no" (16.67%) and five participants (41.67%) did not respond to this item. Remarks were made again about the use and appreciation of the tips on positing thinking. Similar to other comments seen before, one participant noted that she was applying the tips to her everyday life. Another participant felt that the bookmark was a "useful tool" not only for herself but for other people with whom she anticipated working in the future, mentioning that her "job to help others to be happy will be helped by the bookmark." This comment is particularly interesting because it indicates that this participant not only found the bookmark to be valuable to her own life, but also saw it to have potential value for other people around herself, with whom she intended to share what she had learnt from it. Since she felt that the bookmark would help her in assisting others to be happier, there is also the implication that she experienced feelings of happiness as a result of her own use of the bookmark. Lastly, her mention of using the ideas from the bookmark as a means to aid her in her future career points to the significance of her interaction of the bookmark and suggests that she incorporated its ideas deeply into her own life.

Self-help holds the belief that people can optimise their skills, as well as learn new ones and use these skills in their daily lives (Gillham & Seligman, 1999; Tucker-Ladd, 2006). It seems that this participant was on her way to learning from the bookmark and her desire to share its ideas seems to indicate introspective growth. She not only appreciated

what she was learning from the bookmark, but also wanted to use it to help improve others' lives and specifically those connected to her through her studies and future career. This suggests a potential growth of introspective consciousness, and her intention to use this knowledge to improve her abilities in her future career points to the active appropriation she was enacting on the bookmark's ideas. This is significant as it shows an additional layer to the use and potential benefit participants could take from the bookmark, not only within their individual lives but in the way they interact with other people and the way in which they can pass on information which they learnt through their own experiences with the journal programme. In the case of this participant particular, it may also be a sign of the beginnings of changes being made to her discourse. Her feelings about the bookmark and intentions to use its ideas in multiple areas of her life seem to demonstrate the first ripple of changing meanings and understandings which will spread outwards to other aspects of her cognitive processes, as well as her interactions with other people (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

This general positive feedback about the bookmark demonstrates the bookmark fulfilling its functions for most participants. It is of particular note that the majority of participants commented on their use of the tips on positive thinking. Instead of focusing on the tips which suggest how to stop negative thinking, almost all the comments about the bookmark were about the tips on positive thinking. This seems to indicate a trend that was not anticipated at the beginning of the study.

While it has been discussed that the field of psychology has in the past been more focused on deficits and pathologies, the recent emergence and success of positive and preventative psychological methods has lent support to the notion that people are not necessarily deficient, but can learn more adaptive behaviours and ways of thinking to enhance their lives (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Ingram & Snyder, 2006). It seems that the participants in this study were instinctively drawn to the aspects focused on positive ideas behind psychology more than those based in more traditional, problem-based notions of the field. There could be a number of reasons behind this pattern. Psychological ideas have become more widely-spread and accepted and it is possible that

some participants were familiar with concepts from "pop psychology" such as self-improvement and actualisation. It may be that participants were thus attracted to the lessons the tips on positive thinking offered them as a means to achieve goals they had been exposed to in other arenas. Although these tips are largely based in common-sense, their position within a formal study may have also attributed to lending them greater weight and value for participants than if they were to come across the same ideas in another setting.

It is also possible that this use of the bookmark demonstrates people's innate adaptive behaviour, preferring to focus on how to improve their lives rather than to focus on perceived problems or shortfalls. This supports ideas of positive psychology that people have innate positive qualities that can be consciously recognised and enhanced and the personal growth towards which people will instinctively strive (Jason et al., 2005; Resnick & Rosenheck, 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This seems to suggest that the participants who were using the bookmark, and taking part in the study, were people who were more innately inclined to self-development and self-improvement. Since the One Wish programme was a tool aimed to assist people in their everyday lives, it seems that it had a positive interaction with the type of people who stand to benefit from such a programme. This again suggests that the One Wish programme is valuable to certain people, while it may not be effective for others.

Overall the bookmark seems to have worked for participants in line with the psycho-educational principles of cognitive and Narrative Therapy (Dryden, 1990; Rudolph & Thompson, 2000; Weishaar, 1993). The cognitive theories believe that people can be taught how to combat irrational thinking and enhance rational thinking; while Narrative Therapy values the skills and awareness people can learn when they are guided in the correct direction (Dawes, 1988; Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Donigian & Hulse-Killacky, 1999; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Goldfried, 1979; Horowitz, 1998; Monk, 1997; Weishaar, 1993; Wessler & Wessler, 1980). The bookmark acted as a guideline for participants to learn about their thinking patterns, as well as how to change them to be more adaptive. Its use was not enforced and none of the participants commented about

needing help understanding it or how to apply it to their lives. This seems to show that the bookmark was successful in disseminating useful knowledge to participants that they then employed in their lives to enhance their self-understandings and to alter aspects of themselves which they had learnt to recognise and evaluate.

The general response to the bookmark also showed the significant role it played in the One Wish programme. Unlike other aspects of the journal, the bookmark received no negative feedback and the positive feedback was generally meaningful and in some cases even deeply profound. It also seemed to promote agency and insight amongst users, despite being a less interactive component of the programme. The significance of this aspect of the journal raises questions of its position in the study and whether greater importance should be placed on it.

6.3 USE OF WRITING TOPICS

At the back of the journal there were writing topics, suggestions of things about which participants could write. For each task, participants were asked whether they used these suggested topics in a closed-ended item and an open-ended item asked for additional comments if they had used them.

For the first task, eighteen respondents (43%) reported using the suggestions. One participant in particular mentioned how the suggestions helped her to look at various aspects of her life, saying that, “The suggestions are like a little reminder which have helped me give attention to other areas in my life which I might not have.” The fact that the suggestions triggered investigation which the participant felt she would most likely not have undertaken without them seems to indicate that the suggestions served a purpose not only in helping people find things to write about, but also through introducing them to ideas they may have never thought to explore without prompting.

Feedback from Personal Project 2 revealed that nine participants used the suggestions (29%); nineteen (61.29%) reported that they did not use any suggestions and three participants (9.68%) did not respond to this item. The relatively small use of the

suggestions could be a feature of participants feeling that they did not need ideas of what to write about or may have resulted because the majority of participants completed the Personal Project (83.87%) itself. Taking into consideration that during this Personal Project all the respondents reported writing in their journals, it seems that participants were invested in writing in the journals in their own ways and for their own uses. It could be for these reasons that more participants did not use the suggestions during this task.

On the other hand, one participant specifically mentioned enjoying the suggestions, describing them as "essential in tapping into [his] creativity." It seems that this participant engaged with the suggestions as a way to invoke his own imagination, using them to rouse his creativity. It seems likely that much like journalling itself, and the One Wish programme in general, people had individual responses to and varying degrees of appreciation of the suggestions. Since people respond differently to the same stimuli, it is not surprising that this participant seems to have had a very different experience with the suggestions than other participants did (Cropley, 1967; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Nine participants of the sixteen (56.25%) who gave feedback for the task reported using the suggestions during Personal Project 3. One participant commented that the suggestions helped her to write as she sometimes had trouble getting started and used the ideas as prompts for her own writing and ideas. This was one of the intentions of the suggestions themselves and while the suggestions were not very widely used during the course of the study, it is promising that some participants used them to assist in their writing.

For Personal Project 4, seven participants (58.33%) reported using the suggestions; four participants (33.33%) did not use the suggestions and one participant did not respond to this item (8.33%). No additional comments were made about the suggestions in the feedback for this task.

Seven participants of the nine who gave feedback for Personal Project 5 (77.78%) responded "yes" to using the suggestions while two participants (22.22%) reported not

using the suggestions. One participant mentioned how much she enjoyed the suggestions, saying that they often presented topics which she would not have thought of writing herself, echoing the sentiment of the participant who used the suggestions in a similar way during the first task. This participant also mentioned that the suggestions allowed her opportunities to "express [her] thoughts and think deeper about [her] values." It is interesting to see how this participant interacted with the suggestions – for her it seems as if she took on the suggestions almost like a challenge. She used them to propel her introspection and investigate herself in a meaningful way; it seemed that she pushed herself to engage with the topics she picked in order to reflect on herself and her internal processes. This participant may possess innate psychological mindedness however it is also possible that the suggestions themselves spurred her internal investigation (Grant, 2001).

For Personal Project 6, six participants (50%) reported using the suggestions; two (16.67%) reported not using the suggestions and four participants (33.33%) did not respond to this item. Here again there were no additional comments made about the suggestions.

Even though the response numbers for Personal Projects 3, 4 and 5 were small, it is interesting that the majority of the participants who gave feedback reported using the suggestions. More comments and greater detail about the reasons and use of the suggestions would have given a clearer indication of who was using the suggestions and the purposes they fulfilled for these participants.

6.4 TYPES OF JOURNAL ENTRIES

Throughout the course of the One Wish programme, participants were also asked to indicate what other writing they did in their journals aside from the Personal Projects. Eight options were given and participants were asked to indicate which types of entries they had written in the journals – participants were allowed to indicate as many of the options as were appropriate to their writing. The options were: entries about current life; entries about past events; entries about the future; entries about participants' thoughts;

entries about participants' feelings; ideas and creative entries (such as poetry or stories). There was also an 'other' option for entries that participants felt were not covered by the other seven options.

For Personal Project 1, all forty-two respondents reported writing in their journals, despite twelve participants not completing the first task. A total of one hundred and twenty-eight entries were reported. This is a positive finding as writing in the journal is a central component of the One Wish Journal programme; although it was preferable for participants to write in the journal *and* complete the assigned tasks, any form of writing in the journal was considered as a type of participation. Thirty-three participants reported writing about current life (25.78%); twenty-four reported writing about their feelings (18.75%); twenty-two wrote about their thoughts (17.19%); sixteen wrote about past events (12.5%); fourteen wrote about the future (10.94%); eight wrote creative entries (6.25%); seven wrote about ideas (5.46%); and four reported writing about "other" (3.13%), with one specifying that she wrote about "friends, family and how they affect my life, thoughts and what I think of myself." It is interesting that from the first Personal Project, this participant was already beginning to identify the ways in which other people's perceptions affected her internal processes and ways of seeing herself. This also offers support for any form of writing in the journal being a form of programme participation – the first Personal Project was not tied to ideas of the outside influences other people can have on a person's cognitions, thus this participant's recognition of this quality points to the value that participants' independent writings could offer them.

From the Personal Project 2 feedback, it was again found that all participants reported writing in their journal, even those who did not complete the task. Eighty-six entries were reported: twenty-two participants reported writing about current life (25.58%); seventeen reported writing about their feelings (19.77%); thirteen wrote about their thoughts (15.12%); eleven wrote about the future (12.79%); ten wrote about past events (11.63%); six wrote creative entries (6.98%); six wrote about ideas (6.98%); and one reported writing about "other" (1.16%), but did not indicate specifically about what she had written.

Feedback for the third task revealed that fifty-two journal entries were recorded. Unlike the previous feedback, the most common entries were those about feelings, with thirteen participants (25%) reporting writing these type of entries. The next most common entry type was about thoughts, with ten participants (19.23%) reporting these types of entries. Nine participants reported writing about current life (17.30%), seven wrote about past events (13.46%), and five wrote about the future (9.61%). Five also wrote about ideas (9.61%) and three reported writing creative entries (5.77%). No participants reported writing about "other."

Of the twelve participants who gave feedback for Personal Project 4, eleven participants reported writing thirty-six entries. The one participant who reported not writing in her journal at all was also the participant who did not complete Personal Project 4 for reasons of "high stress." This was also the first time any participant did not write in the journal at all. Entries about current life, thoughts and feelings were the most common, with seven participants (19.44%) reporting writing each kind. Entries about past events and entries about the future were the next most common, with five participants each (13.89%). Three participants reported writing creative entries (8.33%), two participants reported writing about ideas (5.56%) and no participants reported writing about other topics.

Twenty entries were reported in the Personal Project 5 feedback; entries about current life were the most common with seven participants reporting this type of entry (35%). Four participants reported writing about their feeling (20%); three wrote about past events (15%) and three (15%) about their thoughts. Entries about the future, creative entries and "other" types of entries each had one response (5%). No participants reported writing about ideas, and the participant who wrote about "other" did not indicate about what she had written.

Thirty-two entries were reported in the feedback for Personal Project 6. The most common entries were those about current life, and those about feelings, with seven participants reporting each type (21.88%). Next most common were entries about past events, and entries about thoughts, reported by five participants each (15.63%). Three

participants reported writing about the future (9.38%), two wrote about ideas (6.25%) and two (6.25%) wrote creative entries. One participant reported writing about "other" without indicating about what she had written and one participant did not report writing anything.

Overall, entries about current life were the most common, comprising 24.01% of the total three hundred and fifty-four entries reported throughout the study. The second most common type of entry was about feelings (20.34%) and entries about thoughts were the third most common type of entries (16.95%). These are not surprising findings as personal diaries are typically expected to contain entries about daily life and the writer's own thoughts about his/her life, and are often used as a means for people to "sort out [their] personal feelings" (Hiemstra, 2001, p. 21). Forty-six of the total entries (12.99%) were about past events and thirty-nine (11.02%) were about the future. The other entry types had lower numbers, with creative entries making up 6.5% of the total, entries about ideas making up 6.21% and 'other' entries making up only 1.98% of all entries.

6.5 OTHER COMMENTS

At the end of each feedback form, an open-ended item invited participants to give any other general comments they felt they would like to express. For Personal Project 1, several comments were made outlining how much participants were enjoying the journal. One participant described being apprehensive about the Personal Projects, however after completing the first one was "looking forward to the future ones." As mentioned in the Personal Project analyses, some participants had expectations of tasks before beginning them, and while most completed the tasks in spite of what they may have anticipated, there were a couple of participants who did not complete tasks based on these expectations. This participant's response therefore demonstrates a positive trend of participants attempting aspects of the programme even if they were not certain about whether they would enjoy them or whether they offered them something they deemed valuable. The comment here is also interesting as it is noted that self-help is generally more beneficial for those who are interested and invested in the self-help material and while this participant ended up enjoying her experience with the Personal Projects, her

initial trepidation might have been expected to prevent her from participating (Kingree & Ruback, 1994; Mains & Scogin, 2003). Thus, this participant's experience of initial uncertainty and then subsequent appreciation of the programme seems to be more exceptional than typical of how a person who is not convinced about self-help material might interact with it. This is also promising as it seems to show that some people who may not have an innate interest in self-help may still benefit from it if they participate in it with an open mind.

Other comments about the journal demonstrated the various values which participants felt the journal offered them. Two participants seemed to use the journal as a tool for significant introspection in their lives, with one commenting that the journal was "Really helping [her] to work through some stuff in [her] life" and another feeling that he journal was "very therapeutic." It is not known exactly in which context the second participant felt the journal was "therapeutic," however her choice of words seems to indicate that she was finding the journalling process valuable and possibly even healing, as the word "therapeutic" has curative and remedial connotations. In addition, one participant felt that the journal had already begun to make him "more self-accepting and thought-conscious." This was certainly one of the main aims of the One Wish programme, not only to introduce participants to their introspective abilities, but also to help them see, understand and appreciate themselves as complex beings in a complicated world (Drewery & Winslade, 1997). Having no leading questions in this item also suggests that the experiences described here by participants were their own personal and unmitigated feelings about the programme and the outcomes that they experienced through it. Their own descriptions of insightful and self-assuring experiences offer great support to the value of the journal.

One participant summed up quite succinctly the use and value of a journal, saying:

> *If I have a problem that I find difficult to talk about I find it very relieving to write about it in my journal. Even though there are no replies, comments, or suggestions, I find that it just helps to talk about it, get it off my chest and in a way, tell someone.*

Two other participants mentioned enjoying the freedom of letting their thoughts and feelings out, with one describing this feature of a journal as a "stress reliever." Both the cognitive theories and Narrative Therapy have been associated with the improvement of coping skills (Corey, 2005; Strongman, 2006). The cognitive theories generally attribute this ability to greater self-awareness and self-understanding and Narrative Therapy similarly believes a person who is in touch with his/her own emotional narrative is more likely to be more adept at coping (Corey, 2005; Horowitz, 1998; Strongman, 2006). This is possibly why these participants felt the journal was a valuable tool – it seems that for at least some participants, the act of writing was a means of expressing themselves that allowed them to achieve some psychological relief (Bolton et al., 2000; Esterling et al., 1999; Whitaker, 1987).

Following one of the aims of the One Wish Journal to allow participants a break from their everyday obligations, a participant who was studying a Bachelor of Science reported especially enjoying taking part in the journal and completing the Personal Project because it gave her "a break from all the scientific work that [she has] to do for varsity."

A potential downfall, however, may be seen in one participant's apology for not completing this first task. She expressed that she "felt bad" that she had not done the task. The journal and Personal Projects were intended to be enjoyable and enhance the lives of participants; an apology could mean that the programme had become a burden or an additional source of stress for this participant. However, the apology could also be related to the participant's own feeling that she would have liked to have done the task and simply could not manage the time to do so.

For Personal Project 2, general feedback from a few participants revealed that the journal allowed them an avenue to investigate themselves and their thoughts in a more meaningful way, seeming to meet the intentions of the One Wish programme. Another participant also commented that she "really enjoy[ed] reading back over [her] entries of the previous weeks." While Personal Project 6 specifically asked participants to do this, this was the only comment indicating that a participant read over his/her own writing. It

is possible that other participants did read back over what they had previously written, but did not make specific mention of it; however of particular note here is the participant's enjoyment of re-reading her writing. She did not give further detail as to why she enjoyed this activity, however the pleasure she took from it seems to be a positive indication. It could be that this participant learnt more about herself through re-reading her older entries; it is also possible that she simply enjoyed re-experiencing things through her own written accounts.

Another interesting response came from a participant who stated that she was enjoying the journal "far more than I thought I would! Far more space for openness than in a blog." Here again is an example of a participant having a more pleasant experience than expected, which again lends support to the idea that although those who have a more innately positive attitude to self-help materials are more likely to benefit from them, those who are open-minded enough to attempt participation in self-help can also experience benefits.

This was also the first time a participant mentioned the use of a blog. The use of a blog is a topic which in itself inspires much research. One study investigated the motivations behind people blogging and although they found numerous reasons behind this action, including people wanting to document their lives and the cathartic "outlet for thoughts and feelings" (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht & Swartz, 2004, p. 44), certain limitations of blogging were identified. In their article, the researchers discuss one particular participant in their study who took down his blog and stopped writing at all for a period after accidentally offending one of his friends through his blog (Nardi et al., 2004). This points to one of the significant obstacles facing bloggers – the necessity to always keep an audience in mind and censor at least part of what they would like to write because of the nature of access to one's writing that exists on the Internet (Nardi et al., 2004). Following this, it is then not that surprising that a person who has been a blogger would find a journal a freer environment to express him/herself. It is note-worthy however, that the participant herself seemed quite surprised by this finding. It seems possible that in the technology-driven world in which we live today, people have somewhat lost touch with

the art of writing and many bloggers would therefore not write or keep a journal in the consistent manner typical of blogging. Since this participant enjoyed writing in a journal, after apparently having experience of also keeping a blog, it is possible that other bloggers might also enjoy the experience of writing in a more private venue.

As with the first task, there was one participant who apologised for not completing the task and not writing more in her journal. She further stated that she "resolve[d] to force [her]self to write in the journal and complete the tasks." The participant's true experience of the journal programme is difficult to interpret from this comment, as the word "resolve" would seem to indicate self-motivation and a personal feeling of commitment, such as that connected to a New Year's resolution, however the word "force" has negative connotations of coercion and unwanted pressure. If the participant felt that she needed to 'force' herself to take part, it is difficult to understand why she would want to take part or continue to do so. On the other hand, it is possible that this participant is a perfectionist and therefore holds high standards for herself, demanding excellence from herself in everything she attempts. If this is the case, her expression may be an indication that her apology was centred more in her own desire to write more and complete the tasks, however it cannot be known for certain if her comment was based in her own standards for herself or a sense of guilt because she was in a research condition that was being monitored.

A more straight-forward response came from a participant who mentioned that she would have liked to have dedicated more time to the task but could not due to "varsity pressures." Another participant mentioned that while she found the journal very useful it was difficult for her to accommodate it in her life because of time limitations, however she adds that it is "really worth it if you do [make the time for it]." This again illustrates the hypothesis that people's everyday obligations often limit them from things they might like to do and that active scheduling is often necessary in order for people to address the things they would like to do. These comments also point to the difficulty in interpreting some responses when the explicit motivations behind them are not clear. The participant who felt she needed to 'force' herself to participate more actively may seem like she was

giving herself a harsh dictation, however this may be her way of expressing the same sentiment as the participant above who felt strongly about the value of the journal when time was made for it. Thus, different participants' reactions, and different interpretations of their comments, sometimes make it difficult to understand a respondent's actual experience and feelings behind their comments.

