

THE UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

Faculty of Arts
Faculty of Business, Law and Sport

**Fostering Innovative Organisational Cultures and High Performance
through Explicit Spiritual Leadership**

A Chief Executive's Integrative Journey of Spirit and Leadership
in the Workplace

Lynne Sedgmore CBE

Professional Doctorate by Contribution to Practice

October 2013

This Thesis has been completed as a requirement
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This thesis was a work for Contribution to Practice so has a lot of the authors writings and books etc are in it. This didital copy is the main text, the following was also included.

Evidence cited in numerical order by # in blue font throughout the context statement

#1: Fry and Altman (2013) *Spiritual Leadership in Action: The CEL Story* (full book)

#2: Copy of Prime Minister's letter

#3: My career, traditional achievements and national profile are evidenced through a range of documentation including my curriculum vitae and biography, press interviews and articles, an OFSTED report, annual reports, Mango stakeholder perception research executive summary and other relevant documentation – (a collection of relevant papers)

#4: *Full Circle: a short history of the development of values and beliefs in the further education system.* (full article)

#5: Fbfe National Conference leaflet

#6: Foreword to *Living Spirituality in the Workplace - the CEL Way*

#7: Joseph, M., (2002) *Leaders and Spirituality - A Case Study* PhD, copy of pp 113 to 125, and pp159 to 179 from core text specifically illustrating my contribution

#8: Memory stick containing the full PhD thesis - Joseph, M., (2002) *Leaders and Spirituality - A Case Study*

#9: Western and Sedgmore (2008) *A Privileged Conversation*, which describes the process and content of our coaching relationship (copy of full chapter)

#10: Simon (2008) *Democratising Strategy*, a chapter in *Organisations Connected* which describes an innovative project to involve all staff in strategy formulation, (copy of full chapter, relevant pages marked)

#11: Altman, Y., Wilson, E., Ozbilgin, M. (2007) *Organisational effectiveness and well-being at work: CEL as a case-study*, (contents page and executive summary of the project)

#12: *Living Spirituality in the Workplace – The CEL Way*, (copy of full booklet)

#13: Altman (2010) *In Search of Transcendence - Making a Connection with Transcendence, An interview with Lynne Sedgmore*, (copy of full article)

#14: Fry and Nisiewicz (2012), *Maximizing the Triple Bottom Line through Spiritual Leadership*, pp 257 to 282 - a 25 page case study on CEL.

#15: CEL (2007) winning application to the International Spirit at Work Award (ISAW) titled *Ordinary Heroes, Extraordinary Company*, (full submission and Appendix 2)

#16: *A Leader's Pilgrimage*, an initial narrative of the first two stages of my illuminative evaluation

#17: ISAW letter informing CEL it had gained the award

#18: *Making Space for Faith in FE* - relevant pages

#19: Bill Rammel's letter, project papers and press coverage

#20: *CEL 2003 – 2008, Our book* (full copy with specific references to pp 40, 48, 50, 51)

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Included material cont.

- # 21: Copy of email on CELishness
- # 22 Presence assignment
- #23: An extract from one of my talks to Surrey University postgraduate students
- #24: CEL leaving gift book to Lynne, (full copy)
- # 25: *The Ever Renewing Story of CEL*, (full booklet and presentation)
- # 26: *The Organisational Lunch*, (full copy – pre-published) relevant page marked
- #27: Spirituality policy draft, emails, Joseph PhD p 183-5
- # 28: CEL organisational organogram
- # 29: the *Faith Communities Toolkit*, (relevant pages)
- #30: Sedgmore (2006), *Leadership in a Pluralist Society: helping colleges to respond to issues of faith and belief*, (full copy)
- #31: *CEL as a High Performing Organisation*, (full copy)
- # 32: *Illumination of Practice through Research and Inquiry*, (full chapter), in Handbook of Faith and Spirituality (2013)
- #33: Invitation email p 65
- # 34: Professor Mitroff email p66
- #35: AoM - Personal Development Workshops sessions, a sample and a sample of programmes of keynotes and talks
- #36: Lynne's articles - Sedgmore (2002) *Learning Excellence*, Sedgmore (2001) *Emotional Intelligence*, Sedgmore (2000) *Personal Reflections on Workplace Ministry as Leadership*, Sedgmore (2000a) *Doing All for the Glory of God*, (copies of each article)
- # 37: Faith in the Community: Leadership Challenges in the Learning and Skills Sector, (content page and executive summary)
- #38: Full version of my articulation of my mystical experience written in 1997
- #39: *Enlivenment*, a published collection of my poetry
- #40: *Review of CEL's Impact in the FE Sector* - Oakleigh Consulting Group, (full copy)
- Google hits for Lynne Sedgmore (general) 4,470 and for Lynne Sedgmore (spirituality at work) 9,540 and for Lynne Sedgmore (spirituality) 17,100 (as on September 23rd 2013))
- 157 Group website www.157group.com

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ABSTRACT FOR THESIS

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Abstract

This context statement describes a twenty-four year journey as an educational leader learning to lead explicitly from the spiritual dimension within my workplaces, informed by three powerful mystical experiences. It draws upon an illuminative evaluation analysis of extensive evidence of my practice and my inner life, and integrates the academic literature and critiques of spiritual leadership (SL) and spirituality in the workplace (SiW). Original contribution to practice and to knowledge is illuminated through the creation of an original whole-organisation framework for fostering spiritual capital through explicit spiritual leadership and leadership presence distilled from my actual practice. The core of the context statement describes, practically and theoretically, leadership of highly innovative organisational cultures through a whole-organisation approach to generating high-performing, high-spirited further education organisations through personal spiritual leadership steeped in presence, and six spiritually explicit interventions. Additional original contribution to knowledge creation in the SL and SiW paradigms is articulated through case studies carried out by respected academics and thought leaders who used my organisations as research laboratories, and produced case studies and academic papers. The nature of the contributions made and the conceptual and spiritual underpinning of my personal spiritual leadership are described, as are the complexities of working with spirituality as a leader in the public domain. The context statement concludes with a reflective chapter on the impact of undertaking this doctorate.

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Declaration, copyright statement and intellectual property rights

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

I confirm that this thesis is entirely my own work.

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This context statement would not have been completed without the unwavering support, calming influence and practical help of my beloved husband John.

My supervisors, June and Karen, have consistently challenged me, but most importantly have guided and supported me to go beyond what I thought I was capable of in writing academically.

I owe the external examiners huge gratitude. They offered immense insight and wisdom through encouraging me to articulate more explicitly the spiritual underpinning of my maps and the integrative nature of my journey. A liberating and powerful addition to my work.

Thanks too to Lindsay and Sandra for their technical and design support.

None of my contribution would have been possible without the fabulous staff I have worked with in my organisations, and the academic researchers, especially Professors Jody Fry and Yochanan Altman.

I thank also the spiritual teachers and companions who have accompanied me on my journey, and not least, the constant nourishment and guidance I receive from Source.

Chapter one: Introduction

1.1 Spirit of context statement

As well as describing and evidencing my original professional contribution, I have also explored and reflected upon the complexities, challenges, personal growth and deep motivation involved in my journey of integration of spirit and work. No leader travels alone and I have tried to reflect the collective nature of my journey. The photograph of staff from the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) and the poem below are an attempt to involve colleagues and to capture the spirit of my journey.



The Contract

A word from the led

And in the end we follow them -
not because we are paid,
not because we might see some advantage,
not because of the things they have accomplished,
not even because of the dreams they dream
but simply because of who they are:
the man, the woman, the leader, the boss,
standing up there when the wave hits the rock,
passing out faith and confidence like life jackets,
knowing the currents, holding the doubts,
imagining the delights and terrors of every landfall;
captain, pirate, and parent by turns,
the bearer of our countless hopes and expectations.
We give them our trust. We give them our effort.
What we ask in return is that they stay true.

William Ayot (2003)

1.2 Structure of context statement

This context statement has eight chapters, four appendices and eight figures, plus the box of evidence. There is a glossary of acronyms used in the text and appendices.

The thirty-eight pieces of evidence are referenced numerically, with a hash tag, (#1, #2), and are threaded throughout the context statement in blue text, with the title of the document. An explanatory note to the examiner is given where necessary within the evidence. The majority of the evidence is in hard copy. The largest publication is on a memory stick, #8. A full reference list of evidence is provided in the evidence box for ease of reference. The nineteen most critical and pertinent pieces of evidence are underlined as and when they are referenced.

This introductory chapter continues with an overview of the eight chapters then summarises the scope of my general professional achievements, contribution and career progress over thirty-four years of working in further education (FE) colleges in England. It then reflects on how I have combined a high-profile public career with being a spiritual seeker from childhood, and an explicit spiritual leader since 1989. It articulates my integrative journey of spirit and work, my motivations for completing this doctorate, my research as personal process and the originality of my contribution. The final section offers insight and new perspectives gained after completing the context statement.

Chapter two provides a summary of the spiritual leadership (SL) and spirituality in the workplace (SiW) literature, then explores the complex issues and challenges involved in working with spirituality in the public domain. It provides an overview of definitions of spirituality and the academic critiques of SL and SiW, which have informed and challenged my practice. This chapter explores performativity and concludes with a brief critique of the work of Professor Fry, a leading-edge academic in the field who has written extensively on my practice and contribution.

Chapter three describes the illuminative evaluation methodology I applied to my professional practice and my spiritual experiences and inner life. Figure 1 illustrates the core themes I identified, which illuminated a clear and robust articulation of the nature of my original contribution, distilled from the vast amount of evidence. It includes, as Figure 2, an original overarching framework of how I developed a whole-organisation approach to fostering spiritual capital through spiritually explicit leadership and leadership presence; distilled from

my practice through the reflective process of this doctorate. Each component of Figure 2 is explained in Chapters four, five, six and seven; and in Figures 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Chapter four provides a chronological summary of how my spirituality, through my experiential knowing of Source and sense of self, has developed, impacted upon and integrated within my organisational life and leadership. An initial powerful mystical experience of union in 1989 is described, as are two other powerful but different kinds of mystical experiences, of oneness in 2002, and of the void in 2005. It culminates with Figure 3, a mapping of the internal constructs, mystical knowing and outward manifestation of my personal spirituality, which underpins everything that I undertake in my personal and professional life.

Chapter five illustrates how I understood and developed my personal spiritual leadership in the period from 1998 to 2008. It focuses on how I developed leadership presence and my senses of self, including no-self, and how this impacted upon my leadership. Drawing on the PhD by Joseph (2002) and relevant aspects of my work in Guildford College and in CEL, it articulates what was spiritually specific in my leadership and how I understood and manifested explicit personal spiritual leadership. The eight components of my personal spiritual leadership are mapped as Figures 4 and 5. The writers and theories that most influenced me and how my leadership impacted on others are also explored.

Chapter six is the crux of my context statement as it describes in detail my original contribution to practice, and the resulting organisational outcomes in Figure 6. It articulates how I led highly innovative organisational cultures through an original whole-organisation approach to fostering spiritual capital, summarised in Figure 7. It opens by setting the context, then articulates the specifically spiritual nature, distinctiveness and success of CEL. It then describes and reflects upon the nature of my explicit spiritual leadership and six spiritually explicit interventions identified from my illuminative evaluation. It draws upon theoretical models and academic critiques to understand and describe the contribution and originality of my practice.

Chapter seven describes how CEL became a research laboratory for respected academics, and illustrates through four strands, Figure 8, how I made original contributions to knowledge in the SiW and SL paradigms.

Chapter eight concludes with a final reflection on the impact undertaking this doctorate has had upon me, and the recent changes in how I now approach spirituality within my current leadership role.

1.3 Summary of my general professional contribution

To experiment with the integration and application of explicit spiritual leadership (SL) and spirituality in the workplace (SiW) within the mainstream of FE and the UK public sector, particularly within a national organisation directly sponsored and funded by the secretary of state for skills and higher education, was a highly contentious and unusual approach to take. It could be argued it was potentially a serious career killer. To undertake my integrative journey I realised very early on, as head of Croydon Business School (CBS) in 1989, that I needed to ensure my own high performance, transparency, accountability and critical reflexivity consistently alongside a high-performing organisation. I supported this approach with a consistent professional track record of significant success and impact, which included meeting all targets and being valued highly by staff, students, customers and stakeholders. Only on such a basis would I hold the genuine trust and legitimacy to enter into, and to experiment with, such an unusual, unexplored sphere. My experience has been that the spiritual aspect of my leadership, if shared by me, was curious for some, uncomfortable for others, inexplicable for many; but always tolerated within the context of my overall professional success and achievements.