There were no remarkable general comments made about Personal Project 3. This task seems to have been the most enjoyable as the comments here were all about how much participants had enjoyed completing this project.

Additional comments for Personal Project 4 generally seemed to indicate the degree to which people were engaging with the task and the journal programme as a whole. One participant described how much she was enjoying and learning from the journal, remarking that she had come to realisations about things she did and did not like about herself, her life and the people in her life. However, she did not leave it at just recognising these negative and positive qualities, she also described how using the journal was helping her "realise how to change the things [she didn't] like." She then went into a lengthy description of how writing down her thoughts and feelings allowed her to come to a better understanding of how and what she really thought – she admitted that when she usually thought about her thoughts and feelings she would censor certain thoughts from herself, and justify others in order to convince herself that she did not feel a certain way about things. However, the act of writing, she found, revealed to her what she "truly felt" and opened her eyes as to how she could change the things she would like to change and maintain the things with which she was already satisfied. This comment was very in-depth and honest and seems to show that the participant had found real and substantial value in the journal. It also seems likely that because she was so honest in her feedback, she was also probably being honest with herself in what she was writing in her journal. Her comments also suggest that she was open to learning more about herself. These things combined point to a likelihood that this participant was using the One Wish programme to investigate herself in a deep and meaningful way and using the process to make changes in her life.

This seems to demonstrate a deep engagement with her own writing and cognitive processes. The considerable amount of work she describes doing to understand herself and stop avoiding some thoughts that may not be comfortable fits with both the cognitive theories' and Narrative Therapy's belief that people can learn more about themselves to effect significant changes in their lives (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Tucker-Ladd, 2006). The outcomes of her effort seem to demonstrate the results which cognitive theories propose can occur when people practise psychological exercises as homework – this participant actively worked to understand more about herself and through this process experienced significant introspective gains (Kazantzis, 2005). Self-reflection and insight have been linked to greater personal awareness and the enhanced ability to make changes in one's life, which seems to be exactly what this participant experienced (Horowitz, 1998). The clear perspective which this participant seemed to have gained demonstrated internal learning and a deeply considered negotiation of her narrative – she stated that she felt capable of not only making changes in her life, but also of differentiating which things should and should not be changed, showing a substantial grasp of personal investigation, analysis and knowledge (Monk, 1997).

For the feedback for Personal Project 5, only one participant gave an additional comment, saying that the journal made him feel "more motivated to be [his] better self." This is a significant comment as it indicates that for this participant, the journal was a source of encouragement for him to attain self-improvement. The cognitive approaches believe people can improve themselves and work to aid them in their efforts, which seem to have been successful in the case of this participant (Teasdale, 1997; Turner, 1993).

After Personal Project 6, participants generally had positive and diverse things to say. One participant described how beneficial she found it to write things down, mentioning that sometimes she even preferred it to talking to friends about what was on her mind, as it gave her the time and space to think of things in her own way. Interacting with other people always means interacting with their discourses; it is possible that this participant discovered the greater freedom she could have when expressing herself in a venue in which no-one else's discourse could actively intervene (Freedman & Combs, 1996). This

is also an interesting finding as it is possible that some participants were not fully aware of the role that other people and society's discourses play on them and could therefore have come to experience a freer exploration of their thoughts and themselves through the use of the journal. It is also possible that this participant's response is an indication of her discovery of the benefits of writing – many participants who had not written before seemed quite surprised and the value and enjoyment they took from the writing process and it possible that this participant was experiencing elements of this feeling.

Another participant described having greater insight into herself, the way she viewed her life and her problem-solving behaviours. The attainment of personal insight was one of the main intentions of the One Wish programme. It is therefore positive that this participant experienced this achievement and experienced it to the extent that she could see and understand it within herself and express it outwardly, especially in her own words. As seen throughout these analyses, participants did not necessarily require the precise jargon to adequately explain their experiences of the programme and their feelings about it. However, since participants were never directly asked about their introspective gains, it offers the study significant support that without prompting participants would specifically mention qualities such as insight and their attainment of it within their lives through the process of the One Wish Journal.

A third response, demonstrating again the different ways in which the same thing can affect people in different ways, came from a participant who described re-discovering his enjoyment of writing and appreciation for the written word, especially poetry. This participant in fact went back and redid the Personal Projects, "reinterpret[ing] the tasks into poetry." Having completed the tasks, this participant still felt he would benefit from re-doing them, but in a way that was wholly from his own perspective. The freedom of expression and exploration of thoughts and feelings offered by creative writing may have been the spur behind this participant's re-interpretation of the tasks and if this were the case, he stood to benefit from not only re-experiencing the tasks but from the different viewpoint of his poetry (Barker, 1985; Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987). This response seems to show a deep level of personal engagement with the journal.

When asked if they would like to share some of what they written in their last Personal Project, most participants felt that their writing was too personal to share. While the additional information would have been valuable for analytical purposes, participants writing in a personal way and feeling that what they had written was something they wanted to keep to themselves is positive. It suggests that these participants took the journal and the One Wish programme in general seriously and invested themselves in it to the degree that their final products were journals that were personal and meaningful, rather than simply a project in which they impassively took part.

One of the participants who did not share what he had written for the task did share some of his experience of the task, feeling that he had "realised [his] potential." This is another powerful response as it indicates that the participant reached a point of self-actualisation within his life. While it cannot be proven whether these feelings of success and accomplishment were solely an effect of the journal programme, this participant mentioned several times throughout the feedback forms how much the tasks and journal itself reminded him of who he wanted to be and encouraged him to be the person he really felt he was. It is therefore highly likely that the One Wish programme played at least a part in this participant's introspective achievements.

A number of significant ideas and themes emerged from these comments. Many of the ideas covered in these comments are similar to those brought up throughout the rest of the feedback for the Personal Projects, although a number of them seem to be more developed. It may be because participants were free to comment on anything in this section that quite specific comments were made, which assists in understanding what participants' experiences were from their own points of view. This trend continued in the overall journal feedback where many of these same themes appeared.

6.6 OVERALL JOURNAL FEEDBACK

The feedback questionnaire distributed after Personal Project 6 asked additional questions of participants in order to assess their overall experience of the One Wish programme.

6.6.1 Motivation behind writing in journal

Participants were asked in a closed-ended question whether they were motivated to write in their journals. For those who responded 'yes' there was an open-ended item asking them to explain what motivated them. Nine participants of the twelve who gave feedback for Personal Project 6 (75%) responded that they had been motivated to write in the journal; one (8.33%) responded that she had not been and two participants (16.66%) did not respond.

A number of factors were given as the reasons behind participants feeling motivated to write in their journals. Two comments stand out as highlighting the sense of freedom that some experienced from writing in a journal. While one expressed this idea saying that she "looked forward [to writing] without being corrected or remarked upon," the other felt that the journal met her need "to share with someone who won't respond in criticism or encouragement." This sentiment was also expressed by another participant, although her feelings did not seem as strong as the former two; this participant described appreciating the journal as an "alternative place and means of expressing [her feelings]." As discussed earlier, a journal can be a much freer form of expression than others, such as blogging, because of the private nature of a journal as a location for writing that is intended to be accessed only by the writer. This also lends support to the programme's notion that the journals should stay in the possession of the participants throughout and after the study. It does seem likely that had participants been required to submit their journals at any point, they possibly would not have written as much or as candidly as it seems some did.

It is also interesting that these participants cherished the lack of feedback about the journal. At various points throughout the programme, some participants mentioned that they would have liked greater interaction from the researcher or a form of guidance or response in reaction to their writing; in contrast the participants described above found the privacy and isolation of their writing to be a positive element. It seems that these participants appreciated a venue to relieve themselves of their thoughts without assessment. Of particular interest is the second participant's response, as she wanted neither positive nor negative feedback. While it could be expected that people would not

want negative comments to be made about their thoughts and feelings, the fact that this participant felt comforted knowing that she would not be receiving any form of feedback signals her use of the journal as a 'sounding board' of sorts – it seems that this participant used her journal as a means to release her thoughts and feelings in a way that she felt that was safe and personal. A striking idea emerges from this feedback about the use of the journal, which is that even though participants may have friends and family with whom they can openly talk about themselves and their lives, for many, there is still a need for expression of their thoughts and feelings in a venue free of other people's associated meanings and evaluations. For these participants it seems that the journal served as this assessment-free setting. Privacy and a venue for free expression therefore make sense as motivations that would have prompted participants to continue with their journals.

Two other participants mentioned the "cathartic effect" they experienced from the journal programme. It is possible that these feelings emerged as a result of the above-mentioned trend of participants sharing their thoughts and feelings freely and without fear of criticism or remark. Although the participants who mentioned having the cathartic experiences were not the same as those discussed above, it is possible that they experienced a similar freedom of expression and exploration of their inner workings, leading to their feeling of emotional release. One of these participants commented on his appreciation of being able to "get it all out on paper" – this seems to be a clear indication of the relief some people experience through writing emotionally-laden material feelings (Bolton et al., 2000; Esterling et al., 1999; Whitaker, 1987). This participant also described the sense of peace he experienced when he reflected on what he had written. This could be seen as a powerful motivator, as many participants mentioned the busy and stressful lifestyles they felt they were leading throughout the journal programme, thus this participant's sense of peace through use of his journal seems likely to have acted as a spur to continue participation in the programme. It is important to note however that although some participants may have purged themselves of thoughts and feelings, leaving themselves feeling relieved, this action did not necessarily lead them to greater insight. Emotional relief and insight are not synonymous although it is possible that this effect enhanced participants' feelings of well-being (Grant et al., 2002).

One participant mentioned that she had never "been able to actually keep up a journal," but used the One Wish programme as an opportunity to see her own journal through to the end of the study. In this case it seems that the journal being part of a larger programme with which the participant had contact was a key factor in her maintaining her use of the journal.

Another participant described keeping her journal with her at all times in order to "capture" any experience or sensation she found striking. For this participant, the journal as a book of records and way of making her more aware and appreciative of her surroundings seems to have been a key motivation in her continued journal use. It also seems that this participant was using her writing as a means of aiding her memory of things she felt were significant, as well as possibly re-experiencing these things. These ideas are indicated by her use of the word "capture" which has connotations of a desire to preserve certain experiences.

6.6.2 Overall enjoyment of journal

A closed-ended item asked participants whether or not they enjoyed the journal overall. For both options there were then open-ended items for them to expand on their assessment. Nine participants (75%) reported that they had enjoyed the programme; one participant (8.33%) reported not enjoying the journal and two participants (16.66%) did not respond.

One of the participants who reported enjoying the journal described how he appreciated being able to express both positive and negative emotions in a way that allowed him to deal with events and his reaction to them. He described this as "capturing" his feelings. In the case of this participant, his use of the word connotes a process of becoming more in control of his emotions, as he went on to say that instead of reacting with anger or aggression towards people in moments of anger and frustration, he rather expressed these things in his journal, which gave him relief at the time and reflection when he returned to read what he had written. His experience of "capturing" therefore seems to show that he

used his writing as a means of learning about the way he reacted to certain situations, becoming more aware of these reactions and then changing them as he saw necessary.

Another interesting response came from a participant who described how it was "fun to try and think positively." For this participant, and possibly for others, thinking positively was something of a challenge; however where some participants may have regarded this challenge as a difficulty, this participant apparently enjoyed the feat. The rest of her comment goes on to describe how much she enjoyed the journal programme, and how intrigued she was by some of the ideas and suggestions behind certain aspects. This participant also called the journal an "exercise of the mind." She seemed to regard the journal as a novel challenge with which she could engage in order to give herself a new experience.

Achieving one of the aims of the One Wish programme, a few participants mentioned that making time for themselves and writing their thoughts down were enjoyable elements of the programme. Some participants seemed to latch quite readily onto this concept of the journal – as a portal to the time and space people often do not make for themselves in a busy world. One participant specifically mentioned having a very positive experience as a result of "making time to focus on [her]self," while another noted that the journal "forced [her] to take some time out for [her]self." While the sentiment is similar for these two participants, it is interesting that the second participant felt that she had to "force" herself to make time for herself. This demonstrates the degree to which people can be caught up in the 'musts' of life, that an interval from these activities would require them to actively compel themselves away from their obligations. The impression given here is that even something which this participant would have liked to have done for herself had to be enforced in some way, otherwise she would not have made the time or taken the effort. Since this comment followed the participant's response that she did enjoy the journal, it seems that she appreciated the shift away from daily obligations and added that the journal "gave [her] time to reflect on things [she had] been thinking about."

In the same vein, another participant described how much she enjoyed being pushed to think creatively, further explaining that the journal allowed her to "escape [her] science degree for a few minutes a week." It is significant that this participant not only felt the journal offered her an "escape," which is associated with ideas of a breakaway and freedom, but also that she mentioned it only took "a few minutes of a week." It seems that this participant achieved a balance with the journal, feeling that the programme allowed her to remove herself from the obligatory part of her life for a brief period in order to give herself a break, without consuming so much of her time that it interfered with her studies. The One Wish programme was not designed to be time-consuming, encouraging participants to allot only a small portion of their time to it. This participant's experience and description of the journal seem to show that this was achieved, at least by some participants.

Another participant described the sense of ease and relaxation she experienced as a result of participating in the journal. As mentioned above, the positive experiences participants reported experiencing with the journal do not necessarily mean that they attained the precise goals set out by the programme, however feelings of greater ease and peace do seem promising on an individual level of assessment of well-being.

The participant who reported not enjoying the journal is the same participant who mentioned having difficulty with Personal Project 6 because of the way it reminded her of her life's difficulties since the death of her mother. This participant felt that the journal made her "confront things." It seems that the journal programme was an uncomfortable experience for this participant and that it either was not suited to her on a basic personal level or that it was not the appropriate material for her to be using at this point in her life. While the One Wish programme aimed to have people spend more time thinking about themselves and the ways in which they think, it was clearly set out as a voluntary programme into which participants entered for their own reasons. Participants were also informed that they could leave the study at any point. Had this participant experienced severe discomfort to the point that something about the programme was traumatic for her, it seems likely that she would not have continued with it. The fact that she took part in

the journal seems to convey that initially she felt it held some value or interest for her, however her responses seem to indicate that she was either not ready for the type of experience which the journal offered her, or that the journal was incompatible with her and her needs at a point in her life when she was coping with a very important life change. It is, however, interesting that in the overall feedback about the Personal Projects this participant described the tasks as a whole as enjoyable and felt that they helped her to structure her thoughts about herself.

6.6.3 Experience of keeping a journal

To investigate participants' experiences of keeping a journal, they were asked whether they had kept a journal before and whether they intended to continue writing after the One Wish programme. These questions were asked in a closed-ended format. An open-ended item asked participants if the One Wish Journal had changed their feelings about writing and was followed by another open-ended item for additional comments on any of the preceding questions about the journal-keeping experience.

When asked if they intended to continue keeping a journal after the study, seven participants (58.33%) responded "yes", four of whom had not kept a journal before; three of whom had. One participant (8.33%) responded "maybe;" two (16.66%) responded that they would not continue keeping a journal and two (16.66%) did not respond to this item. This may be seen as a positive result as it suggests that the majority of people who completed the journal programme intended to continue writing. It is also positive that more than half of those who had never kept a journal before seemed motivated to continue – this would seem to indicate that those who had not journalled before enjoyed and found value in at least some aspects of the One Wish programme, which compelled them to want to continue with the new habit of writing.

Two participants who had not kept a journal before the programme reported not intending to carry on writing in their journals after the programme ended. One of the participants was the participant who had recently lost her mother and reported not enjoying the programme. It is therefore not surprising that she felt she would not like to continue

journalling. The other participant did not give a reason behind her decision not to continue. This could be an indication that although she completed the study, she did not feel that keeping a journal was a habit which enhanced her life in a sufficiently substantial way to warrant continuing with the practice. It is also possible that although she took part in the programme, she preferred the elements that were part of the One Wish programme itself, that is, the Personal Projects, creativity tips and suggestions, and did not want to continuing writing in a simple journal format.

Another participant who had not kept a journal before responded "maybe" – this participant possibly enjoyed part of the One Wish programme but was not sure whether she would actually continue writing when she was no longer involved with the programme which prompted her to write at regular intervals. This seems like a realistic response, as it indicates that this participant had some intentions of writing but did not know if her intentions were sufficient to continue the practice of journal writing once the programme guidelines were removed.

When asked if the One Wish Journal had changed participants' feelings about writing, five participants (41.67%) responded that it had, three (25%) responded that it had not and four (33.33%) participants did not respond to this item. The experience of those participants whose feelings about writing had been changed ranged from those who were pleasantly surprised to those who thoroughly enjoyed the journal and the entire process of the One Wish programme. Participants described discovering that they enjoyed writing and how beneficial it was for them to write down what they felt. One participant explained that she always "loved writing but never knew where to start." It was expected that some participants would have trouble beginning their writing, as many people do not feel familiar with or capable of the act, especially because introspection and creative writing are generally not exercised in academic or work environments. People may therefore feel incapable of these skills, but it was thought that simple prompts could help people rediscover these abilities within themselves, which is why the suggestions at the back of the journal were included. This participant's response seems to indicate that although she began in uncertainty, she discovered her ability to write, reinforcing her

appreciation of the medium. Although she did not give further details in her response, it seems likely that her strong feelings about writing allowed her to explore her thoughts and feelings in ways she possibly had not experienced before.

In a similar vein, another participant described how the journal prompted him to "go back to writing." He explained that while he had always enjoyed writing, he had fallen out of the habit, however since re-starting with the One Wish programme he felt he was back on track in such a secure way that he was "plan[ning] on selling [his] written work in a creative way." Thus, for this participant, the journal not only inspired him to return to a practice which he had always enjoyed, it also seemed to give him great confidence in his ability and skill at writing and fuel further ambition within him. Self-help has been associated with feelings of greater self-confidence and self-fulfilment and it seems that these are things which this participant may have experienced as a result of the One Wish programme (Checkoway et al., 1990; Luke et al., 1994; Watkins, 2008).

One participant described how writing regularly in her journal taught her to think before acting. She explained that she thought more carefully before she reacted to situations and chose what she would like to say with extra care. This shows that the participant had learnt about herself and her behaviour through the journal. This also demonstrates the cognitive theories' method of investigating thoughts as a means to alter behaviour (Horowitz, 1998). While the A-B-C model was briefly outlined in the contract at the front of the journals, none of the participants was coached in implementing the methods of using the theory to alter their thinking. It therefore seems that this participant learnt central principles of cognitive theory largely through her own experience with the One Wish Journal, which is significant support for the programme. The participant's response also implies that she actively applied what she learnt from the programme to her everyday life and behaviours. This also implies that, at least for some participants, the One Wish Journal had a real impact on their lives and was not simply a study in which they took part passively or without personal investment.

On the other hand, there was one participant who was unsure as to what her feelings were towards writing. She responded "Yes and no" when asked if her view of writing has changes, feeling that she was "still not 100% comfortable with it" with her writing, although she expressed her intention to "try to keep it up." This seems to be a positive trend, as there may be other people like this participant who, even if they are not entirely convinced about the use of a journal, may attempt writing and from it find some personal benefit. Whether or not this participant does continue with her journal, her openness to the experience and pushing herself to discover whether it was a habit she would like to continue outside the study means that she was engaged with her journal in her own way and using her introspective skills to assess her feelings about it.

6.6.4 Overall experience of the bookmark

An open-ended item asked participants to comment on the bookmark as they looked back on the One Wish programme as a whole. The responses here were very similar to those given throughout the study. Again, the comments showed a noticeable mention of the value of the tips on how to be positive; three comments were made about the bookmark and all three emphasized the significance and value of the tips on positive thinking. No specific mention was made about the tips to prevent negative thinking.

6.6.5 Overall experience of writing topics

A closed-ended item asked participants whether they found the suggestions of writing topics useful and an open-ended item allowed them to comment on this assessment. Asked about their overall experience with the suggestions from the back for the journal, seven participants (58.33%) reported finding the suggestions useful; three participants (25%) reported not finding the suggestions useful and two participants (16.66%) did not respond to this item.

A couple of participants mentioned using the suggestions as "starting points for topics to write on" and as prompts which assisted them when they "got stuck thinking about what to write." This was certainly one of the precise aims of the suggestions – as noted earlier, one of the participants talked about enjoying writing but not knowing how or where to

start, and it seems that a number of participants struggled with this and therefore appreciated the suggestions as a way to start on their own writing.

Some participants mentioned which suggestion had been their favourite although only a few of these went on to explain why a particular suggestion was important to them. A couple of participants mentioned the suggestion which said “My fondest memory” and remarked that they had enjoyed reminiscing about the past, specifically about good memories shared with their families. While these participants seemed to have merely had a pleasant experience through the use of the suggestions, one participant seemed to have experienced an epiphany. Commenting in this section, he wrote about coming to terms with his sexuality and sharing this with his friends and family, saying:

> *the suggestion which said: "I am" made me make peace with the fact that I can't change who I am and that those that love me will still support me.*

This is a powerful comment as it suggests that the journal served as a significant spur in this participant’s self-investigation and decision to reveal his sexuality to those around himself. It would generally be quite a leap to assume a topic suggestion would create this sort of response had the participant himself not expressed the fact that he felt the suggestion was a key factor in his coming to terms with his sexuality. However, since he was the one to make this connection, he certainly must have felt that the suggestion was part of what propelled him towards making peace with his sexual identity and deciding to share this information with the important people in his life. It is possible that he would have arrived at this point of acceptance without the journal and the suggestions, however this may have taken more time had he not been prompted to the self-exploration he had been undertaking through the journal programme. It seems that the journal was a venue in which he could explore and express his identity and sexuality in his own way and in his own terms before sharing his discoveries with those who were close to him. While the journal may not have been responsible for this participant discovering his sexuality, it certainly assisted him in his decision to embrace this aspect of himself and share it with his friends and family. It is clear therefore that this participant used the suggestions, and indeed the entire journal programme, to think intensely about himself and his life and emerge with a new understanding and acceptance of these things.

6.6.6 Creative writing tips

Participants were asked whether they had used the creativity tips with two closed-ended options; participants could then comment on their use (of lack thereof) in an open-ended comment item. Four participants (33.33%) reported using the creative writing tips, six (50%) reported not using them, with one saying that she "preferred to write [her] own way," and two participants (16.67%) did not respond to this item. Those who did use these tips felt that they helped them to write in different ways to those in which they would usually write, which one participant described as "really interesting." Another participant found the tips quite inspirational as she indicated that they encouraged her to "use more descriptive writing and metaphors." These were the only comments made about the creativity tips, suggesting that participants did not feel as strongly or deeply about these as they did about other aspects of the One Wish programme.

6.6.7 Website feedback

For participants who had used the website, there was a closed-ended item asking whether the website helped to explain the One Wish programme and its various components. There were also open-ended items for participant to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the website.

There were two participants of the final twelve (16.66%) who reported using the website, and both felt that the website helped explain things. Another participant mentioned not being able to find the website. The address was given out on a separate piece of paper, as well as being written in the cover of the journals. If participants lost the paper with the address and covered the journal when they decorated it, it is likely that they would not have been able to find the website, as it was a site through a web-designing programme that could not be easily located through a simple search via a search engine. There was however also a Facebook group (called One Wish) which also outlined the study and had a link to the website.

One of the participants who used the website described it as "very user friendly," which is positive. Had the website not been easy for people to navigate by themselves, its use

would have been limited for the study as participants would not have been able to find the information they needed or filled in forms with relative ease. However the downside of the site was that there were some technical issues which affected the submission of some questionnaires. One participant mentioned her experience with this saying that "Sometimes it didn't work, like when I was completing a survey and then it wouldn't submit it." While this would not have necessarily impacted participants' experiences of the programme, it does mean that some forms came through only partially completed and that others may not have come through at all, thus impacting the research negatively.

The website was designed as a backup form of communication for participants; however if such a website were to be used in the future, a sturdier and more reliable format would be required.

6.6.8 Personal Project preference

Participants were asked if there were any Personal Projects which they particularly liked or disliked in a closed-ended item and an open-ended item followed for participants to comment or explain their answer. Seven participants (58.33%) responded "yes" to the closed-ended item, three (25%) responded "no" and two participants (16.66%) did not respond, although one of the participants who did not respond mentioned that she did not complete any of the tasks. This participant started the programme, but only completed the initial questionnaires and the final questionnaires. However in the final feedback form, she did report writing other types of entries in the journal and using the suggestions in the back of the journal. For this particular task she commented that she had not come to receive the instructions, however she did not explain why she chose not to do any of the tasks. Her comments about her journal use seem to indicate that she took some value from the aspects of the programme she completed, however the reasons behind her inconsistent participation are not clear.

Five participants (41.67%) specified Personal Project 2 (Qualities about self and others) as their favourite. One participant valued the way that this task made her think about her family and how she "act[s] or react[s] to life." Another participant mentioned how

valuable she found Personal Project 2 in helping her to set "a concrete goal of character." A similar comment was made by a participant who enjoyed being able to see her own "strong characteristics and how [she] could change some of them or adapt some from others who I admire." Another participant described how she became more accepting of herself through this task – she explained that she learnt what she is and is not capable of and describes herself as being "less critical of [her]self." Not only do these reports support the value of this task, but it is significant that even at the end of this study, these participants seem to have kept in mind the impact that this task had on them. It seems likely that these responses indicate an initial engagement with the task that made it personally meaningful to these participants, leading to its lasting impact. This suggests that aspects of the journal may have had lasting value and effects for some participants other than immediately during and after a particular activity and this display of non-transient effects points to the potential value the programme could have on participants.

One of the above participants also mentioned enjoying Personal Project 3. Although this was not her favourite task, she enjoyed the concept of the task and the "excitement of a secret in the envelope." The somewhat more dynamic presentation and content of the first three tasks seemed to have been valued by some participants.

No specific details were given about any other task being particularly liked, although one participant commented that she preferred the earlier tasks which she felt gave her greater insight into herself and her life, while she found the last task (Reflection) "a little tedious." Personal Project 5 (Goals) also received a more negative assessment from the participant who mentioned at the time of task that she was not usually a goal-setting person and preferred to take life as it came. At the end of the study she expressed her feeling that setting goals was a limiting behaviour which she did not find beneficial.

There were, however, some participants who felt that it was the tasks altogether which were effective. One participant described the Personal Projects and journal itself as a "personal journey." Although this participant did not give details about what this meant to her specifically, the idea of a 'personal journey' implies a significant personal

experience that leaves one changed. A journey is typically thought of as an excursion from one point to another; a personal journey therefore has connotations of a person learning and changing, in some way altering who s/he is between the beginning and end of the journey. It is possible then that this participant felt that through the process of the One Wish Journal and the Personal Projects, she went through personal exploration that had meaningful results for herself. Another participant, who described the tasks as "collaborative", expressed a similar idea of the Personal Projects helping her to "build up to the person that [she is]." It seems that for this participant, the journal was a means of investigating, determining and developing her sense of self. This again suggests that the One Wish Journal had significant results for at least some participants. The appreciation for the developing and interconnected nature of the tasks also suggests that this format of the programme was coherent for at least some participants and made sense to them as they progressed through the study.

As mentioned above, the participant who was grieving for her mother during the course of the programme expressed appreciation for the Personal Projects, feeling that they helped her to structure her thoughts. This could mean that even for people who do not necessarily like the idea of writing in a journal, the Personal Projects could be an avenue for their introspective investigation.

6.6.9 Additional Comments

An open-ended item asked participants to comment on any other aspects of the journal or their experience with the programme which they felt they would like to share. Many of the themes and ideas that emerged from these comments reflect those seen in the 'Other comments' section of the Personal Projects feedback.

As mentioned, the timing of the programme was problematic and one of the participants pointed this out in the general comments, mentioning that while she enjoyed taking part in the study, she was "often too busy to write, although [she] really wanted to" because parts of the programme occurred so close to exam time. This was one of the few participants who specifically mentioned the timing of the study as interfering with her

own participation and, while it is unfortunate that this participant could not take part to the degree to which she felt she would have liked, it is positive that she explicitly mentions enjoying the study and wishing she could have been more active in it. Another participant also mentioned that she would have liked more time, although she does not specify whether this is because of the timing of the study itself or if their were other time constraints acting on her in her own daily life. She also went on to say that looking back on what she had written in the journal, both of her own volition and for the Personal Projects, was a very positive and enjoyable experience to her.

Two participants made specific mention of appreciating the journal when they went through difficult times. One participant described how using the journal allowed her to be "open and honest" with herself about what she was feeling and in turn she used what she wrote to better understand her situation and "move forward." The other participant expressed gratitude for the journal programme and described how it allowed him to channel his negative energy "into a positive one." Again, it seems that some participants actively used the programme to change their everyday lives, in some cases even using their writing as "a form of everyday therapy," which could be why some participants seemed to achieve at least a degree of insight into themselves and their lives (Strongman, 2006, p. 32).

This sense of greater self-knowledge was also shown in another participant's comment, in which she said:

> *I think this journal is helping me become a happy person – to appreciate who I am more and why I do the things I do, such as studying.*

The positive feelings expressed by this participant, as well as her assertion that she felt this change could be attributed to the journal, suggests a significant psychological gain from the programme. Optimism has been associated with positive gains and it seems that this quality was in some ways attained by this participant through her participation in the One Wish Journal (Gillham & Seligman, 1999; Seligman, 2002b). The participant's description of becoming a "happy person," attaining self-appreciation and self-understanding are benefits that have been associated with self-help and since the

participant linked the attainment of these qualities to her journal use, it seems that the journal enacted these self-help benefits for her (Checkoway et al., 1990; Luke et al., 1994; Mains & Scogin, 2003; Watkins, 2008). This type of self-knowledge may also come about when a person realises a level of insight, suggesting that this participant seemed to have had a deeply personal and meaningful experience that was psychologically valuable (Grant et al., 2002).

One participant, who had a kept a diary before, explained that in her previous diary-writing experience she would only write when experiencing negative emotions. She took the opportunity of the One Wish Journal to have a "happy journal" and through this process reflected on the necessity of accepting both the positive and negative things that happen in life. She also experienced some self-discovery through the course of the programme – she mentioned thinking of ways in which she could contribute positively to the world and acting on these thoughts with the result that she saw herself as a "considerate and generous" person, which she felt she "never knew about [her]self" until that point. Writing has been viewed as a means for people to move from self-understanding to self-discovery, with the potential to arrive at self-realisation (which may be seen as a form of insight), and this participant seems to have experienced each of these to some degree (Bolton et al., 2000; Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987; Wyngaard, 1998). Her comments point to a profound personal exploration that led her to an awareness of herself and her qualities which she felt she did not previously possess. This is also an indicator that aside from people who have never kept a journal and learn about their innate ability to write meaningfully for themselves, those who *have* used a journal/diary before but did not attain any significant psychological value can learn to use their writing in different ways and enhance their introspective skills.

In contrast to other participants who wanted more interaction with the researcher and/or more guidelines for the tasks, one participant described the tasks as "too conforming." This participant felt that she would have rather written about her own choice of content throughout the programme. She is also the participant who did not enjoy the goal-setting task and made it clear that she is not fond of strict guidelines. Her assessment could

therefore be simply about a personal choice, although there is also the possibility that because she enjoyed doing things in her own way, she was not as open to the tasks and what their deeper intentions were. She did however also call the programme a "stress reliever," so although the capacity in which she viewed and used the journal may have been different to most other participants, she did use it in a way that seemed to enhance her everyday life.

Another interesting response came from the participant who did not complete any of the tasks and only gave feedback at the very end of the study. Despite not doing the tasks, her use of the suggestions from the journal and own writings seemed to have produced results for her. This participant described going through a period of anger and sadness – although she did not expand on what triggered these emotions, she also mentioned being disappointed with herself and wanting to "lock [her]self away from the world." However, she went on to say that from the feeling of wanting to conceal herself from the world she "sat down and started writing…taking out all the pain and afterwards…[felt] very relieved." It seems that the journal was a tool for her, which she used to deal with her emotions and arrive at a different emotional place from where she was before she started writing. As with other participants, she also seemed to gain a new perspective of herself through the writing process, as she expressed the idea that from her feelings of disappointment she came to be more accepting of herself after she had written. It is also then not surprising that she ended her comment by saying that the journal was "very helpful."

These comments, in addition to her lack of participation in the more interactive aspects of the journal, suggest that this participant had different needs of the programme. It seems that the actual writing process appealed to her and this is possibly what made her initially decide to take part in the study. Like the participant mentioned above, who found the programme "conforming," it seems that this participant preferred to write her own chosen content in her own manner. While the former participant attempted the Personal Projects, this latter participant seems to have decided that she would rather focus on the aspects she found most useful for herself. Her comments indicate that she found the basic use of

the journal to be valuable in assisting her in coping with her emotions and world-view. These seemed to be the areas the participant most wanted assistance with and since she seemed to receive this from writing in the journal and using the suggestions, it could be the reason why she did not participate in other aspects of the journal, such as the Personal Projects. Despite not following most of the actual One Wish programme, this participant seems to have still experienced some of its intentions, which offers a different kind of support of the programme – people with different needs may use self-help materials in different ways and although their results may vary, the active and engaged use of the material seems likely to bring these participants at least some benefits.

Overall the qualitative feedback for the One Wish Journal was generally positive, with most participants enjoying their experiences with the programme and many finding it useful and personally valuable. Findings also suggested that for many of the participants, the programme was able to assist in improving their insight and emotional wellbeing. However these functions of the journal were complex and did not operate in the same way for all participants. The significance of these qualitative findings therefore needs to be considered in the context of the One Wish programme as a whole.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The overall aim of the One Wish Journal programme was to educate participants about certain basic psychological principles in order to enable them to effect positive changes in their ways of thinking. This knowledge was intended to impact participants' introspective skills, with the hope that it would lead to greater self-knowledge and self-appreciation, thus ultimately increasing subjective well-being and enhancing coping skills. The programme therefore aimed to provide participants with short-term benefits that would turn into long-term growth. Teaching participants to think and view their lives in different ways were the short-term goals, which were hoped to elicit long-term benefits through the maintenance and application of their new-found psychological insight and skills.

The primary aim of this research was thus to assess participants' experiences with the programme before, during and immediately after completion. More specifically, patterns of participation and the changes within and between the experimental and control groups were investigated and participants' own explanations of their experiences with the journal programme were also explored.

Self-help programmes often face a number of difficulties, especially those of attrition, unrealistic expectations and misinterpretation (Morgan & Jorm, 2009; Starker, 2009; Watkins, 2008). The obstacle of relatively high attrition rates was therefore anticipated however the degree of attrition which occurred in the study was exceptionally high. The timing of the study is very possibly one of the reasons behind this high attrition rate, as the latter part of the study occurred close to the end-of-year exams. It is not certain however if this is the reason why so many participants dropped out during the course of this research from both the experimental and control groups. Generally, participants seemed motivated to continue with the study and for the experimental group the most common reason for participants not to complete a task was because of a "lack of time." This suggests that both the attrition rate and lack of participation in the programme could have been at least partly due to participants' lifestyles and also reinforced a central tenet

of the study, namely that people often lack the time in their everyday lives for things which they might prefer to do.

For the experimental group, another potential cause of the unexpectedly high drop-out rate could have been the length of time between tasks when the programme began. It is possible that when there were two weeks between tasks participants lost interest in the programme. Although the time between tasks was subsequently changed to one week, it is still possible that general interest in the journal lapsed for some participants. Some participants may have also desired immediate gratification from the journal and this kind of unrealistic expectation could have affected participants' degree of participation (Starker, 2009). This pattern was unfortunate for the study, especially for the statistical analyses, which were compromised as a result of the small sample numbers.

The majority of participants reported enjoying the journal in the feedback questionnaires, which adds to the unsolved level of attrition. Although all participants seemed interested in the programme at the beginning of the study and feedback indicated that most participants seemed to enjoy the journal and its components, the high drop-out rates begs the question of how to maintain participation in a self-help programme. Self-help has been known to be most beneficial to those who are innately invested in the materials, so the drop-out rates could also be an indication of a lack of personal investment in the programme (Kingree & Ruback, 1994; Mains & Scogin, 2003). However, for some participants it was found that even though they were uncertain about some aspects of the journal, they continued to take part and commented about finding benefit from the programme. This suggests that innate interest in this programme was not the only factor affecting participation and that self-help could be beneficial even for those who are not inherently invested in it.

Means of contact and communication also seem likely to have affected participation. Multiple methods of communication were employed in the study, including text message notifications of new journal material, a website and Facebook group with details about and updates of the programme, as well as contact numbers for the researcher and

researcher's supervisor. The website had some reliability problems, as some forms would not submit, or would only submit partially, although there were no reported problems for participants attaining information from the website.

Further investigation was carried out to assess whether there were characteristics which would make some participants more likely to continue with the study than others, as well as whether some characteristics were linked with particular changes in the various introspective and well-being measures employed through the study. The results from these analyses illustrated the complex impact life changes can have on people however none of the results shed any additional light on the high attrition rates.

Although no significant results were found to determine what made continued participation more likely, it is clear that different participants had varying reactions to, feelings about and experiences with the journal and its components. It was expected that participants would interact with the One Wish programme in different ways, because of the nature of people to have different reactions to the same stimuli, and it is acknowledged that no single method of intervention or self-help material can work for all people (Cropley, 1967; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Participants' own responses reinforced this idea as it became clear, particularly for Personal Project 6, that people's life experiences coloured their perceptions, and in the case of this study, affected their writing. The significance of the individual's context, especially their emotional context, can therefore not be ignored or underestimated.

These vague findings may, however, have also been influenced by the nature of the sampling process used in the study. The convenience sampling method used to acquire a voluntary sample of university students may have led to certain types of people being more inclined to take part in the study. Although tests run to assess whether differences existed between those who continued to take part in the study and those who did not were inconclusive, it is possible that the sample's homogeneity in certain aspects affected these results.

For all participants, both experimental and control, the relationship between the introspective measures (engagement in self-reflection, need for self-reflection and insight) and other measures was investigated. As noted in the Literature Review (Chapter 2), insight seems to have a straight-forward monotonic link to life satisfaction and happiness, but only if its levels are very high; while the relationship between self-reflection and subjective well-being generally seems to be unpredictable (Elliot & Coker, 2008; Lyke, 2009). The relationship between insight and measures of well-being, as well as that between self-reflection and well-being are therefore complex and the correlations found between insight and the other constructs (life satisfaction, subjective happiness, positive affect and negative affect) were not strong. Despite this, the correlations did support the central tenet of the One Wish Journal that changes to a person's introspection may be linked to changes in other aspects of their lives.

Trends found in the descriptive statistics link to these findings and suggest that the One Wish Journal offered at least some benefits to participants. The descriptive statistics demonstrated slight increases in life satisfaction, subjective happiness, positive affect and a slight decrease in negative affect for the experimental group. It must be noted, however, that most of these trends were not significant. The increase in self-perceived insight was one of the few findings that was supported by comparative statistics when investigating the changes which occurred within each of the groups and was thus particularly important. In these tests, insight for the experimental group demonstrated significant increases between the first and second administrations of the questionnaires, as well as between the first and last administrations, supporting the trend indicated by the descriptive statistics and showing that levels of insight increased for the experimental group through the course of the study. Although greater sample sizes would be useful to establish the validity of this trend, this finding also fits with the experiences participants described having during the One Wish programme.

Many of the participants' explanations of their interactions with their journals reflected the introspective value they took from the programme. There were a number of comments expressing the way the journal helped participants to look into their lives in a

meaningful way and make discoveries about themselves through this process. From the very first task, responses indicated that participants were using their journals to investigate their lives, values, goals and themselves. Self-reflexive practices are not necessarily guaranteed to bring about insight (Grant et al., 2002; Lyke, 2009), however it seems that participants were motivated to use their internal investigations in such a way as to attain greater self-knowledge, and that many of them arrived at some level of insight as a result. The type of self-reflection described by participants seemed to be the self-directed and purposeful kind of introspective activity thought to be linked to insight and from participants' own responses it certainly seems as if this was their experience (Grant et al., 2002).

Aside from the participants who made specific reference to their attainment of insight, other comments demonstrated the self-confidence, self-understanding and self-knowledge which some participants achieved through the programme. Participants mentioned learning more about themselves, about the way that they think and react; and about their goals and direction in life. A number of responses seemed to clearly show a dynamic exploration of self, suggesting that participants were immersing themselves in an active investigation of their identities. Some participants also described their experiences of coming to see things in a different way, indicating the gaining of perspective and greater self-awareness. It seems that some of these participants had even started moving towards becoming their own audience.

These results for and comments about insight seemed promising for the overall study results and it was thought that changes in insight would elicit associated changes in the other scales with which it was correlated, however these changes were not supported statistically. Despite the relationships between insight and the other scales (life satisfaction, subjective happiness, positive affect and negative affect), the comparative tests to assess changes within the experimental group did not reveal any significant changes in the scores for the other scales. This means that although self-perceived levels of insight increased significantly between administrations, its changes did not seem to impact on the other scales to a degree which altered them significantly. This could be a

result of the weak relationships between insight and the other scales, or a feature of the small sample sizes.