Over the years I have gained a prominent national profile, successful track record and positive reputation within FE. This has allowed me to feel sufficiently courageous and able to be gradually more open and articulate in my SL and SiW explorations and practice. Being appointed Commander of the British Empire (CBE) by the Queen, in 2004, for services to education was a great boon, as was winning several respected organisational awards, including the British Diversity Award; being in the British Telecom UK's top one hundred visionary companies; appearing in the top fifty Stonewall gay-friendly organisations; achieving the "GoodCorporation" quality mark for Corporate Social Responsibility; and being awarded the Business Excellence Bronze Award. CEL won the International Spirit at Work Award, (ISAWA), in 2007, the first UK public sector organisation to win the award and only the second UK organisation to win after the Body Shop.

A valuable overview of all aspects of my work is presented in the book #1: Fry and Altman (2013), *Spiritual Leadership in Action: The CEL Story*. I will refer to relevant chapters and pages of this book throughout the context statement. For the CEL 2006/2007 Annual Report, the prime minister, Tony Blair, wrote a personal foreword praising the success and impact of CEL. #2: copy of Prime Minister's letter. I was promoted six times from 1989 to 2013, including three different chief executive officer roles, and have led from a range of traditional

organisational development approaches within mainstream FE as well as experimenting, learning and expanding the sphere of my explicit spiritual interventions. In #3: my career, traditional achievements and national profile are evidenced through a range of documentation including my curriculum vitae and biography, press interviews and articles, an OFSTED report, annual reports, Mango stakeholder perception research executive summary and other relevant documentation. In addition #1: Fry and Altman (2013) *Spiritual Leadership in Action: The CEL Story*, chapter three pages 34-42 provides a useful summary of my overall professional achievements; and Appendix I summarises the traditional high-performing outcomes and impact of my organisations.

1.4 Summary of my integrative journey of spirit and work

In Chapters three and four I describe in detail how three powerful mystical experiences and ensuing spiritual development have informed, influenced and been integrated into how I have led within each of my organisations. Spirituality has always been central in my life and I needed to express my spirituality within my workplaces. My journey has coincided with being at the forefront of a newly developing paradigm in leadership practice and research, which has assisted that integration. Over the years, my definition of what spirituality means for me and my understanding of the need to define spirituality collectively within the workplace have changed considerably.

The manner in which I have travelled through three different mystical experiences and how these were integrated within my professional life is described in Chapter four. How they impacted on my organisational life and the nature of my leadership is explored in Chapter five and theorised in figures through the creation of new maps as Figures 4 and 5.

1.5 Research as personal process

Reason and Marshall (1987) question why students pursue doctorates and they challenge and expand the orthodox answer of research being primarily "research is for them" by "contributing to the fund of knowledge in a community for other scholars", to include two additional elements; "research is for us" and "research is for me". They argue that "good research", which is more relevant and better integrated, should encompass and include all three elements.

Research "for us" is generated through cooperative experiential inquiry to enable a community of people to make sense of and act effectively in their world. Research "for me" involves research as an educative process, in which the researcher's capacity for personal development and change encompasses "enormous potential for personal growth", which occurs through the research process itself. They explore how researchers choose, consciously or unconsciously, research topics "to move through and beyond old limiting patterns". It has become clear to me in the writing of this thesis how much my personal process and motivation for involvement in workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership has been illuminated and deepened. I have increased significantly my understanding of the nature, challenge and failures of my personal and organisational spiritual leadership and organisational leadership of the spiritual dimension despite achieving so much in my "successful" career. I have changed significantly my perspective on and valuing of the role and importance of spirituality in my professional role.

Writing this thesis has been liberating and important "to me" personally, and it is a sincere attempt to contribute to research "for us" in that I have reflected upon, described and evidenced the collective processes and work carried out in my organisational communities, and with the amazing staff and students I have worked with, to generate and co-create the original and experimental work involved.

The element of research "for them", the scholars, is also important in that I want to offer to the SL and SiW fields of both practice and research, an account of and a reflection upon my learning experiences and the wisdom I have gained through being a pioneer at the forefront of the SL and SiW fields for many years, based on my innovative practice.

1.6 Motivation

My intrinsic personal motivation to work in the SL and SiW fields was inspired by an initial mystical spiritual experience in 1989 which stimulated me to integrate my spirituality and my professional work and to begin a challenging journey of integrating, articulating and implementing my personal spiritual leadership within the English FE system.

I am deeply motivated to support staff and learners to reach their maximum potential, as an educator and a leader. My vocation is to grow and support people, therefore my workplace is a space in which, I, as a senior leader, choose to actively foster an environment of maximum growth and potential, including the spiritual dimension, for its own sake. Having said that, I am aware that in the public sector, as a CEO I am a guardian of public resources, accountable to

the taxpayer for value for money and that I have to achieve my targets; indeed I take satisfaction in doing so. It has always mattered to me that the targets and goal of my organisation were ones I believed in, and ones that were co-created by the organisational community in which I led and worked.

My professional motivation for undertaking this professional doctorate is twofold. First, I intend to retire in two years' time so this is my way of articulating, synthesising and recording my professional contribution for myself as a reflective leader. Second, I want to leave a thoughtful and robust legacy of wisdom and encouragement to other practising leaders who choose to travel a similar journey of integration and experimentation with SL and SiW in their organisations and professional fields.

1.7 Originality of my contribution

The originality of my contribution comprises advancing and informing organisational practice and knowledge creation within the SL and SiW fields in four ways.

First, the formulation of an original theoretical organisational development framework, underpinned by my personal spirituality and my personal spiritual leadership, distilled from my practice, comprising four components of how I fostered collective and organisational spiritual capital and innovative cultures. This holistic framework is distilled from the illumination of both my spiritual inner life and professional evidence and practice; and is illustrated as Figure 2 page 38. Each of its components are described in more detail in Chapters four, five and seven respectively.

Second, I intend through this framework to make a further contribution to both practice and knowledge creation by articulating a way of leading effectively in the mainstream organisations beyond the constructed self; from union, oneness and the void.

Third, I have led highly innovative organisational cultures through my personal spiritual leadership (Figure 4 page 63), and through applying a spiritually explicit whole-organisation approach, through six spiritually explicit interventions (Figure 6 page 79), to generate high-performing, high-spirited further education organisations.

Fourth, my organisations, by my invitation, had become research laboratories for well-known academics seeking new knowledge creation. Since 2006 I had commissioned projects, which

had produced publications and case studies, by academics to the SL and SiW fields from my original and leading-edge practice. I had also contributed, personally and professionally, to national and international SL and SiW academic conferences, discourse and publications from a practising FE leader's perspective and experiences, initiating original research and innovative leadership development on the spiritual dimension within English FE. This is articulated in Figure 7 page 84.

1.8 Insights and new perspectives

The completion of this doctorate has been in and of itself another facet of my integrative journey. Five significant insights while writing this context statement, stimulated by external examiners, now cause me to problematise the explicitness of my approach, an aspect that seemed so imperative and central at the beginning of my organisational journey in 1989 and was the presenting motivation for undertaking this doctorate.

First, the understanding that whether I was spiritual, or not, mattered far less to others than I had anticipated. This is reflected upon by me in Chapters five (Section 5.3) and eight through the insight I had that "being spiritually explicit was far less important to others than I had envisaged, which caused me to reflect on who my focus on SL and SiW is primarily for, myself or others."

Second, I realised that explicitness is far less important in my current leadership practice than is the quality and nature of my presence, my sense of self and my non-reactive responsiveness to others. This emerged as I understood more deeply the spiritual underpinning and practice of my personal spiritual leadership, (Figures 4 and 5, Chapter four). As the context statement progressed I began to see that my explicit spiritual leadership is significantly about the sense of self from which I am able to lead in any particular moment and situation, and the nature of the leadership presence I was manifesting; something that people commented upon and noticed.

Third, the fostering of the ability to bring the fullest potential of others, their wholeness and their whole self into the workplace was more important to me than any specific form, nature or expression of spirituality or religious tradition.

Fourth, my in-depth explorations have revealed an element of my self-image and identity that has been closely bound with my spiritual narcissism and my attachment to my sense of self as a spiritual leader. Roberts (2005:36-7) explores how people who have experienced the unitive state can play out the role of someone with a special mission. In hindsight I can see that whatever good was done through my leadership in CEL and Guildford College there was an

intrinsic drive to my explicitness concerning spirituality and spiritual leadership. I have challenged my own professional and spiritual narcissism in the writing of this thesis in Chapter six Section 6.4.6 and Chapter eight.

Fifth, I now realise that spiritual explicitness mattered to me as an expression of the fullness and manifestation of my deepest mystical truth and experiences. It was very important for me to be able to bring my whole self into my workplaces, co-creating the space and permission to be the mystic I am and to give this voice; an imperative captured by Forman (2011:84-85) when he says, “I could do nothing else than try to give the sacred in my life a voice, however flawed and halting ... we all have to speak it out in our own way”. This need for speaking about my mystical experiences became confused with a need to be spiritually explicit, which I now perceive as more accurately stated as the need to be able to express my own sense of self. Bringing my whole self, (including the mystic in me, which is core to my being), into my workplaces was deeply important as my work means so much to me as my professional vocation. I recognise also that I have made work the means to an end of living a full and integrated mystical and spiritual life, as well as fulfilling my professional obligations.

I believe that my thesis challenges the prevalent notion of having to partake of a professional persona, or mask, to be a successful leader. My integrative journey illustrates that to be a truly effective, authentic, empowering and impactful leader one needs to bring one’s authentic, whole self into the workplace, being as fully present as possible. In my case this involved bringing in all of my mystical self and exploring this fully to be able to further integrate my spiritual expression within my temporal leadership contexts.

Chapter two – Exploration of the literature, complexities and academic critiques of spiritual leadership and spirituality in the workplace

2.1 Introduction

Before describing my contribution to practice in Chapter six, I provide a brief overview of the literature, FE context, complexities and definitions of working with spirituality in the workplace. I then discuss the academic critiques of SL and SiW. These complexities, definitions and critiques have informed, challenged and influenced my practice, assisting considerably my reflections in real time and in the writing of this context statement. The following discussion of this literature in advance of the description of the analysis of my evidence and the two chapters on my contribution, in Chapters six and seven, is intended to set the academic context within which my practice is considered.

2.2 A spectrum of views on religion and spirituality

In my experience it is possible for individuals to define themselves as religious and not spiritual, both religious and spiritual, or spiritual and not religious, or through terms such as agnostic, atheist or New Age, or through means of an alternative spiritual tradition.

Dorr (2004) makes the useful distinction of “spirituality as a religious tradition” and spirituality “as a set of personal attitudes and commitments” outside, or beyond, any doctrinal or cultural adherence.

The issue with definitions lies partly in the multitude of forms that spirituality takes across a spectrum of views. At one end of this spectrum are those who adhere to and belong to a particular organised religious tradition with clear and explicit doctrines and beliefs. Within traditional religions there exist more pluralistic positions, such as Teasdale (1999), who encourages an “inter spirituality” that encompasses all religions and paths. He articulates spirituality as a way of life that is a part of our entire existence and includes the search for direction, meaning and belonging in one’s life.

A range of literature (including Heelas and Woodhead 2005, Heelas 2008, King 2009, Forman 2004, Tacey 2004) describes the plethora of what is termed New Age or “unchurched spiritualities”. These include paganism, complementary therapies, goddess worship, Druidry, Wicca and other paths that appeal most to those for whom being spiritual is a deeply personal, autonomous and individualistic path outside any mainstream, more orthodox traditions.

At the other end of this spectrum, as Chickering (2006) points out, many people define themselves as atheists or agnostics; and while they do not hold theistic beliefs they too are searching for their own truth and express themselves through words like authenticity, meaning, purpose, integrity and wisdom, rather than religion or spirituality.

A new position is emerging that includes the term religious atheism. A key proponent, Alain de Botton (2013:13), suggests a "religion for atheists" and argues that there is no need for a set of religious or doctrinal beliefs in a God of any kind. He posits that "secular society has been unfairly impoverished by the loss of an array of practices and themes" from the religious realm, which if drawn on in an appropriate manner can "assuage a few of the most persistent and unattended ills of secular life". Rather than any transcendental urge he believes we come together in communities to cope with terrifying degrees of pain, which arise from vulnerability to professional failure, from death, and from troubled relationships. He calls for people in this modern age to "feel unembarrassed" about reappropriating for the secular realm those "consoling, subtle or just charming" religious rituals that inspire, such as gratitude, beautiful spaces, pilgrimages and singing; all of which can nourish the spirit and soul.