It was also difficult to gauge the expected associated changes through the qualitative analyses, because participants were not asked directly about their experiences and feelings about their own insight and subjective well-being. While the comments received clearly showed positive experiences with insight and increases in this construct, subjective well-being gains were not demonstrated in the same clear fashion. It was not expected that participants' would mention their 'subjective well-being,' as this is a specific term that would more commonly be expected to be understood as 'happiness' by laypeople. One participant specifically mentioned that the journal was helping her to become a "happy person" and another described how the journal would assist her in spreading happiness. Many terms associated with subjective well-being were also encountered in participants' descriptions; and several qualities of positive affect which appear on the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule were also encountered in participants' responses, including: feelings of being inspired; the enthusiasm for aspects of the journal, as well as the things which were learnt from these; determination to achieve certain goals or change certain elements within their lives and pride in themselves and their accomplishments. Mention was also made by a participant about realising his potential through the journalling process. This suggests that steps were being taken towards self-actualisation.

Self-actualisation is associated with personal growth and fulfilment and it is thought that when people pursue their potential and move towards self-actualisation, they experience greater life satisfaction (Weiten, 2001). Although the statistical results did not show significant increases in satisfaction with life, individual responses seem to indicate that this quality was achieved by some participants. As mentioned, participants generally lacked the jargon to express some psychological ideas however trends of greater self-appreciation and comfort within their lives support the idea that some participants did experience greater life satisfaction. It is also significant that participants were not prompted in regards to the aspects being investigated in the study – this suggests that the

participants' descriptions of their experiences with the journal and subsequent achievements were genuine as the participants were describing these accomplishments from their own points of view, with their own diction and of their own volition.

In comparing results between the experimental and control groups, it was not expected that participants in the experimental group would have higher scores for negative affect and lower scores for life satisfaction, subjective happiness, positive effect, engagement in self-reflection and insight. These results, found during the first administration of questionnaires, suggest that participants who took part in the One Wish Journal were possibly lacking in some aspects and this is what made the study appealing to them and initiated their participation in the programme. If this were the case, it is also possible that some participants desired immediate outcomes to fulfil these potentially unmet needs and dropped out of the study because they did not experience the effects they desired in the time they expected these effects to occur. In the feedback for Personal Project 1, a participant made note of such a feeling, expressing her disappointment that the task had not offered her a "noticeable difference in [her] life." This may have been another factor in the attrition rate of the study, although it is difficult to ascertain, as self-help materials often face the problem of unrealistic expectations (Starker, 2009). It is also possible that participants in the experimental group who were more interested and invested in the qualities being measured may have been more aware of the way these constructs were operating in their lives and assessed them on a scale based on their desired levels rather than simply what they believed they currently were.

Whether or not these factors were operating during the course of the journal, it was also expected that the pattern of results in comparison to the control group would alter during the course of the study. As discussed, the differences found between the groups during the second administration, (the experimental group's significantly lower scores for positive affect and need for self-reflection) seemed to be linked to the life changes experienced by the experimental group during this time. It was hoped that significant differences would be found during the third administration which would demonstrate that the experimental groups scored higher on the positive measures and lower on negative

affect compared to the control group, however no significant differences were found at this time. Although the descriptive statistics showed that the experimental group had higher means for need for self-reflection, insight, life satisfaction and a lower mean for negative affect during the third administration, the comparative statistics did not establish these trends as significant. With larger sample sizes it is possible that the descriptive trends may have been translated into significant differences; it is also possible that the initial differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of these constructs masked subsequent changes.

The qualitative analyses were used to further investigate the degree to which the One Wish programme met its goals and suggested that participants clearly showed a growing grasp of some psychological ideas. Although they generally did not use the jargon typically associated with this knowledge, a few participants' descriptions of their experiences and realisations indicated a grappling with key aspects of psychological theory. These participants displayed a range of thought and behaviour which implied their awareness of psychological principles, ranging from the emotional awareness which some described as having arrived at, to a fundamental understanding of cognitive theory's A-B-C response. A few participants mentioned their growing appreciation for the way they interpreted events and how they could alter these thoughts and subsequently experience them differently as a result of this behaviour. This comprehension of the way in which personal interpretations mediate one's feelings and behaviours is a cornerstone of the theory behind the cognitive approaches (Corey, 2005; Dryden, 1990; Turner, 1993). Participants' grasp of these concepts also reinforces the notion put forward by Narrative Therapy that laypeople can effectively use psychological knowledge within their lives without necessarily having expertise within the field (Freedman & Combs, 1996). It does therefore seem that people can learn psychological principles which they can apply in their daily lives through self-help materials.

Indeed, several comments made by participants implied that they had learnt valuable ideas or lessons from the Personal Projects which they were actively using in their lives, and this sentiment seemed to be especially true of the bookmark. Throughout the study,

feedback about the bookmark indicated that it was a tool participants were actively employing in their everyday lives. Numerous comments were also made by different participants about the use of the tips on positive thinking and the significant way in which these impacted their lives. It seems that participants had no trouble understanding, appreciating and applying the ideas contained in the bookmark and this again showed their ability to learn psychological skills which they used meaningfully and to create substantial improvements in their lives, with no outside influence or assistance. Use of the bookmark was also particularly interesting because of the focus the tips on positive thinking received in comparison to the tips to dispel negative thinking. Participants seemed to be innately drawn to the more positive and preventative aspects offered to them by the bookmark, which seems to support the notion of positive and preventative psychology that people are not naturally deficient; and possibly even pointing to the intrinsically adaptive nature of people (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Ingram & Snyder, 2006). Alternatively, this may be an indication that the people who took part in the One Wish programme were innately inclined to self-development and self-improvement. The initial higher need for self-reflection for the experimental group (Md_{EIND1} = 30), compared to that of the control group (Md_{CIND1} = 27) supports the idea that those who took part in the journal programme were seeking some form of psychological growth.

Overall, the bookmark seems to have been immensely useful and valuable to participants and it in itself seems to be a valuable tool for self-help and self-improvement. The ways in which participants grappled with the meaning of the new knowledge offered by the bookmark also demonstrates the skills they were learning through the One Wish programme. Tucker-Ladd (2006) proposed that when people learn new psychological skills, they become more capable of making changes in their lives. Several participants expressed similar ideas in their own perspectives, with some detailing their new awareness of aspects of themselves they would either like to enhance or diminish and others specifically mentioning their desire to change aspects about themselves. Whether or not such changes were achieved, there was a clear pattern of participants becoming more aware of both their internal landscapes and their ability to take control of them, signifying an empowering experience, at least for some.

This awareness, together with the skills many participants learnt from the journal as a whole, seems likely to have contributed to participants' increasing levels of introspection and insight. As mentioned above, many participants described experiences and revelations which demonstrate their attainment of greater personal insight. Aside from the increased self-knowledge and self-understanding that some participants experienced, there were also reports of participants seeing themselves in new and different ways, as well as developing greater self-appreciation. These are all qualities which are linked to insight.

Many of the participants' responses seem to be rooted in their experience of the actual writing process. Participant responses supported the idea that the process of writing down one's thoughts and feelings can offer both cognitive and emotional relief, as well as greater perspective, clarity and understanding of one's experiences, thoughts, feelings, abilities and ultimately greater understanding and acceptance of self (Boud, 2001; Bolton et al., 2000; Esterling et al., 1999; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Henry & Luckenbach-Sawyers, 1987; Whitaker, 1987). The journal's safe venue of expression, with no danger of outside repercussions, offered participants a psychologically healthy outlet for these internal processes and in this way introduced them to new aspects of themselves as well as the potential benefits of writing. It seems that many participants came to the realisation that the process of writing offered them an opportunity to purge themselves of thoughts and feelings which might otherwise have remained within themselves. This could be why freedom of expression was an important theme that emerged for a number of participants. It is also for these reasons that the journals which were given out to participants remained in their possession throughout and after the study; in order to ensure that participants always felt that their writing was their own and would not be judged or given boundaries by an outside source. Knowing that an external person may read one's writing can restrict and inhibit what one writes, while the security and privacy offered by the journal allowed participants to write without these restraints (Boud, 2001). These factors could be why even those participants who kept blogs online described enjoying the liberty and lack of restriction which they felt the journal offered them. The private venue of self-expression seemed to be a valued aspect of the One Wish programme. The differences between

keeping a blog and writing in a journal, as expressed by these participants, suggested that writing meaningfully in a journal offers a different internal experience to other kinds of writing. It thus seems likely that out of the vast number of bloggers, there would be quite a few who would appreciate writing in a traditional journal.

Responses from participants to some aspects of the One Wish Journal also pointed to the diminishing role that the act of writing plays in everyday life but the potential enjoyment many may take from it. Indeed, some participants' comments pointed to the new-found appreciation they developed of the power and significance which their own written words contained. Since discourse is associated with a person's individual interaction with his/her world and understanding of his/her self, it also has connotations for his/her identity (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Freedman & Combs, 1996). The way in which participants experienced control over their writing suggests that they also experienced a free exploration of themselves, their discourses and their identities. Although only a few participants mentioned this feeling of control directly, there seemed to be a trend of participants using their writing as a means to assert their agency over their own narrative and discourse. Participants may not have used the jargon associated with these concepts however several comments indicated the increasing command participants felt they had over their thoughts, their behaviours and their lives.

It is not surprising then that participants described their experiences of writing in the journal with a range of outcomes: relief at the ability to express themselves; the solace the journal offered in private moments; the cathartic release of thoughts and emotions; even the "therapeutic" value some felt it presented. Although the One Wish Journal was not intended as a form of therapy, there were several participants who commented on the programme with language and ideas that suggested they felt it had therapeutic value for them. One participant specifically felt that writing in the journal was "very therapeutic" while a few other participants mentioned ideas of the programme helping them to "work through" issues and "get things off their chest." These notions suggest that the journal was, at least for some, a meaningful avenue of self-exploration and a means for participants to both relieve themselves of their internal workings and explore the deeper

meanings of these things. Some participants also seemed to have been working towards becoming their own audience, using their writing to look at things from different points of view and evaluating their perspectives, which is a significant aim of Narrative Therapy (Freedman & Combs, 1996). It therefore seems that the writing process was a significant factor in participants' growing introspection and insight.

The cognitive theories would attribute the general trend of greater self-understanding that emerged from the use of the journal to enhanced self-awareness (Horowitz, 1998; Lyke, 2009). Participants' own responses certainly make this theory feasible as they displayed increases in both self-awareness and self-understanding. Although it is not clear if one led to another, these trends have also been connected to greater coping skills (Horowitz, 1998). Aside from the participant who specifically mentioned the journal acting as a "stress reliever," other participants' comments about their feelings of relief and comfort suggest that the One Wish programme did assist participants with everyday coping.

However, because participants had individual experiences with the programme, not all their outcomes were the same. Participants displayed different levels of interaction with the journal – ranging from superficial interaction to active engagement and investment from which meaningful personal lessons were learnt. It is possible that some aspects of the programme even worked at a subconscious level, affecting people without their conscious awareness of it doing so. These various forms of interaction seem to have also led to different and sometimes unexpected results, such as those participants who delved further into certain tasks to incorporate them in a more personally meaningful way in their lives, for example, the participant who repeated the tasks in the form of poetry.

Besides the different ways in which participants interacted with the programme, there were also the different needs and expectations with which participants entered the study. Although there were some participants with uncertain expectations who ended up benefiting from the programme, it is possible that the journal did not fit the expectations of others. Participants also expressed their different needs in regards to the programme, specifically those who desired more guidance. Self-help materials do not typically offer

face-to-face contact between the programme developer and programme user, and while some participants may have felt that this was an area in which the programme was lacking, most participants were satisfied with the level of contact offered by the One Wish Journal. The un-met needs of participants in the study could, however, have had an impact on the effectiveness of the programme and raises the question of who should take part in such programmes.

As discussed in the Literature Review (please see Chapter 2), self-help materials have been used in conjunction with other forms of psychological interventions (Adams, 1990; Mains & Scogin, 2003; Powell, 1990; Rappaport, 1994). The One Wish Journal as it was presented in this study was aimed at people who were interested in further self-development, personal growth and improving their coping skills. It was clearly indicated to potential participants that the programme was not a form of therapy and was not advisable for people who were currently receiving or felt that they needed professional psychological assistance. The participants who felt they would have liked more guidance might have fallen under this category. The majority of the sample may be seen as representative of individuals not necessarily experiencing any major traumas or in need of deep psychological help. However, the One Wish Journal could still potentially hold benefit for those who needed greater assistance, if there were different forms of it adapted for different needs or if used in conjunction with traditional therapeutic methods by a qualified practitioner.

Some participants' expectations also played a role in the use and possibly the effects of the journal. It was found that most participants generally attempted the tasks, even if they were uncertain of their feelings about them initially. One participant chose not to complete two Personal Projects because she did not feel that she would enjoy taking part in them. As mentioned, those participants who entered into the tasks despite their misgivings typically emerged with positive results, which points to the potential benefits which might have been forgone by the participant who chose not to participate in certain aspects of the programme. On the other end of the spectrum were those participants who

felt that the instructions set out for them were absolutely rigid with no room for individual interpretation.

Another interaction obstacle which emerged was the discomfort some participants felt at re-reading what they had written. Although no particular mention of distress was expressed as a result, a couple of participants mentioned the feeling of discomfort at re-reading their previous entries. Participants were not compelled to re-read their journals until the final Personal Project, which centred on the re-reading of prior entries and reflecting upon their meaning. While some participants appreciated the final task and found significant meaning from the exercise, it is understandable that even for those participants who enjoyed writing in the journal the re-reading of entries could have been uncomfortable. Writing offered participants the opportunity to free themselves of many thoughts and feelings and while the expression of these offered relief to many participants, the re-reading could have led to re-experiencing, which may have been unpleasant for some.

The last three tasks did not seem to be as well-received as the first three. It is not certain why this pattern emerged – it may be a result of the small sample sizes, or timing issues, however it could also be the nature of the projects themselves. As mentioned in the Qualitative Analyses (please see Chapter 6), these final three tasks did not have the metaphorical elements contained in the first three tasks, which may have made them less appealing.

7.1 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

The single largest problem that the study faced was the sample size. Although it is not certain whether the significant levels of attrition were due to the timing of the study, general motivation, or other factors, the number of drop-outs from the study had a severe impact on the efficacy of the statistical analyses, making quantitative conclusions difficult to substantiate. It would therefore be very valuable to assess the reasons behind this pattern of attrition.

The use of non-probability convenient sampling methods means that the sample used in this study may not have been representative of the populations from which they were drawn however, for the purposes of the study, it was necessary for participants to be interested in the journal programme and to volunteer their participation. For these reasons, convenient sampling methods were the most appropriate for this study despite their limitations.

Another issue does however arise as a result of the lack of random assignment between the groups, specifically when looking at possible selection bias which could have impacted on the quantitative results (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 2005). Another common problem when working with non-equivalent groups is the initial differences between the groups which could mask the effects of the programme.

University students, with multiple deadlines and obligations, were expected to experience "typical" stress levels that the average person experiences in his/her everyday life and in this way be representative of an average person who might use and benefit from the One Wish programme. However, all participants being current university students and their similar age bracket may have affected the results, as well as the generalisability of the study. Another reason why this sample may not have been representative of people who would typically take part in self-help is the journal's setting within a research study. Self-help has a mixed reputation, with some feeling that it can offer users benefits and others being sceptical about its use or value (Rappaport, 1994; Powell, 1990). The position of the journal in a formal research programme may have offered it a greater level of legitimacy to people who might otherwise not have been inclined to take part.

The generalisability of the programme is also limited by literacy issues. The written format of the programme means that it is only suitable for those who can read and write, which excludes a large portion of the South African population. The programme is also only currently available in English. In this study, most participants spoke English as their first language (72.22%), however there were a number of other languages spoken as first home languages. Although no mention was made throughout the study of participants not

understanding any aspects of the journal, this may not be the case for the rest of the South African population, for whom it may be appropriate to have different versions of the programme available in different languages.

Although qualitative data is a rich source of information that can offer insight into different areas that quantitative analyses might not cover, it is also associated with its own set of difficulties. Qualitative analysis by its nature is interpretive; the researcher is positioned as the interpreter who makes sense of the diction used (Fossey et al., 2002; Lyons, 2007; Murray, 2006). This is a process based in unpacking the connotations and meanings of other people's discourse and because of this cannot avoid being, at least to some degree, subjective. Certain words might not have the same meaning for one person that they do for another, while two people might describe the same feelings or experiences in two very different ways. This makes the comparison of qualitative terms very challenging, and ultimately, imprecise (Brewerton & Millward, 2001). Grouping connected ideas together and identifying themes presents a similar problem, as the personalised way people have of expressing themselves may not immediately present itself as related to other people's ideas, which might be expressed very differently. Picking apart the meaning of people's words and ideas is thus a finicky process, which may not always result in the correct interpretation. However, the effort made in this analysis to assess a participant's words from his/her own perspective attempted to ensure that his/her kernel of meaning was kept intact.

Participants' commitment to the programme also presented some problems. While many participants seem to have struck a balance between the journal and their everyday lives, a few comments made throughout the programme suggest that some participants felt obliged to participate. There were no negative experiences expressed specifically linked to a feeling of obligation however the programme was voluntary and it possibly would not have served participants if they were taking part because they felt that they had to.

The difficulty of misinterpretation is also often faced by self-help materials, and this problem also presented itself during the study (Morgan & Jorm, 2009; Watkins, 2008).

Generally there seemed to be very few problems of participants not understanding instructions or explanations. The bookmark in particular demonstrated positive signs of participants understanding guidelines without any external mediation. Most participants reported positive outcomes from the bookmark and seemed to have no trouble understanding and applying its ideas in their lives. However for the Personal Projects, some participants did not follow the instructions given to them correctly or they misinterpreted what the instructions meant.

Further complications arose from some participants who misinterpreted the *intention* of some of the Personal Projects. There was one participant in particular who demonstrated this type of misinterpretation of the tasks and opted to not perform the Personal Projects that she felt did not appeal to her. For participants such as this one, their experience with the programme may have been limited as a result of their incomplete grasp of some aspects of the journal.

A strength of the study was the developing nature of the tasks and the way a number of participants understood this progression and followed it, allowing their own thoughts and writing to advance along with the programme. This suggests that the order and content of the tasks built on one another, as intended, and was intrinsically sensible to participants.

Through the study it also became clear that many participants internalised principles of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and Narrative Therapy, as well as how to apply them to their daily lives. This is a significant strength of the study as it supports the notion that generally people can learn meaningfully from self-help materials, and specifically that participants learnt some psychological lessons from the One Wish Journal.

Linked to these findings was the usefulness of the bookmark. The bookmark was found to be a particularly effective element of the One Wish programme, evaluated as useful and valuable to those who employed it. It also seems that for all those who used it, some psychological benefit was taken. Some of the specific responses about the bookmark illustrated the attainments of aspects of insight that some participants experienced. Its use

as an everyday tool also reinforced the ease with which participants used the bookmark and the seemingly effortless way in which it fitted into participants' daily lives.

Overall, the study also seemed to contribute to participants' personal growth and development, with most participants' describing their self-awareness and self-appreciation which enhanced as the study progressed. From many participants there was a sense of attainment of self-knowledge which was not previously possessed. The experience of the One Wish Journal also seemed to open participants' eyes to their lives from a new perspective, which had valuable repercussions, most notably for the participant who described coming to terms with his sexuality. The personal insight gained through the programme demonstrated the natural human inclination to adaptation and the ways in which people instinctively strive to improve themselves – participants discovered their own resources as well as learnt new skills as they progressed through the study (Seligman, 2002b; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

It was also significant to find that different participants had similar experiences through different aspects of the One Wish Programme. The journal programme was designed with multiple facets in an attempt to facilitate varying opportunities for different participants to attain benefits. A clear example of this can be seen in the two participants who used the term "rethink" to explain their experiences with the journal – one participant described learning this reflexive practice during Personal Project 6, while the other used this word in connection to her use of the bookmark. Since different aspects of the journal elicited similar experiences from different participants, it does seem that the programme made strides in combining different facets to maximise the potential gain for a wide variety of people, in that if participants did not find one aspect particularly empowering or useful, there was another aspect that might have helped them to achieve the same outcome through a different format.

Different participants having similar experiences with different aspects of the journal also seemed to indicate that the journal was successful in using different methods to engage participants and aid them in their introspective journeys. However, like other studies in

this area, and despite all attempts to the contrary, positive trends emerged, but with limited proof. Although evidence suggested that the programme was useful, the findings were not supported strongly empirically, due at least in part to sampling concerns. Therefore, even the positive findings must be treated with caution in terms of larger application.