My approach amid the vast array and spectrum of personal beliefs, views, sensitivities and attitudes has been to find my own perspective and approach, as a human being and leader, and to be as inclusive as possible, honouring my own personal spirituality as well as that of those I have worked with. I describe my own personal spirituality in detail in Chapter four and it is described in # 1: Fry and Altman (2013), *Spiritual Leadership in Action: The CEL Story*, pages 24-30. How I experience my spirituality has changed over the years, particularly affected by three stages of mystical experience and shifts in my epistemological understanding and awareness is detailed in Chapter four. I would now articulate my sense of self as:

"seeing, being and responding within non dual reality as both manifest and unmanifest, as self and non self, through being awake and present in the timelessness of now".

2.3 English public sector and further education context

My contribution to SL and SiW has been within a sector that does not have a tradition of spirituality being an acceptable or established element of its leadership and organisational discourse. Indeed, the practical vocational world is frequently highly sceptical of the spiritual and there is no national requirement in FE colleges for spiritual elements in the curriculum for learners as there is in schools. Throughout the seventies and eighties, the spiritual focus was on setting up chaplaincies and prayer rooms in colleges. Within FE the history of public discourse on the spiritual dimension is one pertaining primarily to the pastoral care of students, the curriculum and, more recently, to the offering and creation of safe spaces for interfaith dialogue and celebration of faiths.

During my time in Guildford College, from 1998 to 2004, I found allies in the National Ecumenical Association for Further Education (NEAFE) and the National Council of Faiths and Beliefs in Further Education (Fbfe). I have been part of a series of FE initiatives, since 1999, as articulated in an article jointly authored with Ann Limb OBE, *#4: Full Circle: a short history of the development of values and beliefs in the further education system*. To my knowledge, there is no one else who is advancing the role of spiritual leadership or of spirituality explicit organisational interventions within general FE; I am regarded as the sector leader most informed and experienced in this area. I give keynote speeches on spiritual leadership for Fbfe conferences, my most recent one being in January 2013 at the Fbfe National Conference, #5: conference leaflet.

2.4 Definitions and complexities – working with spirituality in the workplace

Tyler Scott in Conger (1994: 66) argues that “we have made rigid demarcations between our private and our public lives, reserving the spiritual for the private realm and leadership for our professional and public lives” with ensuing psychological and emotional “blindness” that prevent those in public leadership positions from seeing “a view of the whole”. This is my experience of many leaders and staff who feel private and public spheres should be kept separate, a response that has never felt true to me. I do accept the need to recognise and respect the importance of this separation in others and to find ways of working sensitively with their boundaries, while not dishonouring my own desire for integration.

Western (2008) argues that the term spiritual needs to be “problematized and critiqued in order to make sense of it, and is especially challenging when used in the context of the secular

workplace". He argues there is no shared language, clearly defined or agreed terms, or normative assumptions to express and define spirituality. This results in varied definitions and understandings of faith, spirituality and religion, most of which are often used interchangeably.

From 1989 I sought literature on values and transformational leadership and discovered a valuable and growing literature such as Adams (1984, 1986), Bennis (1989), Campbell, Devine and Young (1990), Campbell and Tawadey (1990), Covey (1989), Handy (1998), Owen (1987, 2000), Pascale and Athos (1981), Senge (1990) and Tichny and Devanna (1990), which I read avidly and used as a legitimate management basis for my leadership approach and culture interventions.

As the SL and SiW fields developed I discovered a range of writers on SL and SiW who influenced my practice further including Ashmos and Duchon (2000), Autry (1991, 2001), Benefiel (2005, 2008), Biberman and Whitty (2007), Conger (1989, 1990, 1994), Fairholm (1997, 1998, 2001), Fry (2005, 2008, 2012), Fry and Kriger (2009), Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2004), Greenleaf (1977, 1998), Gregory (2006, 2008, 2009), Hawkins (1991, 1994), Hawley (1993), Kanungo and Mendonça (1994), Neal (2005, 2013), Ritscher (1983), Vaill (1989, 1998, 2000), Zohar (1990) and Zohar and Marshall (1999, 2004).

Kanungo and Mendonça in Conger (1994) argue that the spiritual dimension of leadership is differentiated by being truly transformational through an idealised internal vision and by continual self-transformation of both self and followers, in relation to a higher order and purpose. Hawkins (1991:183) argues for individuals who can operate from a place of wisdom steeped in higher purpose and alignment, which he says is "spiritual learning in worldly organisations", learning that is essentially reflexive and integrative and is vital to "draw out the awareness of the deeper purpose which contains and informs" the spiritual leader. Greenleaf (1997) and Spears (1998) from their servant leadership perspective argue that leadership actions can be expressed in terms of deep service to others through a deep commitment to listening, openness to understanding others, awareness of learning and growth, a commitment to the growth of others, and a commitment to community.

Case and Gosling (2010:262) state that the field of workplace spirituality is "plagued by problems of definition" and that resolving the definitional problem is not the answer: instead it is "necessary to indicate the range of meanings that have been identified".

The writers and definitions I found most useful were those who offered broad definitions for spirituality, such as Mitroff and Denton's (1999, 1999a) "inter connectedness" and Zohar and Marshall's (1999, 2002) "wholeness, purpose, connectedness, and presence", which they claim are elements of spirituality that can be easily discussed without uttering the word "spirituality". Seifert, Goodman and Harmon (2009) point out that many names or constructs aside from spirituality and religion can be utilised as people explore or reflect on themselves, including "meaning and purpose". Ashmos and Duchon (2000:13) recognise SiW as "an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community", and Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2004:14) posit that

"workplace spirituality is a framework of organisational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy".

My approach to defining spirituality collectively within the workplace has changed considerably over the years. Joseph (2002) argues it is impossible to define spirituality in a neat or commonly acceptable way and identifies four types of connections from his research with practitioners – connection with self, others, nature and a higher power. I now share the view of King (2009:3-13) that

"many definitions of spirituality have been suggested, but it is perhaps more helpful to ask what spirituality *does* rather than what it *is*", and that the spiritual "has to be sought, enacted and realised" through "the deepening of reflection and an honest attitude to oneself – an authenticity that recognises truth and acknowledges a reality greater than oneself".

I agree with Conger (1994) that any separation between the private and the public, internally and externally can be worked through by a leader with sufficient development and motivation, and is ultimately "self-imposed" because they are in positions to change the prevalent paradigms; this approach has been the essence of my spiritual leadership journey.

2.5 Exploration of the literature, complexities and academic critiques of SL and SiW

I provide now a summary of the academic critiques of SL and SiW as these have informed and challenged my practice significantly. They have assisted my reflections in real time and in the writing of this context statement. A discussion of these critiques in advance of my contribution chapter is important to set the academic context within which I reflect on my practice in Chapter six.

Lips-Wiersma, Lund and Fornaciari (2009:298) state that

“critical workplace spirituality does not argue that workplace spirituality per se is inappropriate but rather focuses on the way in which spirituality can be misused or misappropriated, particularly for managerial control”

They claim that “the potential for harm is ever present within organisations”, and these critiques can assist leaders “to recognise where and how their own potentially harmful agendas may emerge in the process”. I have found this perspective valuable as it describes how I have approached working with the critiques in real time and in the course of this doctorate.

I have identified eight academic critiques from among the most influential, including Berman Brown 2003, Carette and King 2005, Case and Gosling 2007, 2010, Lips-Wiersma, Lund and Fornaciari 2009, Tourish and Pinnington 2002, Tourish and Tourish 2010, Western 2008a, all of which have had a profound impact on me. They have enabled me to understand more deeply the challenges I have faced in my leadership and organisational practice and to reflect on what I might have done better or differently. These eight critiques are: first, the ways in which leaders who profess spirituality can abuse power is underexplored and lacks sophistication; second, the utilitarianism and commoditisation of SiW is underacknowledged with an overespoused theory of altruism; third, major challenges and complexities in its implementation are ignored or unseen; fourth, there is a potential detrimental effect on employees; fifth, there is a lack of empirical evidence; sixth, SL and SiW practices contain major conceptual confusion, impreciseness and paradox; seventh, spirituality does not belong in organisational life at all; and last, that the benefits of SiW are exaggerated. These critiques are threaded through my descriptions and reflections of practice in more detail in Chapter six. Below I explore briefly how they challenged me in the writing of this context statement.

2.6 Challenging the academic critiques

While writing this context statement, I had a strong emotional reaction on reading the various critiques and felt defensive, misunderstood and unseen, alongside having a sense of unfair critical derision, suspicion and unrealistic assumptions being made by the academics. With perseverance, meditation, reflection and inquiry, I began to see the ways in which my reactions were being triggered. In particular, I was able to face my own narcissism in relation to professing to be a spiritual leader (see Section 6.4.6 pages 98 to 101 for more exploration of this).

While the SL and SiW critiques have assisted my reflective process considerably, I do challenge aspects of these critiques and agree with Case and Gosling's (2010) critique of Tourish and Tourish (2010) as a "strident post-structural critique of the spirituality at work literature". Case and Gosling (2010) challenge the core premise of most critical management theorists claiming that various academic discourses have eschewed the fundamental distinguishing feature of spiritual perspectives on work and leadership; the important feature that spiritual perspectives of reality and authority derive from a transcendental source – a very different reality and perspective from the academics making the critiques. They suggest an alternative proposition: that the spiritual organisation can be taken as a potentially liberating notion, which acknowledges the resurgence and plurality of grassroots spiritualities; celebrating and valuing spiritual capacities and assisting employees to find meaning in their lives through work.

Case and Gosling (2010) argue for a reversal of the currently perceived view of organisational instrumentalism, which views the organisation as taking advantage of employees by utilising spirituality as a manipulative force for performative outcomes. They propose the possibility of an instrumentalism on the part of the employee, in that the employee can use the organisation for their own spiritual expression, growth and development. I identify with their proposition of "another direction of instrumentality" such that employees can "use work, organizational life, and employment itself as instruments in their spiritual lives" (Case and Gosling 2010:275), rather than just being victims of a leader's control and coercion. I know that I was using my organisations for myself and for others for personal and spiritual liberation. I view organisational leadership as my spiritual path alongside wanting to deliver an outstanding and valuable service to my learners, to the FE sector and to funders. The Case and Gosling (2010) article enabled me to articulate the core purpose and motivation of my practice and my contribution in a more sophisticated and nuanced manner. I gained several important insights and can better articulate my reasons for regarding the main academic critiques as valuable but not always consistent with my experience.

The proposition of "another direction of instrumentality" names my core intention and motivation of how, as a leader, I was working with spirituality for its own sake, genuinely aiming to liberate the full potential of staff. At the merger of CEL, I was asked to go forward to lead the new merged organisation with a budget of £125m; I declined to do so as I felt the organisation was too big and too geographically dispersed for me to lead in the spiritually explicit manner that I had in CEL. I was also broken-hearted at the loss of CEL.

Despite the potential of instrumentality and the potential distortion of spirituality into an overemphasis on performativity, all the successful bottom-line results I achieved within all my organisations were never my core motivation. Rather they were the result of working hard and doing a good job for its own sake. All surplus monies were fed back into improving or expanding the service and into staff rewards, particularly as I had no shareholder financial targets to satisfy. For me financial abundance meant even more good work could be carried out for those we served, with no direct correlations between our overall performance and financial reward; apart from our salaries and occasional performance-linked bonuses. As a pragmatist, I knew that for funding to continue targets had to be met, and my staff have always taken satisfaction in overachieving.

I have never been someone who fits herself within a set of specific religious doctrines and rules to follow. My spirituality is highly pluralistic, inclusive and is ultimately about liberation and finding one's maximum potential. A key element of my personal spirituality and leadership is enabling everyone to be the best they can, and supporting them to live a virtuous life inside their organisation. My exploration with values and virtues is described in detail in Chapters four and six. I was open always to challenge and dissent; and to exploring my own shadow and blind spots, as best I could with continual inquiry as a way of life. Blakeley (2007) illustrates that all leaders have blind spots, and identifies nine different kinds. She posits that overcoming them involves leading and learning simultaneously eight learning practices to assist in translating emotional and cognitive learning into action; no easy task as she admits. While I have not applied her specific approach, her valuable analysis has helped me with identifying my own blind spots.

I have coped with personal and professional attacks and on several occasions have been on the receiving end of significant resistance and transference in my attempts to lead major changes within a particular culture. This has included anonymous letters attacking my professional and personal integrity, and having to take out a successful grievance to hold on to my senior position, which a chairman wished to take away from me unfairly. Simultaneously I have generated incredible unsolicited loyalty from staff with petitions raised in my defence. During the grievance in 1994, thirty staff volunteered to be witnesses to vouch for my integrity through letters, petitions and statements from staff expressing how they felt liberated and empowered by my leadership. Fortunately the negative incidents, while deeply upsetting, have been far fewer than the positive, and have made me stronger.

Finally, I am a rebel, a thought leader and someone who enjoys challenging paradigms and who does not work well within orthodox or abusive authority. I always see a more cooperative, innovative and entrepreneurial way forward. I have spent my life fighting against, arguing with, and manoeuvring around, through or over inappropriate, restrictive or abusive managerial authority to create what I termed in CBS in 1990, “oases of freedom and performance”. The overperformance in my organisations is based on people feeling very free and able to get on with their work, highly trusted and with both personal and professional autonomy. I have been part of senior teams and organisations that have overachieved significantly, since 1989. The core purpose in overachieving for me is to gain the freedom to challenge, improve, and if necessary change the dysfunctional system. The reason I have never been sacked (although on one occasion a chairman did want to sack me for my “rebelliousness”) is that what I have proposed was valuable, and worked so well that my approach, while considered unorthodox, was tolerated, and frequently welcomed.

To complement my comments above, I offer further critique of the academic critiques in Appendix II.

2.7 Performativity and empirically evidencing the spiritual dimension of leadership

One aspect I have reflected on deeply is my motivation for adopting a spiritual approach to leadership and why I used spirituality within my workplaces. For me it was never about control and coercion but far more about how deeply I was motivated to enable others to feel more wholesome, liberated and satisfied in their workplaces, something I wanted also for myself. I was open to being held accountable for all my actions and interventions, and I consistently inquired and tried to improve my practice; remaining open to all challenges to my own use, or abuse, of power.

Academic critiques of instrumentality, the use of spirituality to directly improve performance, include Bell & Taylor (2003, 2004:443) who argue that the SiW literature holds numerous contradictions and tensions with attempts to promote the intangible “mystical aspects” of spirituality while simultaneously seeking to advocate “measurement and management”. They claim it is inappropriate to overemphasise the transcendent self within organisational contexts that demand rational discourse and productivity. They argue that proponents of SL and SiW deny or ignore social structures in complex organisational communities, particularly power bases that require sophisticated analysis within the conflicting demands of commercial practice. Tourish and Tourish (2010) argue that the “emancipatory rhetoric” can be at odds

with the self-interest of leaders and the demands of organisational performance. Berman Brown (2003:396) argues that SiW literature is only discursive and anecdotal with “little empirical evidence”. Case and Gosling (2010:3) call for “more nuanced theorisation and critical reflexivity” in the work. Bell and Taylor (2003, 2004:458), argue that SiW places itself outside normal conventions of evaluation. Case and Gosling (2010) take issue with scholarship and corporate practices that treat workplace spirituality in purely performative terms, and as a resource or means to be manipulated instrumentally for organisational ends.

These criticisms are equally valid for other leadership theories, such as transformational and authentic leadership. All organisations have to be oriented towards targets, yet it is possible that both the targets and the means to achieving them can be inspired by spiritual ideals. As I explain in Chapter six, an organisation can hold a higher purpose through which the financial targets are considered a means towards achieving a more spiritual outcome, in that any financial surplus is used for enhancing and fostering people and planet as well as profits. There may be instances where spirituality is exploited by a company whose only purpose was to make profits for shareholders, but there are many companies that do share a higher purpose and aim to do good in the world.

While I understand what is being argued from an academic perspective, as a practitioner, I live in a world where I have chosen to balance outcomes with liberating the spirituality of staff. If my outcomes were not achieved, I would be ridiculed and prevented from experimentation. As a leader, I feel that I lead from a healthy balance of meeting targets as well as supporting spirituality for its own sake; I was keenly aware that establishing CEL as a high-performing, outstanding organisation on traditional terms would engender space to experiment, and said so publicly in #6: my foreword to *Living Spirituality in the Workplace – the CEL Way*.

Joseph (2002:121) posits an initial hypothesis that “spiritually motivated leadership might be recognisable and have an impact, over and above good but non spiritually motivated leadership”. He admits that he could not prove empirically that a spiritual dimension existed, while being clear that he had experienced a spiritual dimension in my leadership – a dimension which he believed affected my work and gave an added element to the way in which I led, transformed, improved and empowered the Guildford College staff and students.

2.8 Critique of Professor Fry's description of my work

As a significant amount of the accolade and evidence for CEL's success is based on the work of Professor Fry, I feel it is important to briefly critique his specific model and approach. He sits in the performativity school of SiW and is critiqued by Case and Gosling (2010), who argue that Fry (2003, 2005) along with others including Ashmos and Duchon (2000), Duchon and Plowman (2005), Fairholm (1997, 1998, 2001) and Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2004) seek to theorise and explore SiW and SL empirically from a "hypothetico-deductive standpoint" and understand their work to be contributing to an objectivist "organization science" that holds out the possibility, in principle, of "complete explanation" through the incremental accumulation of well-theorized empirical knowledge."

My experience of applying Professor Fry's questionnaire was that it was far more of an exploratory adventure and an open discourse of learning rather than what Gosling and Case (2010:261) argue is an attempt to measure employees' spirituality as

"positioning and subjectification of persons within reductive, instrumental matrices. (with) ... individual and collective 'spirit' – rendered as statistics suitable for technoc calculative manipulation".

Although CEL did score very highly on Professor Fry's scales, more importantly, the questionnaire opened up challenging discourse and inquiry into the spiritual nature of CEL and increased staff interest. While the feedback was valuable as affirmation, it also provided practical challenges. In hindsight it is possible that Professor Fry could have challenged more rigorously and offered suggestions as to how we worked more effectively with voices of dissent and with those who felt uncomfortable, as identified in the research.

Professor Fry did overstate the causality and direct impact of spirituality, positioning his feedback primarily within the SiW and transformational leadership paradigms rather than providing powerful alternative perspectives and challenges, particularly on instrumentality. He offered useful suggestions and improvements but did not introduce us to the broad range of SL and SiW critiques that I have explored in depth through my doctorate, many of which were published and available at the time the research was undertaken. As is prevalent in the SiW paradigm, the tendency in his research and feedback is to overemphasise the positive elements with insufficient challenge and critique.

In an Academy of Management (AoM) Conference professional development workshop (PDW) in 2010 the high scores achieved in CEL on Professor Fry's questionnaire were considered by

his academic peers to be “too good to be believed”, and he himself admits that his instrument needs refining and improving. There is insufficient exploration in Fry and Altman (2013) on the blind spots and shadow side of my spiritual leadership, and while some failures are referred to, the vital issue of power as posited by many of the critiques are not considered or referred to. An important critique of Professor Fry is raised by Avolio and Gardner (2005:331) who state that

“the theory of spiritual leadership advanced by Fry (2003) includes an implicit recognition of the role of leader self-awareness with a focus on vision and leader values and attitudes that are broadly classified as altruistic love and hope/faith. Interestingly, these values/attitudes are also described as leader behaviours, producing some confusion regarding these constructs and their role in spiritual leadership”.

In a mapping of my own spiritual leadership and leadership of organisational spirituality, I have tried to articulate my own constructs, drawing on those of Fry and in doing so I have some sympathy for the critique as his constructs tend towards the simplistic.

2.9 Conclusion

To enhance the reflective and academic robustness of my context statement I have read, challenged, reflected upon and tried to integrate the SL and SiW literature and critiques as described above. I thread the critiques, as appropriate, throughout Chapter six to illustrate how they have influenced and improved both my practice and doctoral reflections.

Chapter three: Illuminative evaluation analysis of my contribution

3.1 Introduction

With over twenty-four years of practice, and a vast array of evidence to make sense of, I needed a structured process through which I could draw out evidence-based themes and strands. This chapter summarises the analytical process I undertook, informed by the research methodology of illuminative evaluation. The overarching themes illuminated are outlined in Figure 1 below, which provides the underpinning evidence and themes through which I ascertained my contribution to practice and to knowledge. The chapter concludes with Figure 2, an original whole-organisation framework of how I effectively led and fostered spiritual capital through explicit spiritual leadership and leadership presence; distilled and illuminated from the analysis of my evidence comprising four critical components.

3.2 Evidence base

The nature of my evidence comprises four types: published literature by respected academics, researchers, thought leaders and consultants who have researched my organisations; published articles written by me; organisational and business literature; and miscellaneous evidence including press coverage, and comments by individuals.

My leading-edge practice has been researched, acknowledged and published nationally and internationally by thought leaders and academics in the field. I list below significant publications as evidence of the specifics of my practice and contribution to knowledge. I make more detailed reference to this evidence in the following chapters.

Joseph (2002) undertook a PhD on the spiritual dimension of my leadership in Guildford College, one of the first to be completed in the SL and SiW fields.

#7: *Leaders and Spirituality – A Case Study*, pages 113 to 125 and 159 to 179 contain his core commentary on the spiritual dimension of my leadership.

At #8: is a memory stick containing the full PhD for reference.

Dr Simon Western, a consultant, university lecturer, coach and author, has published his consultancy and coaching work in CEL in #9: Western and Sedgmore (2008) *A Privileged Conversation*, which describes the process and content of our coaching relationship and in

#10: Simon (2008) *Democratising Strategy*, a chapter in *Organisations Connected*, which describes an innovative project to involve all staff in strategy formulation.

Professor Yochanan Altman, founder of the Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion, (JMSR), led a respected team of researchers who carried out a significant study, #11: Altman, Wilson and Ozbilgin (2007) *Organisational effectiveness and well-being at work: CEL as a case-study*. I have included the contents page and executive summary of the project. This work was summarised and published by CEL in 2008, and is included as #12: the booklet *Living Spirituality in the Workplace – The CEL Way*.

Other articles, case studies and books were published as further outcomes of this study, including: #13: Altman (2010) *In Search of Transcendence - Making a Connection with Transcendence, An interview with Lynne Sedgmore*.

To supplement the Altman et al (2007) research project, Professor Jody Fry himself came into CEL to undertake further research. I have critiqued his work in Section 2.8 page 28. He has written about my work in two books:

1: Fry and Altman (2013), *Spiritual Leadership in Action: The CEL Story*.

14: Fry and Nisiewicz (2012), *Maximizing the Triple Bottom Line through Spiritual Leadership* pages 257 to 282; a twenty-five-page case study on the work of CEL.

At the International AoM Research Conference, findings on the spirituality of CEL have been presented in two papers and ten PDWs between 2008 and 2012. These are described in Chapter seven. Additional evidence is in the #15: CEL (2007) winning application to the International Spirit at Work Award (ISAWA) titled *Ordinary Heroes, Extraordinary Company*.

3.3 Research methodology

I undertook an analysis of the evidence, informed by an illuminative evaluation approach, which Parlett and Hamilton (1972) describe as less of a standard methodology than a general research strategy. Parlett (1981) explains how illuminative evaluations are exploratory in nature with the researcher engaging in intense familiarisation with the issues through description and interpretation rather than measurement and prediction. Although it has no standardised procedures or techniques and is not rigidly structured, it usually involves the three stages of observation, inquiry and explanation. I had used illuminative evaluation previously in my MSc so was familiar with its application and considered it a highly relevant approach to analysing evidence from my own practice.

I had a vast amount of written evidence to analyse, all of which stemmed from my own direct experiences and required personal judgements to ascertain contribution. Illuminative evaluation therefore seemed a sensible method to generate themes and strands, and to organise my data in a manner that expanded my insight, and generated new and useful perspectives. Parlett (1981) recommends that illuminative evaluations need to be carried out through open sharing and discussion of key features and experiences; accepting and recognising multiple realities and issues of subjectivity. It encourages immersion in the data through which new insight can emerge, literally as a form of illumination. I acknowledge that writing about myself and ascertaining my contribution inevitably involves subjective choices and interpretations. I wanted therefore a methodology that allows for personal value judgment by the evaluator; exploration of perceptions, opinions and attitudes; as well as linking these to the factual evidence. Illuminative evaluation is not designed to prove a preconceived hypothesis or a predetermined outcome but to observe, unravel, describe, interpret and remain open to emerging areas of inquiry as they become apparent. It views validity more as a valid representation of what is happening through closeness to the data, sensitivity, empathy, intuition, and forming a holistic perspective rather than the objective distance prescribed by more traditional research methodologies. It is the evidential nature of the data that is paramount, data that is factual and confirmable, through analysis and cross-checking.

The challenges to illuminative evaluation include lack of objectivity "as it is based on personal interpretation which cannot be objective", a limited approach to validity, openness to abuse and inaccuracies due to weak specificity on techniques. There is also the view from other research paradigms that descriptive studies are invalid (Hasman 1982:88).