7.2 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The prolific but generally poorly investigated amount of self-help available is one of the greatest difficulties facing this method of self-enhancement. It is important to keep in mind that this field is an immense and constantly growing one and people do use and will continue to use self-help materials. It therefore seems that a system of ranking or evaluating these materials should be developed in order to ascertain their fundamental effectiveness. The excessive number of materials available precludes a full evaluation of all of them however a system could be developed to identify self-help products that seem to offer legitimate potential benefits and should therefore be evaluated. Alternatively, a series of self-help materials could be formally developed and tested by psychological professionals to offer participants materials that are substantially more likely to be beneficial.

The issue of attrition is a highly significant one to be addressed in future studies of this nature, and, in the case of the One Wish Journal, this may be done by planning the timing of the programme to avoid overlapping with particularly demanding or stressful periods in the lives of participants. Efforts should also be made to secure larger samples. Since the exact reasons behind the high levels of attrition are not known, maintaining sample sizes may be assisted by explicitly explaining: the time and effort required for participants to expend in order to attain results; that effects cannot be achieved immediately and that the programme is not an ‘all-purpose solution’ that will solve all problems. A concerted effort should also be made to stress to participants what they can expect from the programme and the amount of contact which will be available to them. Although many of these elements were laid out in the current study, it seems that for some participants it would be beneficial to have these aspects explained in greater detail

in order to ensure that participants' have more precise expectations of the programme. These minutiae may be redundant for some participants however if all participants are given a clear image of what to expect from their participation experience, those who feel that the programme does not comfortably fit with their expectations or desires may decide not to take part, and hopefully those for whom the programme still holds appeal will participate throughout the study. Ideally these preconditions would maintain participation levels and ensure that the programme is appropriate for potential participants.

To find out for whom the programme is most useful, personality aspects, motivation, self-awareness and other factors that may contribute to the greater likelihood to continue participation should be investigated. Tests which ascertain personality aspects and other characteristics that make people more susceptible to self-help in general, and this programme in particular, could improve the generalisability of the One Wish Journal. This may also assist in maintaining participation throughout the study.

It may also be useful to ask participants about their motivation before and during the programme. When participants begin the study, they could be asked about their reasons for agreeing to take part and their interest in the study. In the subsequent feedback questionnaires, items could be added to ask what had encouraged participants to continue with the journal at each point. Knowing for whom certain aspects of the journal programme are most effective could help to improve the programme and add to knowledge about who is assisted under what circumstances. These added items could also be used to assess participants' level of engagement with the tasks and other components of the journal. Investigating what influences participants' engagement could supply useful information about the nature of the journal and its components, as well as potentially pointing as to why some people may engage more with certain elements than others. Participants' personality characteristics could again be explored in this respect to determine whether there are links between personality traits and levels of motivation and engagement in the journal.

An assessment or similar procedure which assesses whether potential participants would be served by the programme could help sift through these elements and enhance the suitability of the programme for these participants. Ideally, the questionnaire should establish the appropriateness of the material for potential participants as an effort to ensure that the people at whom the programme is aimed can benefit from it, while those who have other needs which the programme may not meet can be advised away from this material, and possibly even given advice as to alternative interventions or methods which would be more suitable for them. Psychological mindedness, in particular, also seems to be a significant factor which might be related to the use and effectiveness of self-help materials. Investigations should therefore be undertaken to assess the relationship between this construct and the effectiveness of self-help materials. If a significant link emerges between the two, an assessment of psychological mindedness may be an efficient way to determine who should take part in the programme.

Since any single material or intervention cannot meet the needs of all those who take part in it, different versions of the programme could be adapted and the initial assessment could help determine which version of the programme would best suit each participant. For example, for those participants who require or simply prefer to have greater contact, the journal could be adapted to be a homework exercise of a more formal therapeutic intervention run by a professional psychologist who could monitor participants' use of the journal.

As a part of the further disambiguation of the programme future research should also remind participants at each point in the study that all participation is voluntary and the programme should not interfere with their everyday lives in any way. This should hopefully help avoid participants feeling obliged to take part in any or all aspects of the study.

The nature of the task instructions and how much participants are told about the precise intentions of Personal Projects should also be evaluated. Some participants wanted to deviate from some task instruction but felt that they could not. While it was preferable for

participants to follow the instructions in order to attempt fulfilling the tasks' aims, the adding or altering of some aspects could have assisted some participants in asserting their agency within their journals. To attempt to solve these problems, in the future the contract in the front of the journal could stress to participants that all aspects of the journal were designed with specific intentions and that efforts should therefore be made to complete all components, as well as emphasizing the flexibility of the tasks. As long as the fundamental core of the Personal Project is attempted, it should be highlighted to participants that they are free to adapt the task to their own preferences. Task instructions could convey to participants what the intentions of each task are. Participants could then be reminded that as long as the key functions of the task were achieved they could add or change elements to personalise their experience. Although this might assist participants in exploring the Personal Projects in their own personal ways, it also has the potential to interfere with the way in which participants interact with the tasks. It also removes interpretive and inductive aspects of the tasks, which could be detrimental to the nature of the tasks. Alternatively, these intended outcomes could be distributed to participants in separate envelopes with each task. If these envelopes were then opened once a Personal Project had been completed, participants could compare what they had written in answer to the task with the task's intentions. This would give participants the opportunity to attempt the task in their own manner, and then assess how their interpretation fitted with the task's intentions. It may also encourage more self-reflection.

Communication was a vital component of this study, especially in terms of offering participants multiple methods of being informed and kept up to date about the programme. Thus means of communication must be expanded and improved in future research – a more robust website should be designed and contemporary trends of social networking should be used to their maximum. Methods of social networking develop and change rapidly, thus if the study were conducted again, all current methods of social communication should be employed to enhance the communication abilities of the programme.

The bookmark was a very important and successful element of the One Wish programme whose effects could be further probed. The bookmark was used effectively in conjunction with the journal and was received very positively by participants. No issues of misinterpretations or difficulty in following the instructions emerged and almost all the participants who commented on their use of the bookmark reported positive experiences. This is an aspect of the programme that also seemed to be a useful teaching tool, as most participants who used the bookmark described their experiences of coming to understand the tips given on the bookmark and actively employing them in their daily lives. While the bookmark worked well within the confines of the study, there also seems potential for it to be used as a stand-alone mechanism. This function could be investigated further to examine the effects the bookmark may hold as its own self-administered material.

The way participants focused on the positive thinking aide of the bookmark also points to the possibility that human beings are more innately adaptive than generally thought to be. This should be investigated further to establish this trend, and also to ensure that those who function in this way (as opposed to those who may function in line with the deficiency model) are adequately served by the field.

Since the last three tasks were not as well received as the first three, it would be useful to adapt these final Personal Projects and see if their effectiveness is altered when they are presented in a way that is more similar to that of the first three Personal Projects. The final Personal Project, in particular, may benefit from offering participants a choice of activities. While some participants benefited from the last task, some found it unappealing. Having an alternative to this task could allow those who would have benefited from re-reading and reflecting on their writing to experience the task in its current form, while those to whom it does not appeal could choose the other option and hopefully receive similar benefits, without the discomfort arising from their re-reading. However, the achievement of insight is often linked to re-reading, as this process is generally thought to be a key step to self-knowledge; thus the alternative option would need to offer similar effects.

In terms of interpreting the data from a study such as this one, face-to-face interviews may be useful in an attempt to improve on the unclear meanings which sometimes emerge from qualitative analyses. In a face-to-face setting, participants' responses could be probed more deeply and their specific meanings ascertained more firmly. This type of feedback process may, however, be intimidating to potential participants and would present a number of ethical challenges.

It would also be valuable to assess whether the changes brought about by the One Wish programme were maintained. The enhanced levels of self-perceived insight that some participants experienced, as well as the attainment of some psychological skills, were valuable achievements however it would be important to obtain more substantial knowledge about the further effectiveness of the programme by following-up with participants after they have completed the journal programme in a longitudinal study.

Useful information may also be attained by measuring negative qualities. Apart from the negative affect subscale of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, all the other measures used in the study were focused on evaluating positive or natural constructs (life satisfaction, subjective happiness, positive affect, engagement in self-reflection, need for self-reflection and insight). While the One Wish Journal was based in ideas of positive psychology, some self-help materials have found to be effective for depression and anxiety disorders and insight has been found to correlate negative with stress, anxiety and depression (Den Boer et al., 2007; Grant et al., 2002; Mains & Scogin, 2003; Scogin, 2003; Weishaar, 1993). If these 'negative' qualities of stress, anxiety and depression were also assessed during the study, patterns of decreasing tendencies might be revealed, enhancing the possible outcomes of the programme and its general efficacy.

7.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Overall, this study seems to have demonstrated the educational way in which the One Wish Journal acquainted participants with their introspection. Although the quantitative results did not reveal a great deal, mostly as a consequence of small sample sizes, both the statistical and qualitative analyses illustrated an increase in self-perceived levels of

insight which participants from the experimental group experienced. The central intention of the One Wish Journal was to enhance the introspective skills of participants in an attempt to bring about further improvements in their subjective well-being. Although these latter changes could not be established, the attainment of insight is a significant achievement and many of the participants' own responses indicate that the experience of the journal led them to a number of personal benefits and positive experiences from which they learnt more about themselves. The findings also demonstrated that introspective action can have significant outcomes in people's lives when they are undertaken in a meaningful way. Ideas of agency and control also emerged a number of times through the qualitative analyses and connate the empowerment that many participants experienced within their lives as a result of their participation within the programme.

Also in line with the theory behind the One Wish Journal, participant feedback supported the notion that people often do not make time for the things that they would like to do. Although this seems like a common-sense conclusion, for many participants the acknowledgment of this within their lives was a realisation and for at least some of these participants this realisation prompted further investigation into their lives and the beginnings of life changes to alter this pattern.

While other research around the effects of self-help has shown similar end results to those found in this study, that is, positive trends but insufficient evidence to confirm the intrinsic value of self-help materials, the high levels of attrition may have affected the results found for the use and effectiveness of the One Wish Journal (Bower et al., 2001). The success of self-help material relies in large part on the motivation, continued participation and adherence of those taking part and it is uncertain why some people demonstrate these qualities and others do not. If more were known about the underlying reasons behind self-help use and maintained participation, its fundamental structures could be designed to bring about maximum benefits for those who make use of it.

Other research has suggested that those who are intrinsically motivated to use self-help materials are more likely to benefit from them (Kingree & Ruback, 1994; Mains & Scogin, 2003). The finding from this study, that even those who are not innately motivated by the material stand to potentially benefit, is therefore an interesting discovery. The notion that people who are not necessarily inherently invested in self-help materials can still learn and improve from them suggests that self-help may offer benefits for a wider range of people. The bookmark in particular was highly successful – participants used and learnt from it and gained insight through their interactions with it. Some also worked towards changing their thinking patterns as a result of this component of the programme.

The high levels of attrition were a very problematic aspect of the study which impeded the quantitative investigation of the programme and the reasons for these patterns should be further investigated. Despite this, the study established the potential value the One Wish Journal programme holds for people, demonstrating that laypeople can gain psychological knowledge with measured guidance. Generally, journal participants gained some personal benefits through their participation in the programme, with many learning more about themselves and coming to understand themselves more comprehensively. The programme was also an empowering experience for many participants. Possibly most importantly, the journal programme led to increases in participants' levels of insight. Many psychological professionals consider insight to be the pinnacle of achievement for a psychological intervention, which suggests that this accomplishment of the study is a significant one (Lyke, 2009). It is possible that this valuable finding could be enhanced through further development of the One Wish programme.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Cover Letter for Experimental Group

School of Human & Community Development

Faculty of Humanities

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050
Tel: (011) 717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

My name is Kelli Slotar and I am a research psychology Masters student at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting research about the benefits of journalling, in fulfilment of the requirement for my degree. The journal is intended to teach you how to critically reflect on the experiences of your life. This skill will **ideally** help you to gain a greater understanding of yourself and your life and contribute to your self-development. It is also intended to enhance your perception of yourself and your feelings of autonomy within your life.

As a participant, you will be given a journal in which you are required to write once a week. Every fortnight you will receive instructions for a task which you must complete within the coming two weeks. As soon as the journal is in your possession, it is your own property and you will not be required to return it to me or to let anyone else read it. There will however be a feedback questionnaire on each task and on the journal itself which you will be required to complete and return.

You will also be required to complete four questionnaires three times during the course of study. Together, the questionnaires should take no longer than 20 minutes. All the questionnaires will be given out at one time and there will be no time limit. As soon as you have completed all the questionnaires you will be asked to hand them in and be allowed to leave. The questionnaires will also be available online so if you are unable to complete them in person, you may do so over the Internet.

If you choose to take part in this study, all the information which you share will be kept confidential. You are requested to create a code which you will use for all the questionnaires you

complete so that all your data can be identified as belonging to the same person without having your name or student number. Only the researcher and appropriate supervisors will have access to the data and all the data collected for this study will be destroyed once it has been analysed and written up for publication.

There is a website which is set up so that you can contact me and this is where the questionnaire will also be made available. If you make use of this website, you will be asked to use a pseudonym to maintain your anonymity. There will not be anything additional on the website that you will not receive from me on campus and all Wits students can access the internet from the library.

Please note: This programme is **not** a form a therapy and is not a cure or treatment for any sort of psychological problem. If you know that you have a psychological problem, such as manic-depression or an eating disorder, this programme is not sufficient as an intervention. If at any point during the time that the programme is running you feel you are developing psychological discomfort, **do not** rely on the journal as a solution, rather consult with a member of the Psychology department and s/he will advise you further or contact the numbers below:

Lifeline: 0861 322 322
SADAG (South African Depression and Anxiety Group): (011) 783 1474
SADAG Suicide Helpline: 0800 567 567

Remember that participation is voluntary and you may leave the study at any time should you so desire. There will be no negative consequences for refusing to participate or withdrawing participation.

Please note that general feedback about the study and its findings will be available upon request, but neither individual feedback nor individual scores for questionnaires will be available to participants as answers to these are anonymous.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at:
kelli@global.co.za or 076 314 1598
or my supervisor, Nicky Israel at:
Nicky.Israel@wits.ac.za or (011) 717-4557

Thank you for your participation.
Kelli Slotar

Appendix B: Cover Letter for Control Group

School of Human & Community Development

Faculty of Humanities

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050
Tel: (011) 717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

My name is Kelli Slotar and I am a research psychology Masters student at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting research about Subjective Well-Being (SWB) in fulfilment of the requirement for my degree.

As a participant, you will be required to complete four questionnaires three times during the course of study. Together, the four questionnaires should take no longer than 20 minutes. All the questionnaires will be given out at one time and there will be no time limit. As soon as you have completed all the questionnaires you will be asked to hand them in and be allowed to leave. The questionnaires will also be available online so if you are unable to complete them in person, you may do so over the Internet.

If you choose to take part in this study, all the information which you share will be kept confidential. You are requested to create a code which you will use for all the questionnaires you complete so that all your data can be identified as belonging to the same person without having your name or student number. Only the researcher and appropriate supervisors will have access to the data and all the data collected for this study will be destroyed once it has been analysed and written up for publication.

There is a website which is set up so that you can contact me and this is where the questionnaire will also be made available. There will not be anything additional on the website that you will not receive from me on campus and all Wits students can access the internet from the library.

Remember that participation is voluntary and you may leave the study at any time should you so desire. There will be no negative consequences for refusing to participate or withdrawing participation.

Please note that general feedback about the study and its findings will be available upon request, but neither individual feedback nor individual scores for questionnaires will be available to participants as answers to these are anonymous.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at:
kelli@global.co.za or 076 314 1598
or my supervisor, Nicky Israel at:
Nicky.Israel@wits.ac.za or (011) 717-4557

Thank you for your participation.
Kelli Slotar

Appendix C: Journal Instructions and Commitment Form

Dear Participant,

Welcome to your journal.

Research has shown that this journalling can have benefits for people who are interested in this sort of self-expression (Baikie & Wilhelm, 2005; Walker, 2006). Thus, this journal is an exercise that is for **you**. As such, everything in it is for **you** and you will not be required to share anything from your journal with anyone else.

The first major requirement of the journal is that you must write in it at least once a week. The second requirement consists of 'Personal Projects' that must be completed once every two weeks. The final requirement is that you try to write one entry in a creative way once every three weeks.

You are welcome to write as often as you like in your journal, although as mentioned, you are expected to write a **minimum** of once a week. How and what you choose to write in your journal is up to you – you can record what has happened during the day on which you are writing, what has happened in recent weeks or months, or memories and stories that you would like to remember. You can write about current events or your feelings and opinions about issues that are important to you. The content of your journal is entirely up to you. There are also no restrictions as to what you can put in your book so there is no problem if you feel you want to decorate it or paste other materials like photos or interesting articles in it. Included in the back of the journal are some suggestions that you can use if you feel unsure of what to write about.

The way that you choose to write entries is also up to you and it's fine if you prefer to type journal entries rather than write them by hand, but you must then print out these entries and paste them in the book.

Although you are free to write about anything and in any style you like, it is requested that you try to write in a creative way once every three weeks. Ideally, you should write these creative entries in the third person as if you are talking about a character outside of yourself. For example, instead of writing "I didn't feel like going to work today," you could write something like "[Your name here] trudged into the office, dreading another gray day of the same monotony." You should also be as descriptive as possible when you are writing creatively.

The journal is based on the principles of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Rational-Emotive Therapy (RET) and Narrative Therapy. CBT and RET operate on the idea that the way we interpret things around ourselves determines how we feel about them and how we react to them, and our interpretation depends on the way we think. Both theories suppose that people have two ways of thinking – the 'right,' rational way and the 'crooked,' irrational

way. Irrational thoughts are maladaptive and may often be self-defeating, while rational thoughts generally improve our coping skills and are believed to be associated with greater emotional and mental health. As such, if we change the way we think, we can change the way we feel and behave.

Irrational thoughts, however, may be difficult to stop or avoid so you are given a bookmark reminding you about what irrational thoughts are, some of the most frequently-occurring irrational thoughts and how to counteract them.

This journal is meant to be enjoyable, as well as beneficial to you and you are thus encouraged to use it however you feel so as to attain these qualities. Below is a contract to commit your participation to this journal programme.

I, _____ , declare that I have taken it upon myself to take part is this research and aim to fulfil my obligations of participation to the best of my ability.

I commit myself to this programme and aim to use it for my own benefit in order to improve my general well-being and feelings about myself, others and the world.

As far as possible, I will write in this journal at least once a week and complete the projects which are assigned once a month, so that I get the most from this journal programme.

_____
Signature

Appendix D: Bookmark

Reminders for a bad day or irrational thinking

Irrational thoughts are those thoughts that are unreasonable or illogical and affect the way we think, feel and behave in a negative way. Everyone experiences irrational thinking at some point but they can be prevented or at least decreased through investigation.

Investigating your irrational thoughts

1. When you think "I must…" or "He/she/they should…"
   Remember: Just because you prefer something to happen doesn't mean that it *must* happen. And if what you would like to happen does not occur, it is unfortunate, but not necessarily terrible.

2. When you 'awfulise' a problem (imagine the worst-case scenario)
   Remember: 'Awfulising' a problem makes it seem worse than it really is and may also make it more difficult for you to find a solution.

3. When you think, "I can't handle it."
   Remember: When we are in an unpleasant situation we often think that we "can't handle it." This is not the case because we often don't have an option when it comes to coping with difficulties – we cannot simply lie down and die, so we get through whatever is troubling us even though it may seem impossible.
   If you think back to other bad situations, you can probably recall another time when you felt that you could not cope, but you got through irrespective of this feeling.

4. If a person were asked to rate a room and said that it was 'comfortable', he would only be rating one dimension of the room (the dimension of comfort). A room is too complex to be summed up in one rating. People are similarly complex and thus cannot be given a single rating like "I am a failure" because this does not take into account the various dimensions of the person.
   Remember: People, and life itself, are too complex to be given a single rating, so when we assess and criticise ourselves, other people and the world we are often unrealistic and therefore more damaging than anything else.

5. If you think "I will never succeed" or "I always make mistakes" etc.
   Remember: 'Always' and/or 'never' statements are often defeating and unrealistic, as we cannot tell the future and thus know nothing about what will always or never be.

Positive thinking

These are some reminders of the good things that might slip your mind, or tips to see more of the good things that may go unnoticed .

1. Look how far you've come already.
   Often we forget that many of the things that we have to do in life are things that we have already done at some other point in our lives. For example, for every test we worry about writing, there is one that we have already done and succeeded in passing. So keep in mind all that you have accomplished already when looking at new tasks that need to be tackled.