3.4 The analytical process and conclusion

In Appendix III, I include an overview of how I applied illuminative evaluation through the three stages of observation, inquiry and explanation. First, I read all the pieces of evidence in chronological order beginning with evidence related directly to my practice in Croydon College, Guildford College and CEL, then my involvement with academics and the literature written by me, and then the literature written about me by others. I also read my journal accounts of my mystical experiences and the development of my inner life.

I immersed myself in the huge array of evidence, perceiving it as core research data. Following this deep immersion, I grouped my data into themes and patterns that enabled me to

ascertain and clarify my contribution. The only way I could illuminate my organisational journey was by writing a twenty-five-page description, in narrative form, of what the evidence was telling me, [#16: A Leader's Pilgrimage, an initial narrative of the first two stages of my illuminative evaluation description.](#)

From this narrative I compiled the table, Figure 1 below, which provides an overview of the key elements of my illuminative evaluation analysis and ascertains thirteen different elements that give a chronology of my journey, progression and key transition points in both my organisational and spiritual life. It highlights the thought leaders, academics and conceptual models I worked with over different time periods, my underpinning spiritual formation, practices and the teachers and teachings I worked with. It provides a chronological summary of how I made more spiritually specific and explicit interventions at each stage within my three organisations, and how my inner life influenced this. It illustrates how my leadership style developed from being ad hoc to a whole-organisation approach and how I had developed and worked more comprehensively, explicitly and in a more sophisticated manner, with spiritual language, articulation and interventions. It illustrates also how the knowing and epistemological changes in my direct knowing of self and Source developed and impacted upon my leadership.

Figure 1: Overview of the key elements of my illuminative evaluation analysis

Date	1989–98 Croydon College	1998–2004 Guildford College
Nature of leadership	Values and quality-led leadership. Cultural leadership. Transformational leadership. Collective leadership.	Servant leadership. Virtues-led leadership. Personal spiritual leadership. Followership and leadership. Learning leadership. Good to Great leadership.
Organisational scope	Ad hoc experimentation not spiritually explicit.	Small spiritually explicit projects.
Nature of language	Values, spiritual words not used.	Values, limited use of spiritual words.
Progression of intervention approaches and contribution to practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Values-led leadership. 2. Total Quality Management. 3. Community engagement and interfaith work. 4. Semi-explicit spiritually based interventions with non-spiritual approaches. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Virtues-led personal spiritual leadership. 2. Non-traditional approaches without explicit spiritual dimensions. 3. One-off explicit spiritually based projects.

		<p>4. Community engagement and interfaith field work.</p> <p>5. Basic CSR and sustainability approaches.</p> <p>6. Public speaking and writing on the spiritual dimension.</p> <p>7. National awards in quality, vision, CSR.</p>
Conceptual models applied	<p>Torbert's action logics.</p> <p>Learning organisation.</p> <p>7S shared values.</p> <p>Organisational transformation.</p> <p>Total quality management.</p> <p>Enneagram fixations Riso & Hudson.</p>	<p>Virtue theology.</p> <p>Enneagram of virtues – Maitri.</p> <p>Spiritual leadership – Zohar, Conger, Vaill, Hawkins.</p> <p>Good to Great – Collins.</p>
Key transitions, understandings and clarity gained	<p>Mystical experience</p> <p>Deep spiritual motivation</p> <p>Clarity of my personal spirituality</p> <p>Articulation of values</p>	<p>Deep exploration of "good" versus "spiritual leader"</p> <p>Development of moral character and virtues</p> <p>Personal spiritual leadership clarity</p>
Activities related to knowledge	<p>MSc dissertation – an illuminative evaluation of Torbert's action inquiry.</p>	<p>PhD by Joseph on my spiritual leadership.</p> <p>Four published articles by Sedgmore on spiritual leadership and SiW.</p> <p>Interviews and presentations.</p>
Thought leaders and academics personally worked with	<p>Boydell, Burgoyne, Hawkins, Marshall, Mulligan, Pedler, Reason, Torbert, Tosey</p>	<p>Gregory, Howard and Welbourne, Hudson, Joseph, Riso, Anita Roddick</p>
Nature of mystical experience and of presence	<p>Dualistic union, mystical marriage.</p> <p>Two into one, surrender, awe, joy, trust in a benign universe, noetic knowing of a truer reality.</p> <p>Inner clarity, love, quietness and safety. Being filled with divine presence. Presence descends on me. I AM WITH presence.</p>	<p>Non-dual, I am this.</p> <p>Never were two, always were one, sense of a oneness of absolute unity. I am presence. Presence is constant and always there. Loss of the sense of presence of a personal God. I am the oneness of all forms that exist.</p>
Epistemological shift, the nature of my ground of Being	<p>Shift from intellectual knowing of primarily a physical and material reality to the direct mystical knowing of a transcendent, true presence and reality beyond and within myself. Being infused by Divinity, light and love, interconnected to all</p> <p>Expansion of consciousness and awareness to include the omnipresent transpersonal.</p> <p>All truths lead to the same source and all are true.</p> <p>Wanting to be of service.</p>	<p>Direct knowing of being the Divine, being eternal, timeless presence – with an identity shift to perceiving personality as not being real but a construct, a sham.</p> <p>Truth is beyond all constructs, is inexplicable.</p> <p>No separate self, simultaneously being the manifest and the unmanifest.</p> <p>Knowing through the universal witnesser, when mind is still.</p> <p>Living in flow, effortless actions, and synchronicity.</p>

		Intrinsic desire to live a virtuous life through right action.
Spiritual teachings, texts	Christian mystical theology and personal experiences by saints. Rule of Benedict. Bhagavad Gita. Neoplatonic philosophy. The Dhammapada.	Inter-spirituality and cross-faith mystical writings/experiences, Hinduism, Jainism, Anekanta, Neo-Vedanta: Swartz, Katz, Gill, Hartong, Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, Upanishads, Indian philosophy.
Spiritual teachers (personal Guru marked with *)	Bede Griffiths*, Merton, Theresa of Avila, Aya Kheema*, Underhill, Mother Meera*.	Acharya Sushil Kumar*, Griffiths*, Father Tredget*, Miranda Holden, Dadi Janki*, Amma, Wayne Teasdale, Wilber, Frawley.
Spiritual formation underpinning my personal and leadership development	Meditation, Divine office, Spiritual healing training (NFSH) Action inquiry. Time, as individual, in monastic environments. Personal growth workshops Jungian therapy.	Meditation, Enneagram, Chanting Formation as spiritual director, spiritual healer, interfaith minister and Benedictine oblate. Structured retreats in various faith traditions and Ayurveda. Integral spirituality. Pilgrimages to Hindu and Jain sites and stays in ashrams in India.

Date	2004 – 08 Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL)
Nature of leadership	Integrating personal and organisational spiritual leadership. Distributed leadership at every level. Fostering of collective spirituality.
Organisational scope	Whole-organisation approach overt and spiritually explicit.
Nature of language	Open spiritual language and discourse
Progression of intervention approaches and contribution to practice	1. Living collectively from virtues, meaning, higher purpose and service. 2. Fostering a spiritually intelligent, high-spirited community and culture. 3. Introducing spiritually informed policies and liberating processes. 4. Developing the whole person through fostering inner life spiritual awareness, growth and inquiry. 5. Celebrating and supporting spiritual pluralism and diversity. 6. Respecting and responding to dissent and challenge.
Conceptual models applied	Organisational spiritual leadership – Fry. Spiral dynamics – Beck. Enneagram of Holy Ideas – Almaas, Riso. Spiritual intelligence – Zohar, Wigglesworth.
Key transitions, understandings and clarity gained	Manifesting more sophisticated spiritual leadership. The importance of presence and holding space for others to be present. Understanding how to develop and implement a whole-organisation and spiritually explicit approach. Effectively fostering collective spirituality.
Activities related to knowledge	Published case studies in books, CEL book, by respected researchers. Original model generated from CEL by Altman et al. Presentation and papers at AoM.

	<p>Jointly authored articles published, published interviews, radio interviews.</p> <p>Creation of my own original model based on practice.</p> <p>International presentations in USA, Israel, Yale, France.</p>
Thought leaders and academics personally worked with	<p>Altman, Beck, Benefiel, Bennis, Biberman, Bournois, Fry, Goldman-Schuyler, Grint, Malloch, Neal, Rutte, Western, Wigglesworth, Zohar.</p>
Nature of mystical experience and of presence	<p>Loss of constructed and egoic identity into a void of emptiness, unknowing, no self, literally the disappearance of small self, nothing there but what is beyond, which cannot be known or conceptualised in any way. Pure nothingness. Spaciousness. No boundaries. Pure presence, beyond all constructs. Empty presence.</p>
Epistemological shift, the nature of my ground of Being (NB this is still more of a state than a stage for me and I am still integrating the impact)	<p>Struggle between experience of no-self and how to continue to act, to be in the world in real time. Dissonance, paradox, loss of all constructs.</p> <p>Development of personal essence.</p> <p>Being non-attached to things in the material plane.</p> <p>Acceptance of things as they are, being totally here now.</p> <p>Unfolding, emergence, evolutionary spirituality.</p> <p>Living consciously with paradox, unknowing, negative capability while knowing already simultaneously divine, empty, nothing and everything.</p>
Spiritual teachings, texts	<p>Heart Sutra, Dzogchen Buddhism, Enneagram of Holy Ideas, Cloud of Unknowing, Almaas: Void, Inner Journey Home, Essence and Pearl of Great Price</p>
Spiritual teachers (personal guru marked with *)	<p>Hudson*, Almaas*, Forman, Roberts</p>
Spiritual formation underpinning my personal and leadership development	<p>Meditation and being present.</p> <p>Ridhwan School retreats – three a year, plus structured weekly inquiry practice based on teachings of Almaas.</p> <p>Inquiry and being present as daily practice for continual transformation.</p> <p>Writing poetry.</p>

3.5 Conclusion of illuminative evaluation process

Within each time period and organisation, Figure 1 above summarises organisational themes in rows one to eight, (which directly inform the development of Figures 2, 6, 7 and 8). My spiritual expression and development are summarised in rows nine to thirteen, (which directly inform Figures 3, 4 and 5). In particular the six spiritually explicit organisational interventions in row four (progression of intervention approaches and contribution to practice) illustrate the specifics and the progression of my intervention approaches. Working through the different interventions I had made in each of my organisations, and tracking their development, allowed me to clarify the details and the overarching nature of my contribution to practice and to knowledge. The culmination and total picture provided by Figure 1 has enabled me to identify four core strands of my original contribution to practice as follows:

First, the most powerful illumination that occurred as I reflected on the totality of my illuminative evaluation analysis and table was a significant new insight, the formulation of an original theoretical organisational development framework, underpinned by my personal spirituality and my personal spiritual leadership, distilled from my practice, comprising four core components of how I fostered collective and organisational spiritual capital. This holistic and overarching framework of a spiritually explicit organisation approach to fostering spiritual capital is distilled from the illumination of my spiritual and professional evidence and practice; and is illustrated as Figure 2 below.

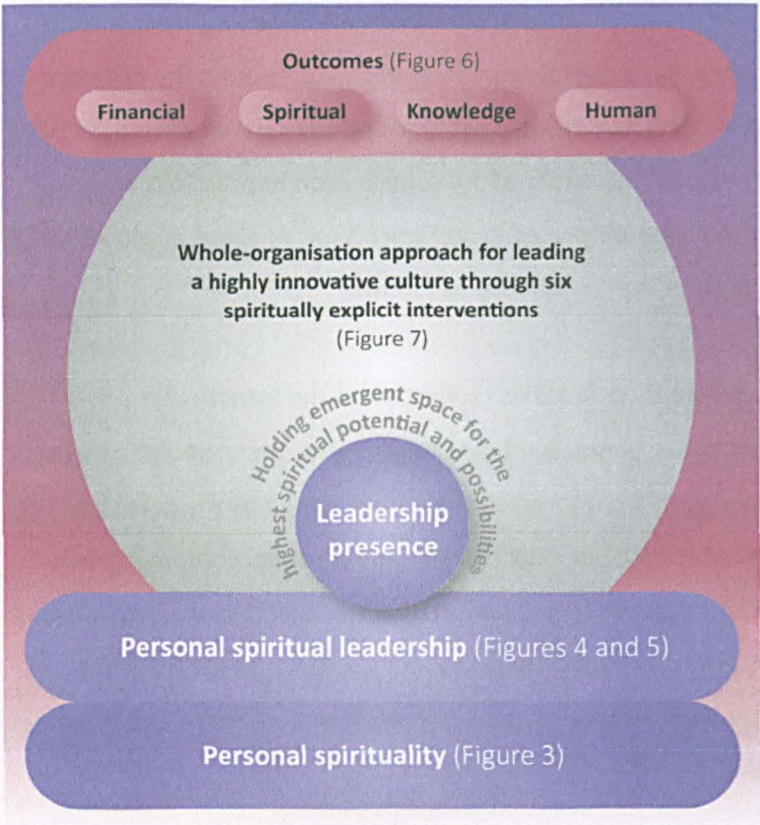
Second, this framework could make a further contribution to both practice and knowledge creation by articulating a way of leading effectively in the mainstream organisations beyond the constructed self; from union, oneness and the void.

Third, it became clear that I had led highly innovative organisational cultures through my personal spiritual leadership (Figure 4 page 63), and through applying a spiritually explicit whole-organisation approach, through six spiritually explicit interventions (Figure 6 page 79), to generate high-performing, high-spirited further education organisations.

Fourth, the analysis revealed that my organisations, by my invitation, had become research laboratories by well-known academics seeking new knowledge creation and since 2006 I had commissioned projects that had produced publications and case studies by academics to the SL and SiW fields from my original and leading-edge practice. I tracked how I had contributed, personally and professionally, to national and international SL and SiW academic conferences,

discourse and publications from a practicing FE leader’s perspective and experiences. Then I ascertained how I had initiated original research and innovative leadership development on the spiritual dimension within English FE, (articulated in Figure 7 page 84).

Figure 2: Original whole-organisation framework for fostering spiritual capital through spiritually explicit leadership and leadership presence



This framework describes four components: personal spirituality; personal spiritual leadership (which incorporates leadership presence); a whole-organisation approach through six spiritually explicit interventions; and the financial, spiritual, knowledge and human capital outcomes. These four components all comprise the effective fostering of organisational (collective) spirituality and the resulting outcomes, including spiritual capital, in my organisations. This holistic map provides an overview and illustration of the interrelationship between the four components.

It felt important not to put any specific content into this overarching framework, rather to present it as a framework of four components that a leader can populate for themselves, as a developmental tool and as an expression of their own leadership and organisational approach. Each of the four components, (from bottom upwards) is explained, illustrated and developed in detail as Figures 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 in Chapters four, five, six and seven.

This framework is original in that it is distilled from my own practice, but is influenced conceptually by Fairholm (1997, 1998, 2001), Fry (2003, 2005, 2007, 2008), Fry and Kriger (2009), Fry and Nisiewicz (2012), Fry and Altman (2013), Gregory (2006, 2008, 2009), Joseph (2002), Kirkeby (2000, 2008), Maccoby (2000), Reischter (1986), Zohar (1999, 2004) and Zohar and Marshall (1999, 2004). By bringing together my own practice, knowledge, understanding, reflection, experience and insight and synthesising this with elements from new models of leadership and insights from academic critiques, I believe I have generated an original, innovative, critical and robust mapping of the key components for fostering organisational spiritual capital through spirituality explicit leadership and whole-organisation intervention.

3.6 Conclusion

The application of an analysis informed by illuminative evaluation provided a useful approach to understanding a vast array of evidence, which at times felt overwhelming. This analysis enabled me to clarify the core themes and nature of my original contribution and to generate a new map of fostering organisational spiritual capital through spirituality explicit leadership and interventions. It assisted also the illumination of a holistic framework from a metaphysical perspective for the underpinning of personal spirituality, personal spiritual leadership and leadership presence, which I hope to share as a further contribution and outcome from this doctorate.

Chapter four: My personal spirituality

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a chronological summary of how my spirituality has developed, impacted and integrated within my organisational life and leadership. It culminates with a mapping of the internal constructs, mystical knowing and outward manifestation of my personal spirituality, which underpins everything that I undertake in my personal and professional life. An initial powerful mystical experience of union in 1989 is described, an experience that motivated me into a sustained exploratory journey of spiritual leadership and of experimenting with and integrating spirituality within my workplaces. This initial experience of mystical union was followed by two other powerful but different kinds of mystical experiences, of oneness in 2002, and of the void in 2005, which are also described. My epistemological development and how my experiential knowing of Source and sense of self have changed and developed are outlined alongside how these have informed my leadership and organisational practice within my professional contexts.

4.2 Integrating my work and spiritual worlds

My journey of integrating my spirituality within my workplaces and inquiring into what it meant to be a leader from a spiritual and mystical perspective in a secular organisation began in earnest in September 1989. Up until this point, I had been an active spiritual seeker and explorer, since a child, but my spiritual explorations and work life had run on two parallel tracks.

Until 1989, I had experienced consistently a sense of "something more and something bigger" than myself. I experienced this as a relationship with a transcendent power, a power I worshipped, held in awe and revered. I was brought up in a Christian culture and within an agnostic family. My journey of integrating my personal spirituality within my workplaces began in earnest in September 1989. I had been an active spiritual seeker and explorer since a child; continually seeking truth, meaning and purpose as articulated in my autobiographical description of my religious sensibility from an early age in #1: Fry and Altman (2013) *Spiritual Leadership in Action: The CEL Story*, chapter 2 pages 24– 30. My primary spiritual expression, explorations and understandings were within Christianity and from my early twenties I explored also Buddhism, therapy and personal growth approaches.

In 1989 my life, family situation, my work in FE and my spiritual growth were all in a state of flux and change. I had separated from my husband after seventeen years and had been promoted into a new and challenging role as Dean of Croydon Business School (CBS). Two months before starting this new professional role I experienced an incredibly powerful mystical experience of union. This experience motivated me into a sustained exploratory journey of developing my own explicit spiritual leadership and of experimenting with spirituality within my workplaces, in order to integrate my two worlds of spirit and work.

This experience was followed, several years later, by two other powerful but different forms of mystical experiences in 2002 and 2005. I have organised these three different mystical experiences into three phases, which I articulate below. The periods in-between each of these experiences have enabled me to consolidate and integrate the impact of these experiences, and their differences, particularly on my sense of self and the epistemological development and changes in my experiential knowing of Source, presence and self.

Within and throughout these different mystical experiences, and their differences, I have also experienced what Forman (2011:39) describes as

“a strangely steady something in an unsteady life, a candle flame in a blizzard ...the me that watches and lives and holds it all ... (while) ... the old me is here as well”.

The notions of a sense of self and the nature of subject and object are explored in this chapter.

The spiritual teachers who have influenced me over the years, and I have worked with personally, include Bede Griffiths, Father Tredget, Aya Kheema, Mother Meera, Acharya Sushil Kumar, Russ Hudson and A.H. Almaas.

4.3 My three mystical experiences

4.3.1 Union experience – The Mystical Marriage 1989–1998

When I could find the words in 1997 to describe my initial mystical experience and its effect on me, I wrote as follows:

“ I was completely suffused with feelings of love, total unconditional love for everything, everyone. My whole self, every part of me felt totally at one, totally unified, within and without. The boundaries between myself and all around me dissolved ... I was in connection with a deep knowing ... stronger than anything I have ever experienced; a heart knowing, a body knowing, a mind knowing, a transcendent

knowing ... that the true reality is one of unconditional love, peace and harmony ... with the most profound feeling of wholeness, completeness, of coming home ... my whole being expanding and dissolving into this new reality. My life is now essentially the attempt to live my mystical vow ... integrating the mystical knowing with my daily life ... To live as congruently as I can ... and to remember to manifest the true reality ... to live constantly in the presence of God while I continue to live a busy domestic and professional life in the mainstream world."

This is an extract taken from #17: a full version of my articulation of my mystical experience written in 1997

I have written a poem, *Mystical Marriage*, below, which describes this union experience of being filled with Source and transcendent presence.

Mystical Marriage

Your presence liquefies -
I soften into syrup,
silken and smooth.

Dissolving in your golden light -
flowing into truth,
glimpsing true reality.

Loving union of Thee and I -
singing the symphonic glory
of cosmic consciousness.

This union experience generated a spontaneous shift from intellectual knowing of the physical and material reality to a direct mystical knowing and infusion of a transcendent presence and a perception of a "true reality" beyond and joined with me simultaneously. I felt infused by Divinity, light and love. I experienced an expansion of awareness that this transcendent presence was omnipresent and that all truths lead to the same source and all are true. This was accompanied by a powerful sense of wanting to be of service and to be "the face of God" in the world.

In 1989 the definition of mystic that I most identified with was Sinetar's (1986:31) definition of the "self-transcendent" person whose "authority rests in the truth or law of the developing "Higher Self". The writers on mysticism I turned to included Underhill (1993), Happold (1970) and Sinetar (1986), who not only focus on the nature of the mystical experience itself but articulate also a practical, world-centred, active mysticism. They describe how the mature mystic can immerse herself in the temporal world to be of selfless service through divine will, mediating between humanity and eternity from a whole new internal set of values, ways of

knowing and changed behaviours. This greatly inspired me; it felt a relief as I had no desire, nor the financial means, to give up my job to go and sit on a mountain top.

This was the period where the fruits of my mystical experience manifested in my professional life as a desire for service, compassion and the need to live a good and more virtuous life. This is when I began to see my personality flaws and the gap between how I wanted to be, a truly good and spiritual person synchronised with true reality, and how I currently lived my life. I began serious therapy work as well as daily meditation. I spent time in monastic environments and in solitude and reflection to assist my understanding of how to manifest my spirituality personally and within my organisational corporate life. I developed a strong desire for quietness, reflection and contemplation; went on retreat three times a year; and began to engage with spiritual formation activities, extensive spiritual inquiry and development regularly.

Following reflection, advice and discussion with spiritual teachers I discovered that I had experienced a mystical or peak experience, something that took me many months to understand, work through and to articulate. I read texts of direct spiritual and religious experience by ancient and acknowledged mystics, such as Plotinus, Brother Lawrence, Julian of Norwich, Hildegard of Bingen, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. These spiritual classics of their life stories, ways of being in the world or the monastery, and their journeys of ancient and acknowledged mystical experiences helped me to differentiate between the contemplative and active mystic path as well as introducing me to notions and experiences of “being and presence”. I needed to make sense on a rational level of my deeply irrational experience. In my readings I discovered that **how** the mystic responds to their experience is as important as the experience itself.

Hadot (1993:4) describes how in the Enneads Plotinus sees virtue as “that trace of God which makes her similar to God” and a means through which the soul can aspire to a spiritual life. In Ennead I (Second tractate: On virtue) Plotinus urges us to become “just and holy, living by wisdom, the entire nature grounded in Virtue”. He describes civic virtues as “a principle or order and beauty in us ... (which) ... ennoble us by setting bound and measure to our desires ... dispelling false judgement ... lifting outside of the sphere of the unmeasured and lawless” acting “as a principle of measure to the soul”, (Mackenna (1992) translation of Plotinus Enneads).

James's (1982) four "marks" of mystical experience— "ineffability, noetic quality, transiency and passivity" – resonated with me, as did Happold's two additions of "sense of oneness" and "sense of timelessness"; I recognised what they were describing in my own experience.

Underhill's (1993) five stages of "awakening, purgation, illumination, dark night of the soul, and union with the one reality" enabled me to recognise and to work out how this powerful internal and subjective experience could be worked through in time, with clear steps of unfoldment that others had trod before. Both James and Underhill attempt to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy mysticism and I felt relieved that I seemed to be healthy and surviving amid the disintegration of my personality and some inner confusion that was being generated by such a deep inner shift in my perception and experience of reality and my sense of self.

Sineta (1986) interviewed "ordinary people as monks and mystics" and discovered two types: the "socially transcendent" who have no religious affiliation or sensibility, whom she termed "monks"; and the "self-transcendent" person, whom she termed "mystics", whose "authority rests in the truth or law of the developing Higher Self", (Sineta 1986:30-31). Sineta (1986:77) describes the way in which the focus of my life began to change; she summarises five characteristic changes (originally identified by Underhill) that a mystic moves through: adopting a transformative approach to life rather than a theoretical playing with ideas; becoming involved in spiritual activity that dominates and influences the mystic's path, generating a deepening relationship with the transcendent; the dominant life emotion becomes love expressed through service and self-surrender in all aspects of life, including work; and finally, the mystic's life's work becomes experienced as "being in and with the presence of God" as their primary journey and goal.

Sineta (1986:75) articulates also the core thread of state of Being when she states

"a key difference between mystics and all others is that their spiritual eyes have been opened, and they have "seen". From the chaos of their early inner confusion, mystics awoken to an illumined posture of Being. They are in a state of Being, rather than – like most others – seeking to become."

James and Underhill focus on both healthy and unhealthy mysticism and possible madness, but they also describe the "realness of the mystical experience" for the one having had such an experience, the health, high-functioning ability and intelligence of many people who experience such transcendence. Indeed this is my own experience and one that has enhanced my life in many ways. For the mystic, the experience is more real than anything else they may have experienced.