2. Playing to your strengths.
   No-one can be good at everything, so rather than regretting those things that you cannot do, celebrate those things that you can do and maximise your use of these talents.

3. Being your own competition.
   Every person has his/her own idea of what his/her life should be so comparing your life to someone else's or trying to compete with them is like trying to play chess against someone who is playing checkers. Try not to concern yourself with other people; there is only one person who is going to live your life. Rather just strive to do your best every day and achieve your own ideals.

4. Being appreciative.
   For every bad situation there are almost always positive aspects. This could be something like appreciating the ability to walk when you have lectures spread over the campus. Gratitude is also a gift to others – people like to feel appreciated, so try and make sure that your friends and family members know you appreciate them.

5. Knowing who you are.
   If someone were to say to you "You are a pink kangaroo" you would laugh at the ridiculousness of the statement or think that the person was mad. However, when someone says something negative about us, we are often quick to accept the criticism or at least wonder on some level whether what they have said is true. And yet, you would never give a second thought to someone who said something unbelievable like, "You are a pink kangaroo" because you know it is completely untrue – you know who you are and what you are capable of, so don't let others make you doubt yourself.

Appendix E: Topic Suggestions

I've always wanted to…

I wish…

If I were a child again…

The best advice I've ever received…

I don't like people who…

I really appreciate…

My most vivid childhood memory…

One of my favourite things to do…

Friends…

Looking back on my life so far…

I hope…

The people I like best…

I am afraid to…

When I'm alone, I think about…

I see myself as…

One of my fondest memories…

I need…

I want…

My character strengths are…

School…

The only trouble…

Dancing…

I secretly…

I don't understand why…

If I could change one thing about myself…

Happiness is …

Success is…

Some of my favourite things are…

Things I would change…

Life…

The world…

Appendix F: SMS Notification

If you would like to be reminded of important dates in the study via SMS, return this slip of paper with **only** your cell phone number.

Cell number:_____

Appendix G: Creative Writing Tips

Why Creative Writing?

Often when we are in a situation, it is difficult for us to have real perspective of what is happening. Think about any movie you've seen or book you've read where it is painfully obvious that one character is attracted to another, or that someone is about to be betrayed – it is often easy to see things when we are in an objective position, but this is something that we generally lack in our own lives, because, of course, we are living it every moment. This lack of perspective can lead to annoyance or misunderstandings and sometimes it causes us to jump to conclusions. For example, think about the last time you sent someone an sms and didn't get a reply. One of your first thoughts was probably something negative, like the recipient didn't feel like replying or is 'snubbing' you for some reason. It's possible that s/he was busy with something that could not be interrupted, or that s/he had intended to reply but forgot because of the seven other things s/he was thinking needed to be done. It's also possible (and highly likely) that your own message never went through because cell-phones are notoriously unreliable. We all know this and yet have an uncanny ability to forget when it is our lives that it is inconveniencing.

Writing in the third person and in creative language will hopefully allow you to gain some of this 'outer perspective' on your life – to open your mind to the possibilities of other explanations for happenings, other people and even yourself. But this is just a hopeful maybe. If nothing else, creative writing provides you with an opportunity to flex your creative talent and live any kind of life you can imagine.

Creative Writing: Tip #1

Character Sketch

Many people have difficulty with creative writing so a character sketch is a good place to start. Writers often create a character sketch of their main characters before formulating the events of a book so that they have a good idea of who their characters are and how they would react in different situations. The character sketch typically includes a description of the character's appearance, an outline of their back-story (i.e. how they got to be where they are now) and their dominant personality traits.

Try and write a character sketch of yourself, keeping in mind that a character sketch must be told from an exterior perspective – all the creative pieces you write should try to make use of the third person, i.e. 'he,' 'she,' or 'they,' rather than the first person ('I' or 'we').

The following are some examples of how to tackle writing a character sketch:

Physical appearance:
Mike Durton is a twenty-year-old man, 6"2 with dark hair and mud-brown eyes. His lanky frame makes him appear taller than he is and his dead-straight posture also contributes to this illusion.

Back story:
Jenny had been waiting for her chance at freedom since she was sixteen and felt that she would finally accomplish this dream when she came to the city. But studying during the day and working nights at the local restaurant is more exhausting than she anticipated and she is finding it difficult to strike a balance in her life.

Personality:
Mariko had always been a friendly type of person, but sometimes her reserved nature made it seem like she was cold and judgemental. This always worried her, not only because she was concerned about hurting the feelings of others, but also because she worried about just about everything.

Here are some ideas to help you with your own sketch:

1. Appearance

Tall	Lanky	Brunette	Glamorous
Short	Plump	Elegant	Adorable

Beautiful	Alluring	Blonde	Slender
Unusual	Broody	Graceful	Groomed
Fair	Poised	Red-head	Handsome

2. Strengths and weaknesses. From this list of adjectives, decide which words you would you use to describe yourself and why, or which wouldn't you use and why not?

Grumpy	Sensible	Forgiving	Stubborn
Reliable	Entertaining	Determined	Faithful
Curious	Helpful	Unhappy	Patient
Strong	Cruel	Lazy	Talkative
Funny	Smart	Disorganised	Mischievous
Suspicious	Helpful	Interesting	Scruffy
Quiet	Honest	Cunning	Stern
Fair	Kind	Brave	Friendly
Dark	Considerate	Scruffy	Fickle
Bright	Loving	Talkative	Irritable
Weak	Lively	Sly	Wild

3. Feelings and behaviours towards others

Affectionate	Co-operative	Charming	Pleasant
Reserved	Faithful	Concerned	Nervous
Cold	Argumentativ	Mistrustful	Indifferent
Friendly	e	Agreeable	Unfriendly
Open	Kind	Proud	Relaxed
Trusting	Courteous	Surprised	
Encouraging	Serious	Thoughtful	
Quiet	Helpful	Considerate	
Boisterous			

4. You might want to include other activities, such as:

- Hobbies / activities
- Pets
- Aspirations
- Relationship status
- Favourites (food, drink, colour, brands)
- Etc…

Creative Writing: Tip #2

Report a conversation

* Report conversations between yourself and other people, as either direct or indirect speech.

* Be creative and use as much emotive language as possible.

* It is preferable for you to use the third person, for example, if your name is Susan:

e.g. 1

Susan was shocked at the news and asked in astonishment, “But what does this mean for the children?”

After a brief pause, Martin answered, “I’m afraid I really have no idea.”

Susan thought about the shocking new information she had just learned and realised that she was going to have to call Emma.

e.g. 2

Martin relayed the story to Susan in a quivering voice, hating to be the one to deliver the news. Susan’s reaction was one of shock and she asked Martin what would happen to the children. Martin was uncertain how to answer Susan, but decided to be truthful, admitting he did not have a solution. Susan contemplated the situation and realised that she was going to have to call Emma.

Creative Writing: Tip #3

Describe a situation

* Think about an event or an experience that has some sort of meaning to you – it can be something that has happened recently or a memory.

* Describe the actual place where it happened. Things that you could include here are:
  - What it looks like
  - What the atmosphere is like
  - Any historical details, or even details from your own previous experiences there
  - Sensory details, i.e. describing the sights, smells and sounds of the place

e.g. Mckenzie had always loved this park, with its broad flat area, perfect for picnics, and its huge and ancient trees that spoke of years gone by. The air always seemed sweeter here, not only from the smell of the various plants and flowers, but also because this was a place of sanctuary and freedom. The red, blue and yellow swing-set reminded him of Sundays with his grandfather and the lush green grass welcomed thoughts of what lay ahead this summer. The sound of traffic from the nearby highway reminded Mckenzie that he was still in the city, but somehow the park always managed to make him feel calmer.

* Introduce the ‘characters’. Some ways you could do this is by:
  - giving some background on the people involved, this would be like a very brief character sketch
  - providing a short description of their appearance and mannerisms

  e.g. Maria was always late when they had arrangements to meet and although this could sometimes bother her friends, they knew that punctuality was just not part of Maria’s life. Today Maria was wearing a pale pink blouse with dark blue jeans and sparkly yellow sandals – she always seemed to pair things in perfect complement with her olive skin, things that no-one else could get away with. She walks with effortless grace and always carries herself as someone who has a purpose.

* Use descriptive language to describe the action of the event (i.e. what actually happened).

Creative Writing: Tip #4

Letting your imagination run free

* Write about things the way you would like them to be, or how they might have been.

* Things can’t always be the way we want them to be and we can’t always have the things we want. While certain things may be impossible in real life, anything is possible in your own imagination.

* Keep as much or as little factual as you like – you can write about your real life adding in little details here and there of how you would ideally have them, or go all out and write a totally fictional piece about yourself.

Appendix H: Personal Projects

Personal Project

1

1. Find a quote that is meaningful to you and write it in your journal.
2. Describe why it is meaningful for you.
3. If you can, find out about who said the quote and what the circumstances around it were.

Personal Project

2

1. Pick someone who you admire. This can be one person or a number of different people and it doesn't matter if it is someone famous or someone you know.
2. Write down the qualities about the person/people that you admire.
3. Only look at the next step once you have completed the first two.

- Look at the qualities that you described as admiring in others and think about which of these you see in yourself, and try to appreciate these things more in yourself.
- For the qualities that you feel you don't possess, think about whether there are ways in which you *could* bring out these qualities in yourself and how you would go about doing that.

Personal Project

3

1. Look back through your journal and take note of the overall appearance of your book.
   - Is it covered?
   - Have you stuck in anything like pictures, tickets or articles?
2. Remember that you signed a contract at the beginning of this journal saying that you were going to use this journal as a personal exercise and for your own benefit. This means that the journal is supposed to be something personally meaningful to you and it should remind you to focus on yourself sometimes and do little things for yourself. The appearance of your journal could be a reflection of how you feel about yourself or how much time and effort you put into your own wants and needs.
3. Since your journal is one example of this, think about whether you would like to decorate your journal or add in some extra things to it to make it more personal.
4. Whether or not you feel you want to decorate your journal, keep in the mind the importance of making time for yourself in your everyday life.

Personal Project

4

We all have expectations of ourselves and others. And similarly so, other people have expectations of us. These factors combined sometimes make it difficult for us to live according to our own values.

Values are those things that we feel are important in our lives and may be things like family, honesty, tradition, religion or loyalty. Values are a personal matter and determine how we prioritise our lives.

1. Think about the expectations that you have of yourself and list them.
2. Then list your values – think about what is important to you and why.
3. Make a list of the expectations you feel other people have of you.

4. Look through these lists and answer for yourself:
   - Is there an overlap between your expectations and those of others?
   - Do your expectations come from theirs?
   - Do you makes your values priorities in life or are you fulfilling the expectations of others before attending to the things that you feel are most important?
5. Make some notes about how you could change things in your life to fit in better with your values.

Personal Project 5

The last task dealt with your values and ties into this month's task.

Research has shown that successful people tend to demonstrate certain characteristics. One of these characteristics is goal-setting. Once you know what is important to you and where your priorities lie, you are in a better position to go about achieving these things. Making goals for yourself gives you a clear idea of what you are trying to do, and helps you set out a clear plan to accomplish these things.

Remember that there are short-term, medium-term and long-term goals and that it is often easier to begin with short-term goals. Short-term goals are those aims that affect your day-to-day life and become the stepping stones to achieving medium-term and long-term goals. Long-term goals are those things you wish to achieve in your lifetime, and medium-term goals are the necessary steps towards these eventual aims.

1. Think about the things that you want most in your life, your personal goals could be about any number of things, including your social life, career or family.
2. Make a list of these goals and break down each one of these goals into the steps that you would have to take to achieve them.
3. Try to make a list of goals for each week, even the little things, like going to class and returning library books – this just reminds you of the things you have achieved.

Personal Project 6

This is the last task and requires you to look back analytically at your writing from the past 12 weeks. During this journal programme, you have written personal entries as well as taking part in Personal Projects. All of these entries can offer insight into your experiences and thoughts of the past few weeks. Read through your entries and while you do:

- Think about the things you wrote about and if you remembered them differently to how you wrote them.
- Think abut the way you felt when you wrote about things and if you feel the same way now.
- Look for patterns of thought, such as repetition of certain ideas/feelings or experiences that occur in cycles.

Write a paragraph (or more, depending on how much you feel you want to write) based on these thoughts and observations.

Appendix I: Task Feedback

1. Did you complete the task? If no, why not?

Yes	No

- ☐ lack of time
- ☐ lack of motivation
- ☐ thought it was a waste of time
- ☐ not an interesting task
- ☐ other reason : _____

2. If you did complete the task, did you find this task useful/valuable?

Yes	No

2.1 What was / was not useful about it?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. If you did complete the task, did you enjoy the task?

Yes	No

4. How would you have changed this task?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. What type of entries have you been writing in your journal besides your tasks?

Entries about current life	Entries about past events in my life	Entries about the future

Entries recording my thoughts	Entries recording my feelings	Ideas

Creative entries e.g. poetry, lyrics, stories, etc.	Other

6. Have there been major changes (such as change in marital status, the death of a loved one, major changes in living arrangement, major health changes, major changes in sleeping habits etc.) in your life in the last six weeks?

Yes	No

6.1 If yes, please describe what changes you have experienced, if you regarded these changes as positive or negative and how important you feel these changes have been in your life

Change 1: _____

_____

Rating:

Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive

Importance of change:

Not important at all	Somewhat important	Very important

Change 2: _____

_____

Rating:

Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive

Importance of change:

Not important at all	Somewhat important	Very important

Change 3: _____

_____

Rating:

Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive

Importance of change:

Not important at all	Somewhat important	Very important

Appendix J: Journal Feedback and Debriefing

1. Did you have/make time to write in your journal (other than the Personal Projects)?

Yes	No

2. Were you motivated to write in your journal?

Yes	No

2.1 If yes, what motivated you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Have you enjoyed the journal?

Yes	No

a. **If yes**, what did you like about the journal?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3.2 **If no**, what didn't you enjoy about the journal?

_____

_____

_____

4. Do you plan on continuing with your journal?

Yes	No

5. Have you kept a journal before the One Wish Programme?

Yes	No

6. Has the One Wish Journal changed your feelings about writing?

Yes	No

   a. If yes, in what ways?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Were there any suggestions from the back of the book that you found particularly useful/enjoyable?

Yes	No

a. If yes, which suggestions were especially useful/enjoyable to you? If you would like, please give details of how it/they were valuable to you.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Did you use any of the creative writing tips?

Yes	No

a. If yes, what was/was not useful about using the creative writing tips?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

b. Was there anything particularly valuable about the bookmark for you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

c. Which tasks did you complete?

☐ PP1 – quote

☐ PP2 – qualities about self and others

☐ PP3 – appearance of journal

☐ PP4 – values and expectations

☐ PP5 – goals

☐ PP6 – reflection

9. Is there any particular Personal Project that you especially liked **the most** OR **the least** out of the six?

Yes	No

9.1 Please explain why you particularly liked/disliked certain tasks.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. Any additional comments? / Any specific instance that you found One Wish especially helpful?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Debriefing

PP 1: QUOTE → this task was designed to introduce you to the study and was something of a precursor of PP 4. The introspective aim of this task was to have you focus on yourself, your interests and the things that are important to you on a personal level.

PP 2: ADMIRABLE QUALITIES → this task was aimed at enhancing your awareness of your own positive qualities. This task also illustrated a common psychological process known as modelling – the process whereby people learn behaviours by modelling their actions after those of other people.

PP 3: PERSONAL TIME → this task was designed to emphasize the limited time people make for themselves in everyday lives. It was intended to make you take the time to explore and appreciate yourself. The introspective aim here was to aid you in recognising yourself as a valuable person worthy of time and effort.

PP 4: VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS → this is the first task that required more in-depth analysis. It aimed to help lower stress by lessening conflict between personal and "other" aims. The intentions here were for you to explore your personal values, evaluate your priorities and encourage you to change those things you felt needed to be altered in order for you life to fit in with your values.

PP 5: GOAL SETTING → the introspective aspect here aimed to enhance the feelings of control and structure in your life i.e. it was designed to make you feel that your goals, decisions and accomplishment of goals comes from their own effort.

PP 6: REFLECTION → this task probably called for the most introspection, as it required you to analyse your own writings from the entire study. The intention here was for you to gain a new perspective on the way you think and feel. It also aimed to show you how you can gain greater insight into yourself.

Appendix K: Demographic Questionnaire

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: M F
3. Year of study: 1st 2nd 3rd 4th
4. Home language:

English | Afrikaans | isiZulu | isiXhosa | isiNdebele

Sepedi | Sesotho | Setswana | siSwati | Tshivenda

Xitsonga | Other

If other, please specify: _____

5. Marital status:

Single | In a relationship | Married | Separated | Divorced

Widowed | Other

If other, please specify: _____

6. Have there been major changes (such as change in marital status, the death of a loved one, major changes in living arrangement, major health changes, major changes in sleeping habits etc.) in your life in the past few months?

Yes | No

6.1 If yes, please describe what changes you have experienced, if you regarded these changes as positive or negative and how important you feel these changes have been in your life

Change 1: _____

_____

Rating:

Very negative | Somewhat negative | Somewhat positive | Very positive

Importance of change:

Not important at all | Somewhat important | Very important

Change 2: _____

_____

Rating:

Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive

Importance of change:

Not important at all	Somewhat important	Very important

Change 3: _____

_____

Rating:

Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive

Importance of change:

Not important at all	Somewhat important	Very important

Change 4: _____

_____

Rating:

Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive

Importance of change:

Not important at all	Somewhat important	Very important

Change 5: _____

_____

Rating:

Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive

Importance of change:

Not important at all	Somewhat important	Very important

Appendix L: SRIS (printed with permission)

SRIS

Please read the following questions and circle the response that indicates the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements. Try to be accurate, but work quite quickly. Do not spend too much time on any question

THERE ARE NO "WRONG" OR "RIGHT" ANSWERS – ONLY YOUR OWN PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

BE SURE TO ANSWER EVERY QUESTION ONLY CIRCLE ONE ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION

1.	**I don't often think about my thoughts**	*Disagree* Strongly 1	**Disagree** **2**	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	**Agree** 5	Agree Strongly 6
2.	**I am not really interested in analyzing my behaviour**	*Disagree* Strongly 1	**Disagree** **2**	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	**Agree** 5	Agree Strongly 6
3.	**I am usually aware of my thoughts**	*Disagree* Strongly 1	**Disagree** **2**	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	**Agree** 5	Agree Strongly 6
4.	**I'm often confused about the way that I really feel about things**	*Disagree* Strongly 1	**Disagree** **2**	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	**Agree** 5	Agree Strongly 6
5.	**It is important for me to evaluate the things that I do**	*Disagree* Strongly 1	**Disagree** **2**	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	**Agree** 5	Agree Strongly 6
6.	**I usually have a very clear idea about why I've behaved in a certain way**	*Disagree* Strongly 1	**Disagree** **2**	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	**Agree** 5	Agree Strongly 6
7.	**I am very interested in examining what I think about**	*Disagree* Strongly 1	**Disagree** **2**	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	**Agree** 5	Agree Strongly 6
8.	**I rarely spend time in self-reflection**	*Disagree* Strongly 1	**Disagree** **2**	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	**Agree** 5	Agree Strongly 6
9.	**I'm often aware that I'm having a feeling, but I often don't quite know what it is**	*Disagree* Strongly 1	**Disagree** **2**	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	**Agree** 5	Agree Strongly 6
10.	**I frequently examine my feelings**	*Disagree* Strongly 1	**Disagree** **2**	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	**Agree** 5	Agree Strongly 6
11.	**My behaviour often puzzles me**	*Disagree* Strongly 1	**Disagree** **2**	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	**Agree** 5	Agree Strongly 6
12.	**It is important to me to try to understand what my feelings mean**	*Disagree* Strongly 1	**Disagree** **2**	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	**Agree** 5	Agree Strongly 6
13.	**I don't really think about why I behave in the way that I do**	*Disagree* Strongly 1	**Disagree** **2**	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	**Agree** 5	Agree Strongly 6
14.	**Thinking about my thoughts makes me more confused**	*Disagree* Strongly 1	**Disagree** **2**	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	**Agree** 5	Agree Strongly 6
15.	**I have a definite need to understand the way that my mind works**	*Disagree* Strongly 1	**Disagree** **2**	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	**Agree** 5	Agree Strongly 6

16. I frequently take time to reflect on my thoughts	*Disagree* Strongly	**Disagree**	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	**Agree**	Agree Strongly
	1	**2**	3	4	5	6
17. Often I find it difficult to make sense of the way I feel about things	*Disagree* Strongly	**Disagree**	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	**Agree**	Agree Strongly
	1	**2**	3	4	5	6
18. It is important to me to be able to understand how my thoughts arise	*Disagree* Strongly	**Disagree**	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	**Agree**	Agree Strongly
	1	**2**	3	4	5	6
19. I often think about the way I feel about things	*Disagree* Strongly	**Disagree**	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	**Agree**	Agree Strongly
	1	**2**	3	4	5	6
20. I usually know why I feel the way I do	*Disagree* Strongly	**Disagree**	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	**Agree**	Agree Strongly
	1	**2**	3	4	5	6

Grant, A. M., Franklin, J., & Langford, P. (2002). The Self-reflection and Insight Scale: A new measure of private self-consciousness. Social Behavior and Personality, 30, 821-836. – *Permission is freely granted to use this scale for research and therapeutic/coaching purpose. Commercial use of this scale requires written permission from A. M .Grant. Email*: anthonyg@psych.usyd.edu.au
© AM. Grant 2001

Appendix M: SWLS

Satisfaction with Life Scale

By Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, Randy J. Larsen, and Sharon Griffin

Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 – 7 scale below indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

7 - Strongly agree
6 - Agree
5 - Slightly agree
4 - Neither agree nor disagree
3 - Slightly disagree
2 - Disagree
1 - Strongly disagree

In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The conditions of my life are excellent.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I am satisfied with my life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Diener, E., Emmons, R.A., Larsen, R.J. & Griffin, S. (1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *49* (1), 71–75.
The scale is in the public domain (not copyrighted) and therefore you are free to use it without permission or charge by all professionals (researchers and practitioners) as long as you give credit to the authors of the scale: Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, Randy J. Larsen and Sharon Griffin as noted in the 1985 article in the *Journal of Personality Assessment*.