Happold (1970) delineates two mystical paths, "the contemplative mystic" and the "active mystic", the latter being one who takes action in the world based on a personal encounter with the divine, an encounter that guides and informs all actions, encompassing but also going beyond a moral and ethical base. I recognised that I am an active mystic, and that my path is in the world but not of it. Underhill (1920) explores the challenges and necessary work for the mystic within corporate life and identifies how the mystic experiences individual longing to be in union, and yet also has a corporate responsibility. She argues that in social interaction the active mystic can integrate more fully though being challenged and developed as

"The mystic lives by an immediate knowledge far more than by belief; by a knowledge achieved in those hours of direct, unmediated intercourse with the Transcendent" and yet "the demands made and the restrictions imposed by the community on the individual are good for the mystic ... (The) most sublime spiritual experiences are themselves social in type ... and they all entail not a narrow self-realisation, but the breaking down of barriers; the setting up of wider relationships ... training in humility, self-denial, obedience, suppleness ... essential to the education of the human soul". (Underhill 1920:25, 28)

Another way in which I attempted to integrate my spirituality and my work was through my formation as a Benedictine Oblate from 1999 to 2002. Central to Benedictine spirituality is the notion of "work as worship" as articulated by Griffiths (1992), Fox (1994), Chittister (1990), Henry (2001) and Vest (1997, 2000).

This union experience was so powerful and all-encompassing that it left me no choice but to make sense of it, work with it and undertake a journey of integrating my spirituality within my work as I was unable to keep them separate anymore; and I was also keen to stay in my employment and continue to perform within my workplace and professional role.

As dean of CBS and vice-principal of Croydon College, I experimented primarily with my own internal sense of self and my emerging spiritual awareness, with all the complexities, complications, new perspectives and issues this gave rise to. I was not able to use spirituality as a word within the college workplace and values were the arena through which staff engaged and coalesced.

This is the time when my study of SiW began in earnest, alongside personal and corporate values clarification and organisational culture experimentation. I completed an MSc in Change Agent Skills and Strategies in 1992 in which I focused on transformational leadership and spirituality in the workplace, drawing on academic research and formal inquiry approaches to help me synthesise and apply spiritual and empirical approaches in my work practices.

There was still a separation between my inner life and work life, of which I was acutely aware, with no real integration at this stage. In many ways this was a period of ad hoc experimentation rather than a considered and integrated strategic focus. My major spiritual exploration and development was outside my workplace in peer groups of spiritual contacts outside FE, and with networks and consultants steeped in SiW from the corporate world.

I was surrounded by senior managers qualified to MBA levels and with highly rational mindsets. When I attempted to hold conversations on spirituality I was responded to with curious looks, incomprehension, and on occasions with hostility. It soon became clear to me that I could not use the word "spiritual" as a new leader of the school and be taken seriously. As a pragmatist, I accepted that I would have to locate this part of my exploration outside my workplace, in my academic studies and in my private life. I was advised to focus on the lens of values and culture, which I did. In the first months of my leadership we developed a values-led strategic plan, which was considered very leading edge for its time. Alongside this I became absorbed in Tolbert's Action Inquiry and used this as my primary tool for being present and living my spirituality, however covertly.

This sense of union opened me up to new notions of leadership including transformational leadership, servant leadership, leading through moral and spiritual character and virtues, collective leadership, and notions of using power with rather than over other people.

4.3.2 Oneness Experience: Non-Duality 1998–2005

From 1998 I began even more intense meditation and time in silence and retreats to foster my deepening relationship with Source and to explore even more deeply the question: "Who am I?" I undertook a range of spiritual formation activities including a two-year training programme as an interfaith minister and a five-year training programme as a spiritual healer. Such formation has kept me centred and has enabled me to articulate my personal spirituality and to manifest and nurture my personal spiritual leadership within organisational life. In 2002, on an Enneagram workshop, I experienced total oneness rather than unity, an experience in which there never was any division at all, never any separation anywhere in the universe, of there never being two, only ever one. I expressed this in my journal as

"being one with all that is, simultaneously seeing and being the true reality, fully awake and present without any preconceptions or expectations".

I articulated this experience through a poem:

Enlivenment

The form in which I lived
that never was but seemed so real,
dissolving into truer form
of universal life force; rippling waves
pulsating in my body form
reminder of true nature -
I am This.

Every cell enlivened
inside out and outside in,
the two that never were apart
lived now as one.

Relaxing, unfolding, being here now
every moment fresh, alive and truth.

Gone beyond -

all form as objects
all form as death
all form as concepts
all form as falsely seen

Into: *alive to alive* -

all form as one
all form as life
all form as presence
all form as true reality –

Absolute.

The epistemological shift I experienced was one in which my experience of self shifted to the direct knowing of – I am This, I am God, I am Source. My personality or egoic self dissolved into the true form of my transcendent self. I was being presence, Source, rather than being filled with Source. I was eternal, timeless presence, and now perceived my personality as not being real but a construct, a sham with no separate self. This knowing left me with a more still and peaceful mind and the perception that my desire to live a virtuous life was through being goodness and through right action.

When I explored this experience, I discovered writers on non-duality ranging from the ancient Upanishads (Jacobs 2007), Vedanta spiritual writings (Hodgkinson 2006; Maharaj 1973) through to modern Neo-Vedanta, (Gill 2004; Gilbert 2011; Hartong 2001, 2005; Waite 2003; Wheeler 2004), as well as mystical and philosophical academic discourses such as Loy (1998), Forman (1999) and Parrinder (1995).

Non-duality is a term and concept used to describe a state of consciousness, or sense of self in which two become completely one, without experiencing any subject or object; with the subject being the object, as I have described above. The term is used also to refer to interconnectedness or oneness. Wilber (2007) defines it as "reality apprehended directly and immediately ... subject and object become one in a timeless and spaceless act". Historically the term forms a key strand in the Indian Advaita Vedanta-tradition, which states that there is no difference between Brahman and Ātman. I also found Christian mystics including Bernadette Roberts, (Roberts 1982, 2005) Thomas Merton (Finley 2003) and Meister Eckart (Davies 1994), who also articulate this experience.

Katz (2007) is a comprehensive text on oneness and he defines non-duality as literally meaning "not two". He describes the wide range of experiences and descriptions of non-duality across all the wisdom, faith and religious traditions. He posits that non-duality is the path through which we achieve understanding of true self as "we come to understand that there is no separation between us and purpose, between us and self" (Katz 2007:46).

Loy (1988) explores both religious and philosophical assertions of non-duality and attempts to construct hermeneutically, through extraction and elucidation, a core theory of non-duality. His core theory is a synthesis of claims from Asian non-dual traditions, particularly Buddhism, Vedanta and Taoism, supported by references to Western philosophical traditions, including Hegel, Whitehead, Nietzsche and Heidegger. Despite the contradictory ontological claims of the different traditions, Loy (1988:184) posits that "behind each philosophy is the same non-dual experience" and that the differences stem from emphasising different aspects of the same experience. He provides an extensive analysis of the ways in which Western philosophical discourse is working from a dualistic analytical conceptual perception accessible to all, while the Asian counterintuitive meditative experiences of the non-dual transcend all concepts but can only be articulated, in hindsight after the experience, from the conceptual dualistic mind.

The aspect of his complex, fascinating and perceptive analysis most relevant to my doctorate is the way in which he links non-duality to how an individual, from a non-dual perspective, treats others based in seeing others as self and as Brahma. Loy (1988:296) quotes Vidyanaraya (an Indian sage) to emphasise how "the knowledge of the Self leads to the identification of oneself with others as clearly as one identifies with the body". He contrasts dualistic and non-dualistic ways of seeing and relating to others as – morality versus understanding, good and evil versus truth and error. He illustrates how practical daily "problems" become issues of delusion rather than evil, and the "solution" lies in not applying will or moral codes but in reaching accurate insight about the true nature of all things. One is then able to live and behave from an intrinsic response to others through the knowing of interconnectedness, others as true self or Brahma, which diminishes self-centered behaviours and fosters the virtues.

I had moved to Guilford College in 1998 and was now in a professional space in which I was able, in my first chief executive role, to be more explicit and to use the word spirituality in an open, if tempered, manner within a broader more mainstream dialogue in the college. During my six years there, I undertook a profound inquiry into the strategic application and articulation of SiW and how working explicitly from the spiritual dimension affected the learning and responses of others, including the positive and negative consequences of taking such an overt leadership stance. This included an eighteen-month debate and objective observation on the spiritual dimension of my leadership in a PhD by Joseph (2002), which gave detailed attention to my practice from an external academic perspective and from the internal perspective of six staff working in the college.

This was a six-year period in which I became more strategic in my approach to SiW and SL. I focused as a leader on four key areas: virtues-led personal spiritual leadership; one-off explicit spiritually based projects; interfaith field work; and corporate sustainability. I expanded my scope and type of intervention with a lot more focus on encouraging the inner life and well-being of individual staff and on collective learning activities for staff. I began to witness the power, impact and difference of how staff could and would change when they were able to see themselves, and others, in a new or changed perspective.

I explored the notions of interconnected leadership, flow and synchronicity, distributed leadership, spiritual leadership, and power for and through. In particular, exploring the notion of a virtuous leader was really significant for me during this period, a notion I explore in more detail as part of my personal spiritual leadership in the next chapter, in Section 5.4.2.5

page 67.

4.3.3 Void Experience: Emptiness 2005 – present

In 2005, during a one-week Enneagram workshop on the Holy Ideas (Almaas 1990), the words of the Buddhist *Heart Sutra*, which I had read regularly for over twenty years, suddenly revealed their deepest meaning to me, and I understood the meaning of the words as translated by Pine (2004):

"form is emptiness, emptiness is form;
emptiness is not separate from form,
form is not separate from emptiness;
whatever is form is emptiness,
whatever is emptiness is form."

From then onwards I have experienced directly the truth and reality of both form and no form, the nature of the void and the expansiveness of space as another facet of true reality. I could now see not only my constructed personality as a shell and fabrication of the mind but that everything I had ever known was a construct of the mind; every construct I have ever known just disappeared. I now knew that everything arises out of nothing, I have no self, there is only quietness, stillness, formlessness and emptiness at the core of everything, including me. This unknowing (which feels a more accurate term than knowing) is constantly with me, even in the midst of my action in the world.

I wrote a poem, published in 2014 in the Ridwhan *Diamond and Dust* magazine, which expresses my direct experience of this as below:

Knowing of No Self

Spontaneous disappearance into no-self,
form and no form simultaneously arise -
knowing of the deepest truth
appears within expansiveness.

Clearer sight of self-made ark of personality,
survival imprinting on delicacy of soul -
knowing this false nature
causes absence to arise.

Letting go
impermanence
cessation of the mind
dissolved to flow and emptiness -
knowing of beyond in brilliancy of boundlessness.

The epistemological shift from my previous two experiences was primarily one of experiencing emptiness, of nothingness being there, of loss of all constructs. Yet there was also a fullness, a completeness, a stillness and deep inner peace alongside a paradoxical knowing that I am simultaneously Source, and empty, everything and nothing, form and no form, manifest and unmanifest. I experienced also a total acceptance of things as they are, being totally here now, non-attached to things in the material plane, plus a sense of pure unfolding (beyond anything I can ever know with my mind) from spaciousness and emptiness.

This was the most difficult to allow, or unfold, of all my mystical experiences as it terrified me initially to let go into this void. It felt like a black hole into which I might disappear and never return. An important question for me was how I could continue in my professional work if I really let go into this nothingness completely. Yet what I have found since the experience is that I can live an even fuller life. I experience action as flowing from spaciousness enabling me to hold an open space for others to unfold, as well as for myself. What I experience happening is an emergence of form (the manifest) out of being centered and aligned with formlessness (the non-manifest) into the world of action and organisational life; arising from the letting go into total alignment of being Source. I am still in the process of integrating this experience into my daily life and I still need to integrate the paradox and limitations of how to continue to act, to be in the world in real time, to lead in my organisations more consistently from this state of void (no self) as well as from ego (personality), union or oneness.

My own journey of the experience of self to no-self is one in which through continual inquiry and mystical experience I have come to see that my egoic self has no real existence, nor substance. Rather it is constructed, as modern psychotherapeutic and object-relation theories articulate it, through thoughts, beliefs, stories, experiences, self-images, and ego structures (both conscious and unconscious) that I have identified with since a child, all of which are barriers that have separated me from Source and my fullest potential. Through my spiritual practices, studies, meditation and mystical experiences, I have seen through and let go of many of them by understanding and seeing them for what they are; and many still remain. As my sense of self changes, the personality structures, fixations, behaviours and reactions become thinner and thinner, enabling me to see things, situations and people as they really are in that moment, situation, or event through perceiving a clearer sense of objective reality without my internal structures and constructs, conscious or otherwise, clouding and influencing the way I respond.