Appendix N: PANAS-X (printed with permission)

PANAS-X

This scale consists of a number of words and phrases that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you have felt this way over the past few weeks. Use the following scale to record your answers:

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
very slightly or not at all	a little	moderately	quite a bit	extremely

1. _____ cheerful
2. _____ disgusted
3. _____ attentive
4. _____ bashful
5. _____ sluggish
6. _____ daring
7. _____ surprised
8. _____ strong
9. _____ scornful
10. _____ relaxed
11. _____ irritable
12. _____ delighted
13. _____ inspired
14. _____ fearless
15. _____ disgusted with self
16. _____ sad
17. _____ calm
18. _____ afraid
19. _____ tired
20. _____ amazed

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Permission to reproduce this instrument is granted for internal University purposes only; any commercial/public use would require the express written permission of the copyright holders.

Dr. Watson and Dr. Clark are professors in the Department of Psychology at the University of Notre Dame and may be reached at db.watson@nd.edu and la.clark@nd.edu.

Due to the nature of the copyright of this scale, only 20 of the 60 items have been reproduced here.

Appendix O: SHS

Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)

By Sonja Lyubomirsky, Ph.D.

For each of the following statements and/or questions, please circle the point on the scale that you feel is most appropriate in describing you.

1. In general, I consider myself:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not a very happy person						a very happy person

2. Compared to most of my peers, I consider myself:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
less happy						more happy

3. Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterization describe you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all						a great deal

4. Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterization describe you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all						a great deal

Lyubomirsky, S. & Lepper, H.S. (1999). A measure of subjective happiness: Preliminary reliability and construct validation. *Social Indicators Research*, *46*, 137–155. – Permission to reproduce scale kindly granted by Professor Sonja Lyubomirsky.

Appendix P: Ethics Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Division of the Deputy Registrar (Research)

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Slotar

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER H070516**
PROJECT	The Introspective Value of a Self -Help Journal
INVESTIGATORS	Ms K Slotar
DEPARTMENT	Human & Comm Development/Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	07.05.11
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE*	Approved unconditionally

NOTE:

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE 07.05.11 **CHAIRPERSON** .....
(Professor M Vorster)

*Guidelines for written 'informed consent' attached where applicable

cc: Supervisor : Mrs N Israel
Human & Comm Development

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to a completion of a yearly progress report.**

This ethical clearance will expire on 1 February 2009

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix Q: Histograms

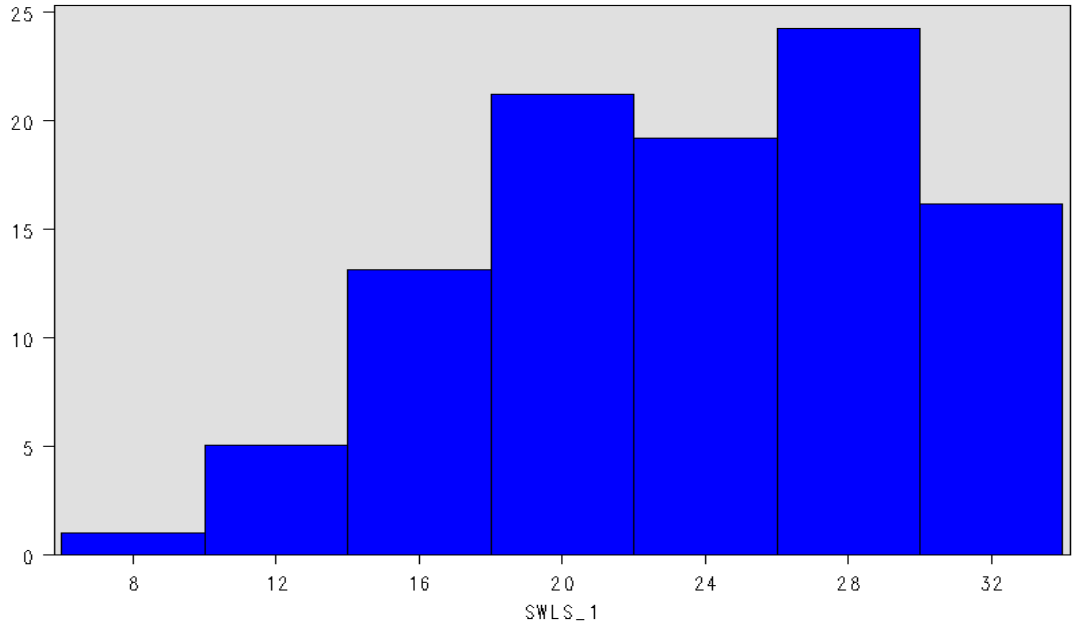


Figure 1: Histogram of experimental scores for life satisfaction at time one

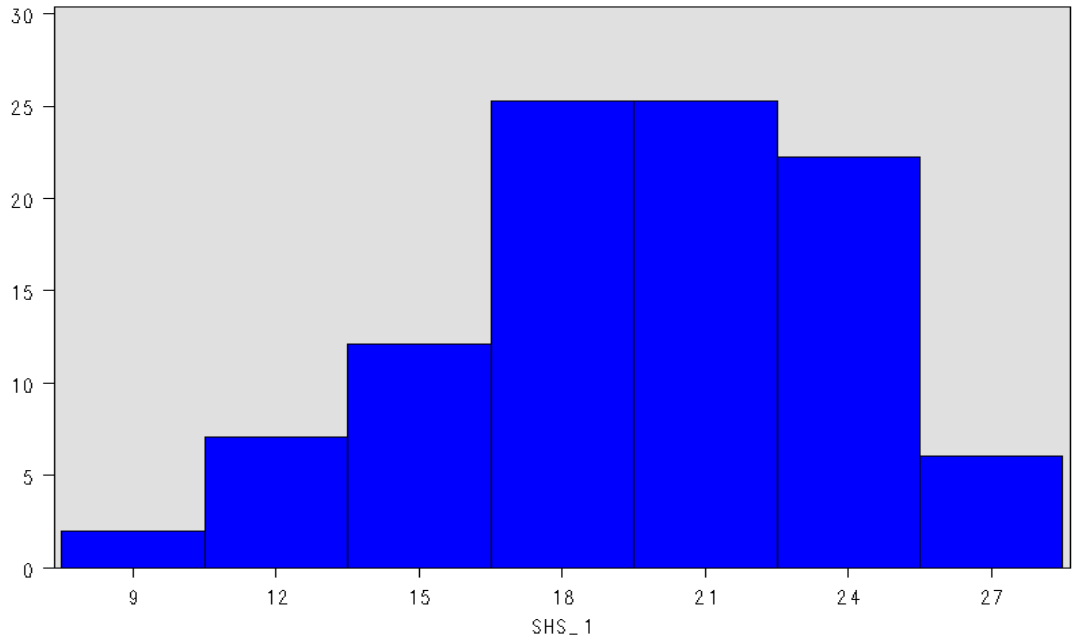


Figure 2: Histogram of experimental scores for subjective happiness at time one

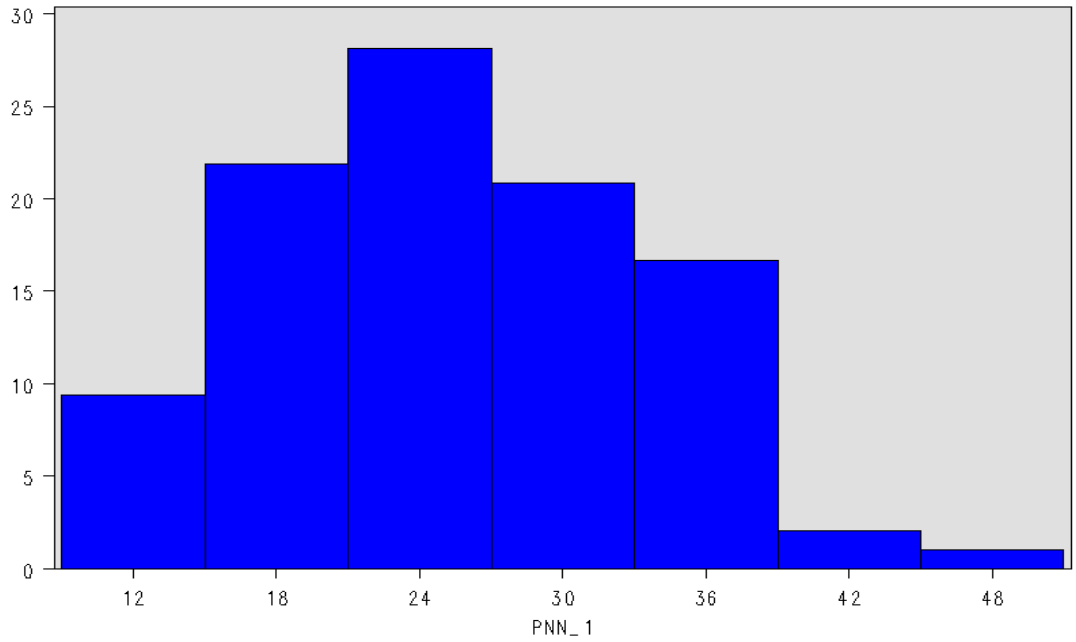


Figure 3: Histogram of experimental scores for negative affect at time one

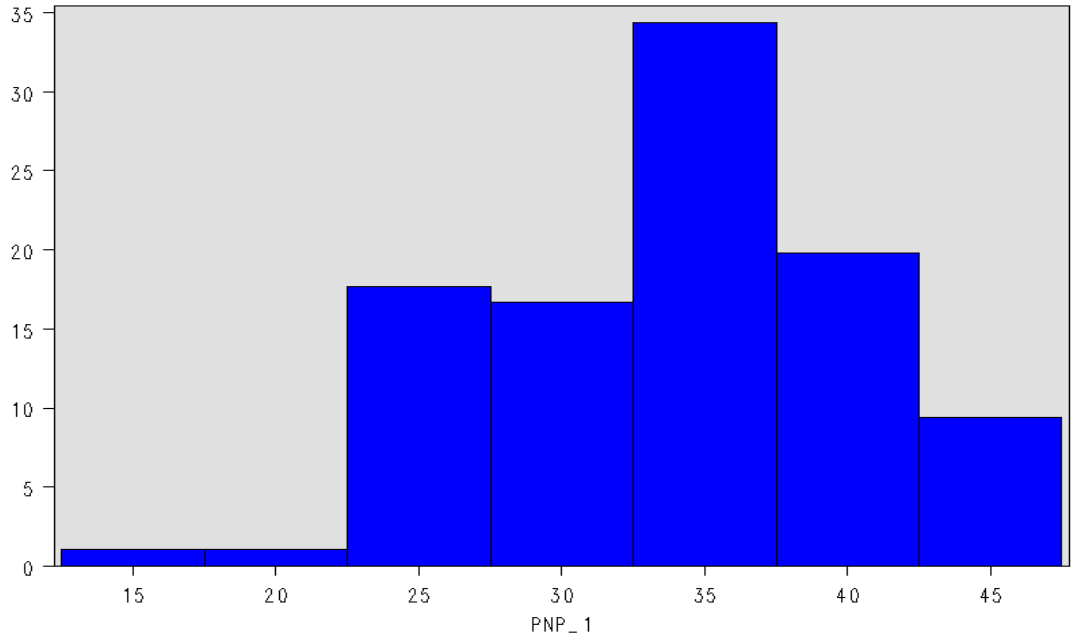


Figure 4: Histogram of experimental scores for positive affect at time one

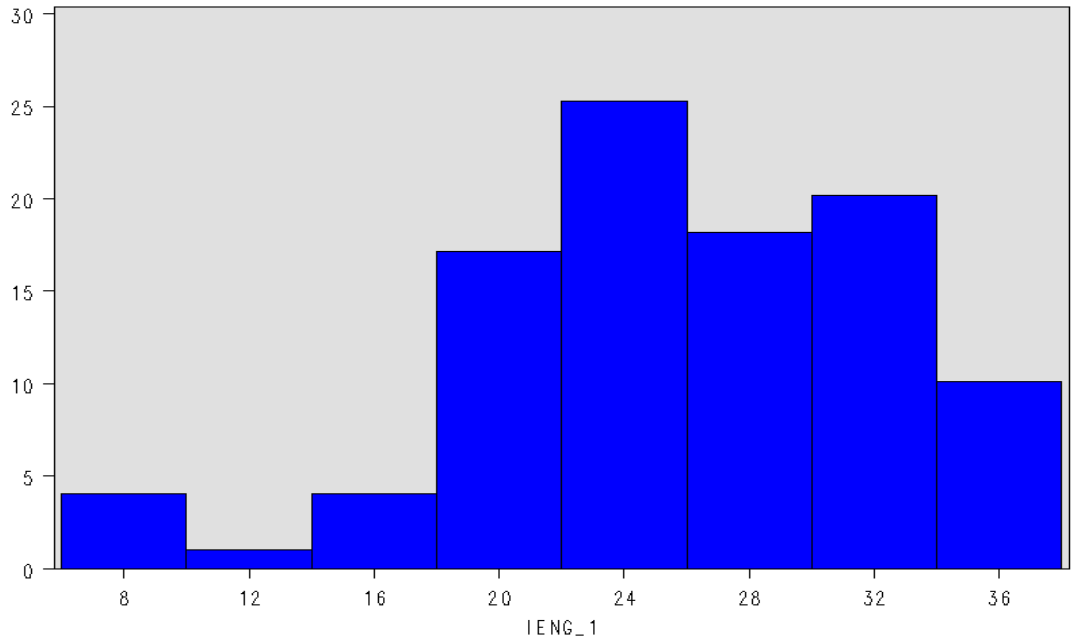


Figure 5: Histogram of experimental scores for engagement in self-reflection at time one

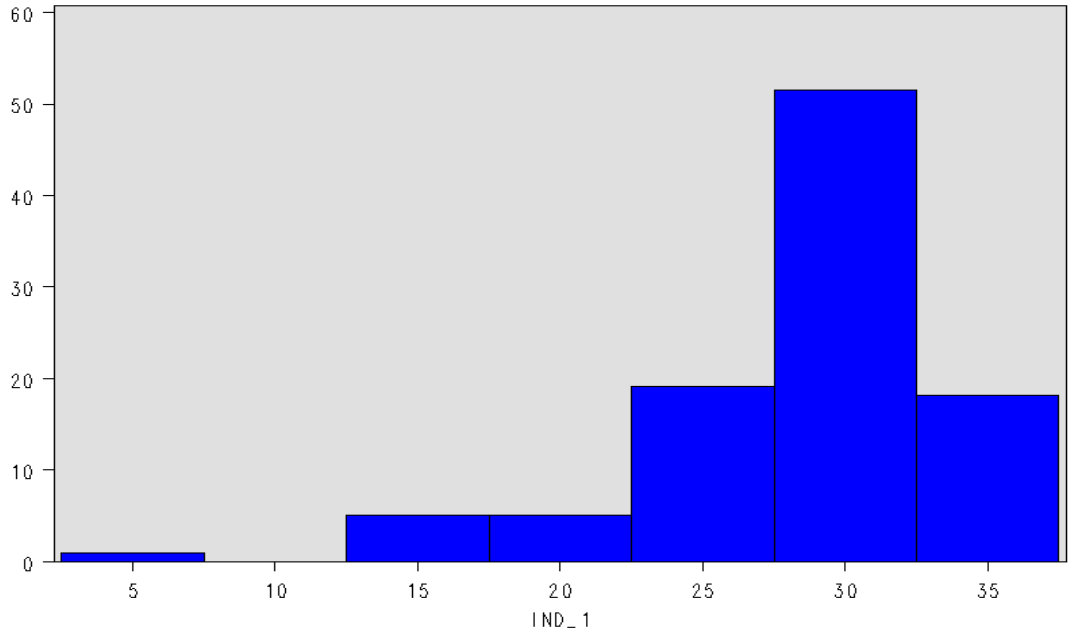


Figure 6: Histogram of experimental scores for need for self-reflection at time one

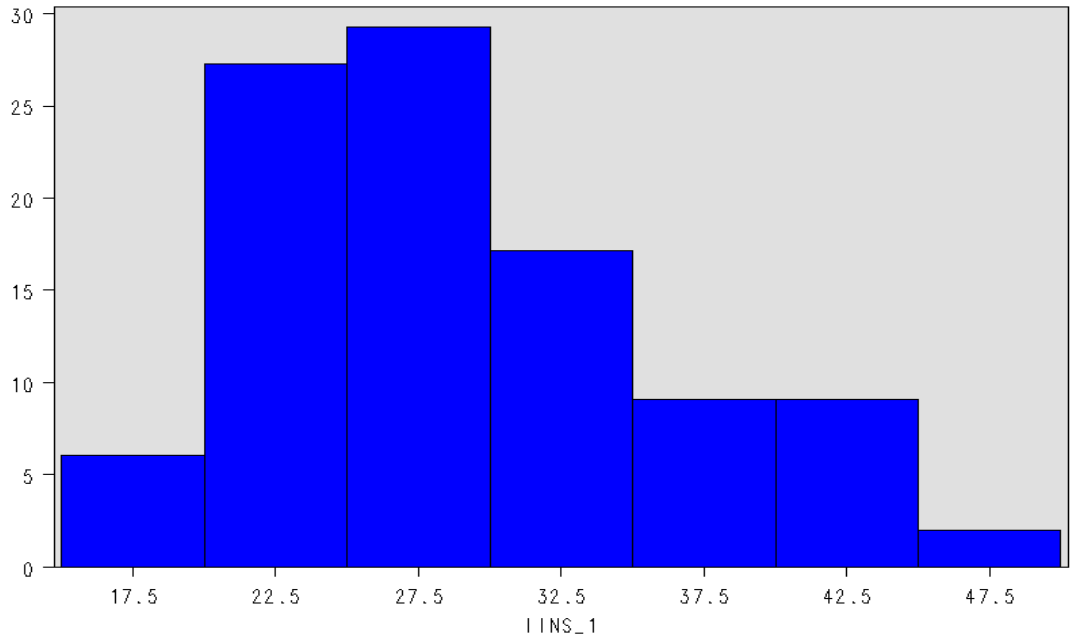


Figure 7: Histogram of experimental scores for insight at time one

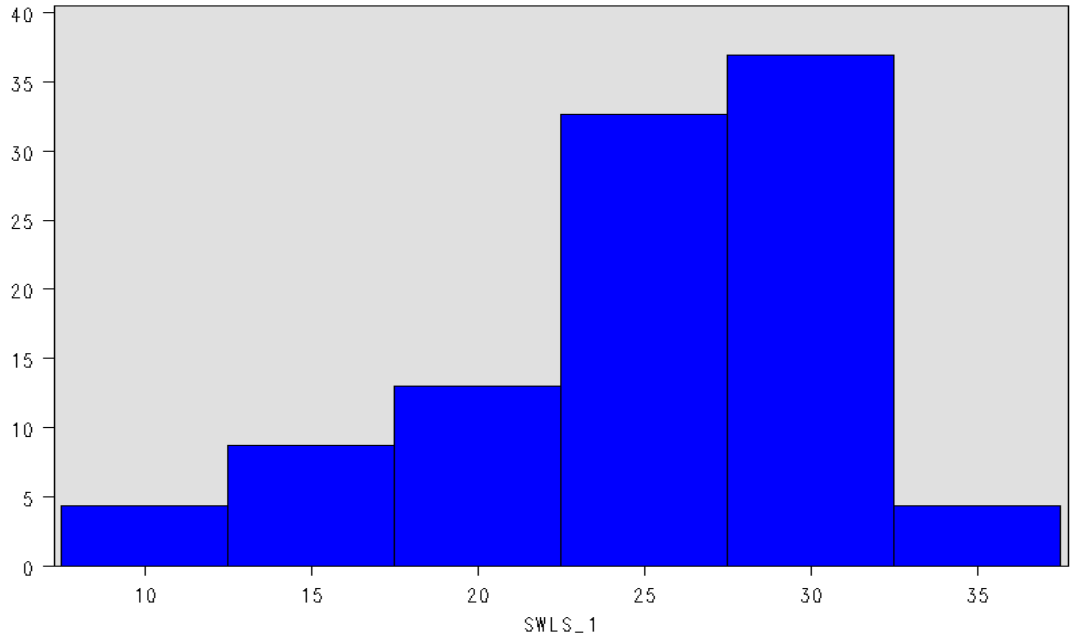


Figure 8: Histogram of control scores for life satisfaction at time one

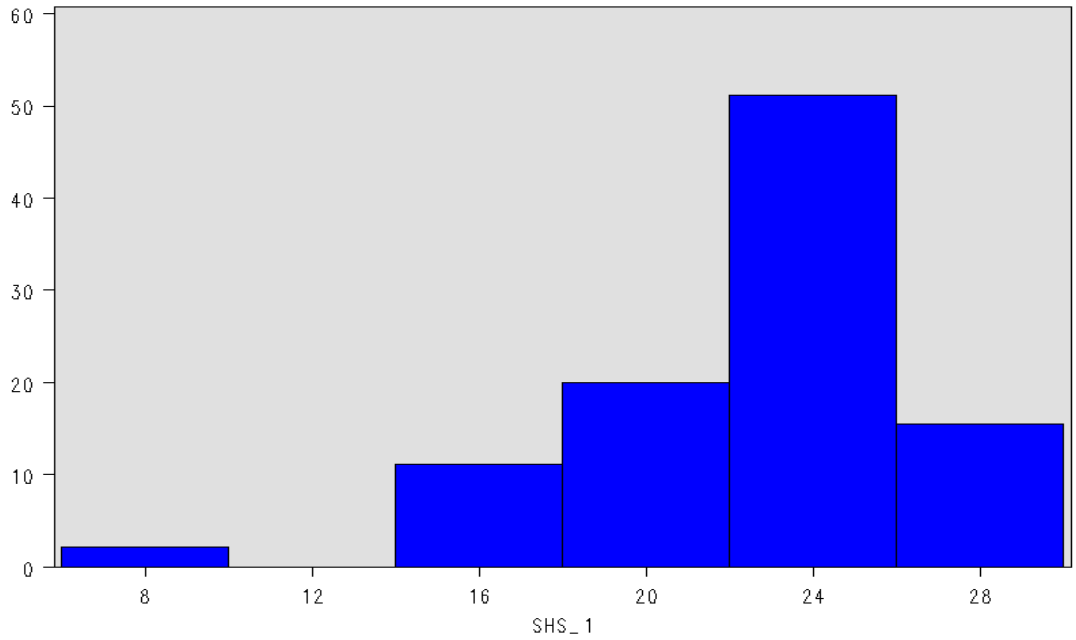


Figure 9: Histogram of control scores for subjective happiness at time one

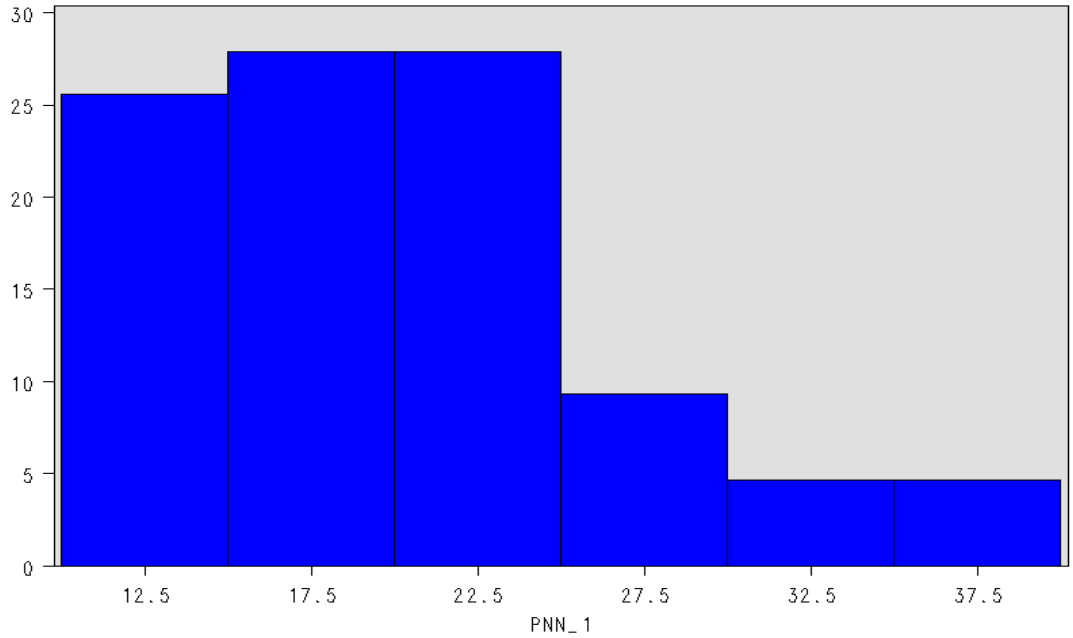


Figure 10: Histogram of control scores for negative affect at time one

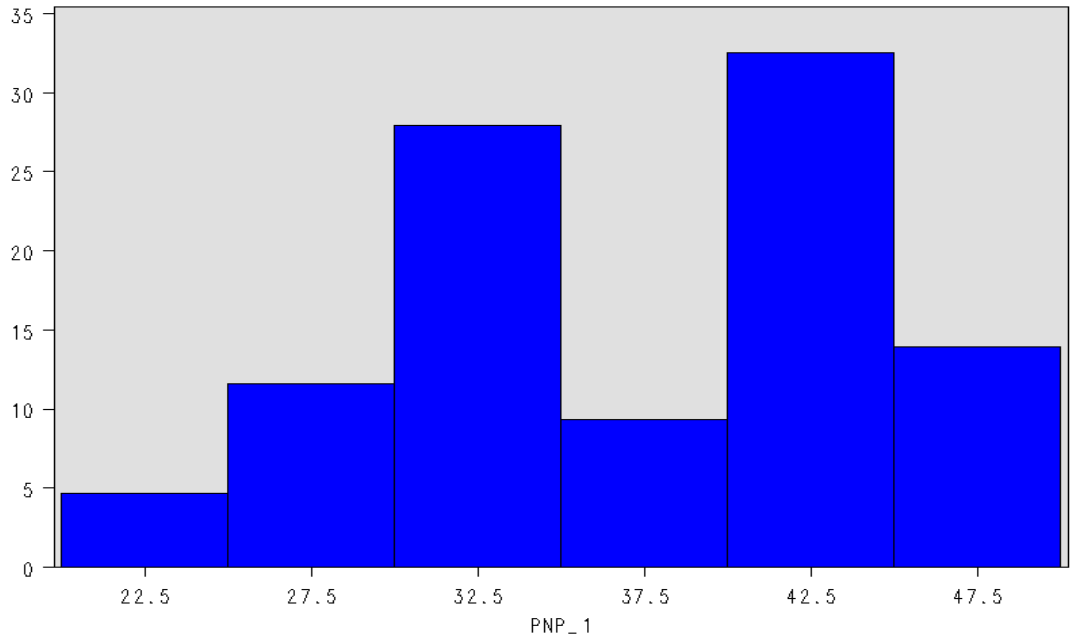


Figure 11: Histogram of control scores for positive affect at time one

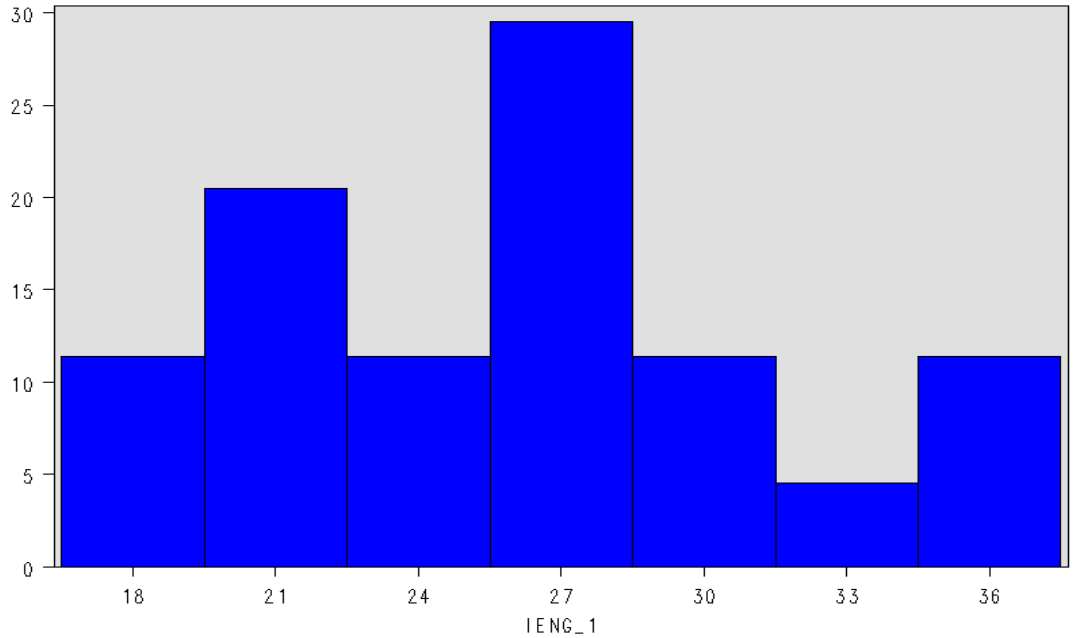


Figure 12: Histogram of control scores for engagement in self-reflection at time one

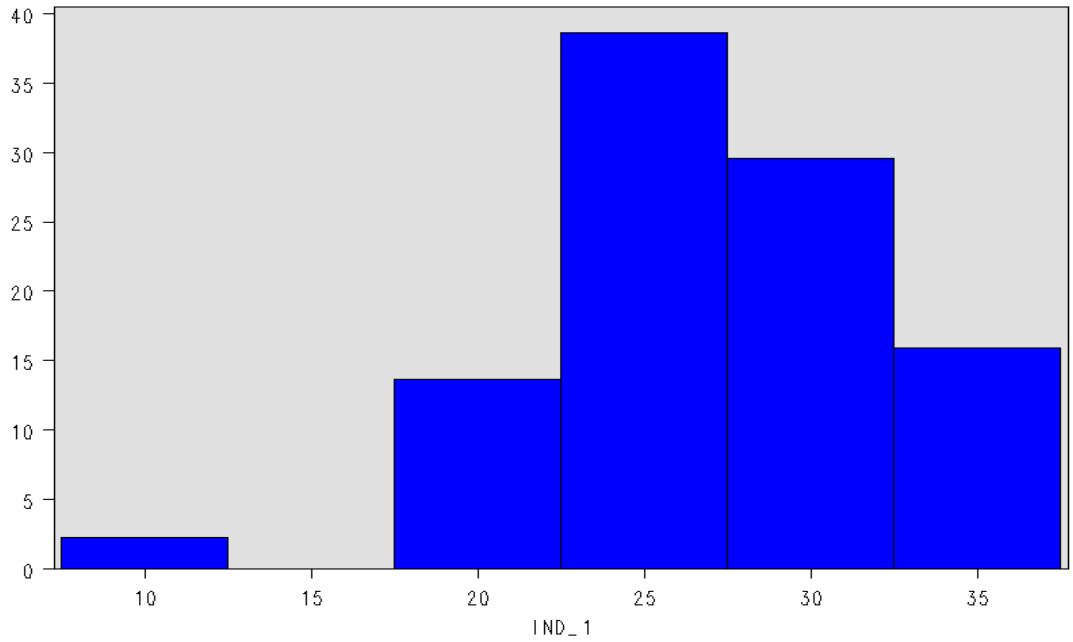


Figure 13: Histogram of control scores for need for self-reflection at time one

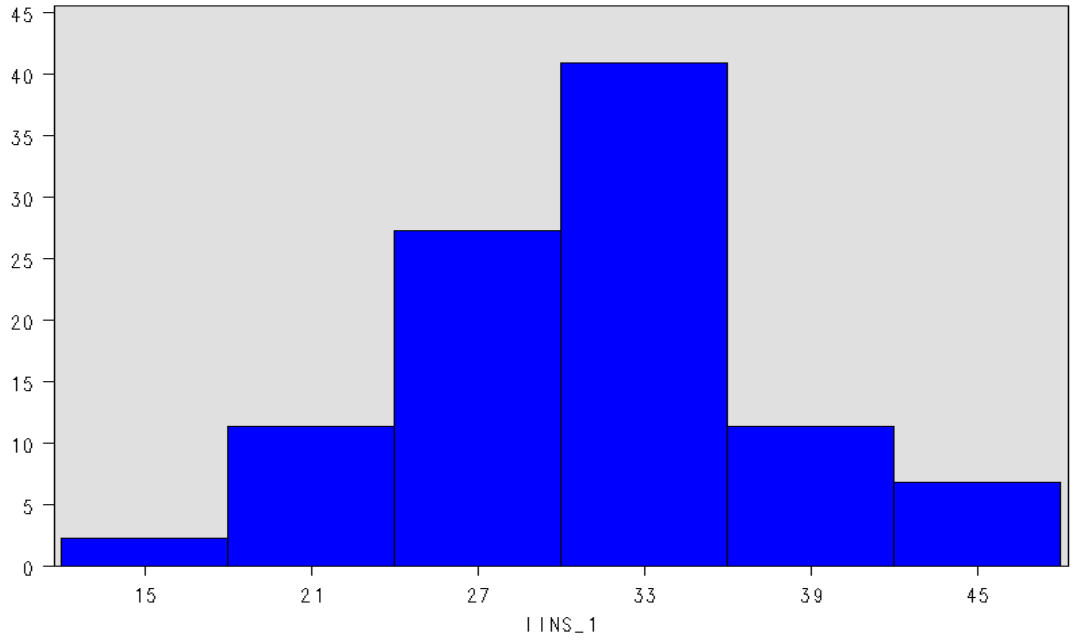


Figure 14: Histogram of control scores for insight at time one

Appendix R: Mann-Whitney U Test Tables for Experimental group

Gender

Table 3: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of gender at time one for the experimental group

	n (male)	n (female)	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	p-value
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	19	78	1002.5	0.65	0.52
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	19	78	965.5	0.31	0.76
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	19	76	782	-1.21	0.23
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	19	76	947	0.32	0.75
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG)	19	78	797.5	-1.21	0.23
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Need for Self-Reflection (IND)	19	78	871.5	-0.54	0.59
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Insight (IINS)	19	78	1068.5	1.25	0.21

Year of study

Table 4: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of year of study at time one for the experimental group

	n (1st & 2nd year)	n (3rd & 4th year)	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	p-value
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	56	14	504	0.1	0.92
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	56	14	597	1.47	0.14
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	55	14	594.5	1.56	0.12
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	55	14	499	0.13	0.9
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG)	56	14	495.5	-0.01	0.99
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Need for Self-Reflection (IND)	56	14	537.5	0.59	0.56
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Insight (IINS)	56	14	557.5	0.88	0.38

Home language

Table 5: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of home language at time one for the experimental group

	n (English)	n (Other)	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	p-value
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	74	22	960.5	-0.93	0.35
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	74	22	993.5	-0.64	0.52
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	74	20	1028.5	0.72	0.47
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	74	20	1095	1.34	0.18
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG)	74	22	1121.5	0.47	0.64
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Need for Self-Reflection (IND)	74	22	1060.5	-0.05	0.96
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Insight (IINS)	74	22	1006.5	-0.52	0.6

Relationship status

Table 6: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of relationship status at time one for the experimental group

	n (Single)	n (In a relationship)	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	p-value
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	46	49	2039	-1.26	0.21
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	46	49	2158.5	-0.37	0.71
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	44	49	1945	-0.94	0.35
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	44	49	1908.5	-1.23	0.22
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG)	46	49	2361	1.14	0.26
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Need for Self-Reflection (IND)	46	49	2254	0.34	0.73
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Insight (IINS)	46	49	2174	-0.25	0.80

Life Changes

Table 7: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of life changes at time one for the experimental group

	n (Life changes)	**n (No Life changes)**	**Wilcoxon statistic**	**Z**	**p-value**
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	54	41	2199.5	1.74	0.08
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	54	41	1964.5	-0.02	0.98
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	54	39	1666	-1.3	0.19
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	54	39	1620	-1.66	0.1
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG)	54	41	2289.5	2.42	***0.02****
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Need for Self-Reflection (IND)	54	41	2152.5	1.39	0.17
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Insight (IINS)	54	41	2148	1.35	0.18

Appendix S: Mann-Whitney U Test Tables for Control Group

Gender

Table 8: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of gender at time one for the control group

	n (male)	n (female)	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	p-value
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	8	31	170	0.33	0.74
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	8	31	194	1.17	0.24
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	8	31	161	0.02	0.99
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	8	31	186.5	0.91	0.36
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG)	7	31	121.5	-0.55	0.58
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Need for Self-Reflection (IND)	7	31	115	-0.79	0.43
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Insight (IINS)	7	31	135	-0.04	0.97

Year of study

Table 9: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of year of study at time one for the control group

	n (1st & 2nd year)	n (3rd & 4th year)	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	p-value
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	23	13	219.5	-0.68	0.5
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	23	13	276	1.16	0.25
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	23	13	227	-0.43	0.67
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	23	13	225.5	-0.48	0.63
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG)	22	13	257	0.77	0.44
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Need for Self-Reflection (IND)	22	13	254.5	0.68	0.49
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Insight (IINS)	22	13	244	0.33	0.75

Home language

Table 10: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of home language at time one for the control group

	n (English)	n (Other)	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	p-value
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	29	9	99.5	-2.6	***0.01***
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	29	9	179	0.1	0.92
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	29	9	218.5	1.46	0.14
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	29	9	184.5	0.29	0.77
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG)	28	9	193	0.76	0.45
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Need for Self-Reflection (IND)	28	9	208	1.3	0.2
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Insight (IINS)	28	9	186.5	0.53	0.59

Relationship status

Table 11: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of relationship status at time one for the control group

	n (Single)	n (In a relationship)	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	p-value
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	19	18	367.5	0.76	0.45
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	19	18	314	-0.84	0.4
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	19	18	305	-1.11	0.27
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	19	18	296.5	-1.37	0.17
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG)	18	18	394	1.92	0.05
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Need for Self-Reflection (IND)	18	18	384.5	1.62	0.11
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Insight (IINS)	18	18	353.5	0.63	0.53

Life Changes

Table 12: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of life changes at time one for the control group

	n (Life changes)	**n (No Life changes)**	**Wilcoxon statistic**	**Z**	**p-value**
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	17	25	287.5	-1.99	0.05
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	17	25	344	-0.54	0.59
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	17	25	397	0.8	0.43
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	17	25	303	-1.59	0.11
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG)	17	24	366	0.23	0.82
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Need for Self-Reflection (IND)	17	24	354.5	-0.05	0.96
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Insight (IINS)	17	24	331.5	-0.66	0.51

Rating of changes

Table 13: Mann-Whitney U Tests: Comparison of rating of life changes at time one for the control group

	n (Positive)	**n (Negative)**	**Wilcoxon statistic**	**Z**	**p-value**
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	8	8	55	-1.32	0.19
Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)	8	8	71.5	0.32	0.75
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Negative Affect (PNN)	8	8	70.5	0.21	0.83
Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Positive Affect (PNP)	8	8	61	-0.69	0.49
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Engagement in Self-Reflection (IENG)	8	8	60.5	-0.74	0.46
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Need for Self-Reflection (IND)	8	8	74	0.58	0.56
Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Insight (IINS)	8	8	62	-0.58	0.56