CEL was the culmination of a lifelong journey and a deep inquiry, at the core of my whole life and being, into how I integrated my educational, organisational and spiritual life and to live my deepest truths, as an effective and authentic leader, while integrating my spirituality and lifelong quest for spiritual wholeness. During this period, I led primarily from oneness but also had glimpses of the void and a sense of manifesting from the unmanifest and letting go of power in a more radical manner. My professional and spiritual journey in CEL is my most significant attempt to live spirituality across a whole organisation in the workplace and to be an overt spiritual leader within my professional life. My work in CEL is described, reflected upon and evaluated in detail in Chapter six. The leadership theories I explored in this period include organisational spiritual leadership, selfless, quiet and invisible leadership, radical trust, Theory-U, the power of presence and letting go.

For two years I worked with Dr Simon Western, who as my coach assisted me in integrating my spiritual inner life with my leadership impact. The most explicit example of a direct relationship between my internal spiritual state and how this enabled me to lead differently is captured in an article we co-authored: #9: Western and Sedgmore (2008) *A Privileged Conversation*, (copy of full chapter), which describes the process and content of our coaching relationship.

In this article I describe specifically how:

"I had moved from organisational unity and connectedness to fragmentation and disconnection, mirrored in my inner life by the final stages of a shift from a personalised sacred object to the non-conceptual and the void ... letting go and accepting the unknowable and non conceptual in every facet of my life ... able to perceive and hold these paradoxes." (Western and Sedgmore 2008: 334–336).

As described in Western and Sedgmore (2008) and Fry and Altman (2013:55-70) this coaching work resulted in a stronger, more liberating trust within my leadership in the CEL workplace, with me being more centred and present in my work while acknowledging that my "personality and ego would kick in at difficult times". This inner shift in my spiritual inner life, which enabled me "to create a more liberating, less hierarchical structure and organisational form, different in intention and shape than I had co-created previously", (Western and Sedgmore 2008:338) is articulated.

4.4 Culmination of my mystical experiences

I have written up the broader range of my mystical experiences in poetic form, in addition to the three poems above, some of which has been published in 2013 in #18: *Enlivenment*, a published collection of my poetry.

Despite my range of mystical experiences I cannot claim any form of steady state transcendence as I know some spiritual teachers and writers do. Instead I experience a shifting back and forth, or an opening and closing, between a more present, spacious and unified or transcended sense of self, or no-self and a more constricted egoic or constructed self. At times, although less so than previously, my egoic habits of many years arise and take charge.

What I do experience is the ever-growing capacity to access, witness and return to a state of presence, more skilfully and more speedily, with deep sense of inner calm. Since working in the Ridwhan School, I perceive all states of self, egoic or otherwise, as part of Source and I am more accepting of wherever I am. I am able to allow whatever state or sense of self arises and to be with that in the moment, not taking things personally or being overly detached, engaging and letting go as I move into the next moment, or situation, fresh without preconceptions of an anxious chattering mind. I experience all states and senses of self as occasions for learning, inquiry and conscious unfolding. Having said that, the constricted places feel more and more uncomfortable and unattractive. What my different experiences of Source, and perspectives of self, no-self, have given me is a broader range of options and possibilities to lead from in any situation I face. The egoic perspective provides me with the tools and knowledge to function effectively in my workplaces, and my mystical experiences have enabled me to no longer identify with my constructed self as my core identity, or as my only way of leading. This is explored more fully in the next chapter, particularly Section 5.4.2.6 pages 68–72.

4.5 Academic and spiritual writings on self and no-self

There is a vast academic and spiritual literature on self, personhood and identity. *The Oxford Handbook of the Self*, (Gallagher 2011), summarises and explores theories and studies of self from the perspective of the disciplines of psychology, philosophy, religion and neuroscience. The questions posed and answered by the different perspectives include: does the self have a real ontological existence?; what is meant by a "sense of self"?; is the self a narrative construction, a cognitive representation, a linguistic artefact or a neurological induced illusion through illness or mystical experience? Sidents, Thompson and Zahavi (2011) describe the experiences and dialogues of a group of Western phenomenologist and analytical philosophers and scholars of Eastern philosophy. This collection includes various perspectives concerning the self and ultimately leaves the nature and existence of the Self still in question, indeed the title is *Self and no Self?*, with a question mark.

My experience is supported and clarified by writers (Almaas 1986, 1986a, 1988, 1990, 1998, 2004, 2008; Forman 1999, 2011; Roberts 1982, 2005) who all write about the loss of self and their own experiences of the void, all of which I identify with. Roberts quoted in Katz (2007:183) describes form and formlessness from the viewpoint of non-dual Christianity, through the lens of the resurrection and the ascension, as revealing "the inseparability of spirit and matter, the Formless and the Form".

It is the metaphysical explorations into self that most interest me, and I have found common ground within the spiritual wisdom traditions, particularly Christian mysticism, Hinduism, Buddhism and the Diamond Heart School, that a constructed sense of self, ego or personality, is what lies at the root of all human suffering and separation. They posit that liberation and wisdom lies in spiritual inquiry into the nature of self beyond the personality.

The modern living writer and teacher who has assisted me most over the past ten years is A.H. Almaas. I joined the Ridwhan School as his mystical philosophy encompasses all my various experiences. In 2008, I began undertaking three retreats annually within his Diamond Heart approach (Davis 1999). I identify with the comprehensive nature of Almaas's approach and his inclusion of a wide range of mystical experiences available to each individual; more than any other writer of the mystical life, he describes my own experiences.

Almaas combines three components – modern psychological and therapeutic understandings, the ancient western and spiritual wisdom schools, plus the experiences of himself and of his

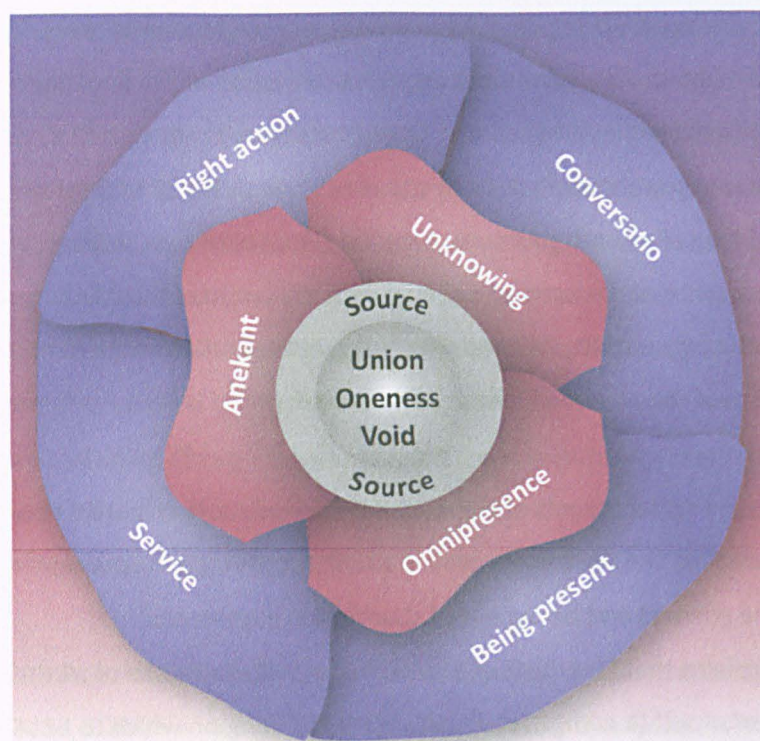
students – in a unique approach designed to facilitate the "healing and integration of our being" (Almaas 1986a:vi). Almaas (2004:ix) describes four stages of Beingness or realisation, the first three of which I have experienced – living daylight (union), presence (oneness) and non-conceptual (void) as described above. The movement and transformation of the knowing of the sense of self and of identity involved in Almaas's first three stages are as I have attempted to describe in my own journey above: first, from ego identity with the structures of personality to the experience of being filled with source and having glimpses of true reality; second, the shift to the experience of being source and oneness with that source; third, to realising the boundlessness of our being in space and knowing the void beyond all conceptual understandings and the experience of the end of all identity into no self.

My own experiences of the epistemological aspects of these shifts is articulated in Figure 1 row ten page 34. He has a fourth dimension, the Absolute, which is abiding constantly in Source, remaining constantly aware of the stillness and beingness of source in everyone and everything. Almaas (2004:386) explains that "the Absolute (dimension) is the absence of all the components that give us the sense of self (it comprises of) absolutely nothing on which to base a sense of self". Roberts (1982, 2005) describes her experience of no self as going beyond an egoic one (which is my experience) and includes loss of consciousness itself as she travelled her journey from personality self to spiritual self to no-self. I am in the process of exploring Almaas's Absolute and Robert's "spiritual no self" as I have not experienced either of them directly.

4.6 Map of my personal spirituality

As described above I have travelled my own personal spiritual journey of mystical and spiritual experiences while continuing in my full-time professional work as an organisational leader. I now articulate my own unique expression of my personal spirituality in Figure 3 below:

Figure 3: Personal spirituality



At the heart of this model is mystical knowing of Source through three mystical experiences of union, non-dual and the void.

Mystical Knowing

1. **Source** – My use of the word Source is my name for an ultimate reality, or sense of transcendence that is both myself, but is also beyond all aspects of my personality, and is the unmediated knowing of true reality and the sense of self, or no-self, that arises of direct, unmediated knowing of Source.
2. **Omnipresence** – spirit experienced as everywhere, in and of everyone, interconnected, unified, both manifest and unmanifest, form and no form, and available to all.
3. **Anekant** – perceiving the many-sidedness of truth as truth, also a truth beyond all articulation alongside accepting the diversity of all beings, actions, paths and beliefs as part of a universal unity, unfolding and evolution.
4. **Unknowing** – loss of personal self into a void of emptiness and unknowing, pure nothingness. The disappearance of small self into no-self, nothing there. Beyond any previous knowing of source, beyond anything that can be known or conceptualised in any way while knowing all is already simultaneously divine, empty, nothing and everything. Living consciously with paradox and unknowing.

Spiritual Manifestation

5. **Being present** – directly experiencing an expansive state of being, clarity and presence from the deepest experience of Source. Holding a space, internally and externally, for what can arise as the deepest form of what truly is in the now.
6. **Service** – offering the fruits of all action to a higher purpose and benefiting others by seeing the spiritual in everything and everyone. Functioning from a place of ego surrender and no-self within Source unfolding and manifesting.

7. Right action – behaviour, responses and decisions based in virtues and experience of Source, arising naturally and intrinsically from virtuous character and actions steeped in and congruent with Source and deep integral personal spirituality.
8. Conversatio – continual inquiry and transformation for spiritual learning, growth, consciousness and expansion into fullest spiritual knowing, potential and perception of true reality.

In Appendix IV, I outline in more detail the eight terms above and reference additional sources, spiritual traditions, concepts, thinkers and teachers who have influenced me on my journey. Spiritual influences are summarised previously in Figure 1 rows eleven and twelve, page 35.

4.7 Conclusion

The description of my mystical experiences and the mapping of my personal spirituality articulates the underpinning of how my spirituality informs, influences and enables the spiritual dimension of my leadership and organisational practice to manifest. I have a deep and open, flexible and inclusive spirituality, which is crucial to how and why I have been able to stay true to the explicit spiritual dimension within target-based organisational cultures that demand control, compliance and performance. A key element of my contribution is to have developed, understood and articulated my mystical and inner life; unusually so for a busy, practising leader. I have done this to such an extent that I have gained a powerful leadership clarity, and strength, to face the complexities, barriers and resistances to attempting to publicly integrate my spirituality in an overt manner in my workplaces. I have travelled through three deep and impactful mystical experiences and changes in my direct knowing of Source, and of my sense of self. With such a strong inner spiritual life, the support of therapy, spiritual community, spiritual practices and coaching I have remained effective as both an active mystic and as an organisational leader.

Chapter five: The development and articulation of my explicit personal spiritual leadership

5.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates how I understood and developed the personal spiritual dimension of my leadership in the period from 1998 to 2008. Drawing on the PhD by (Joseph 2002) and relevant aspects of my work in Guildford College and in CEL, I articulate what was spiritually specific in my leadership and how I understood and manifested explicit personal spiritual leadership. The writers and theories that most influenced me and how my leadership impacted on others are also explored. Figure 4 below is a map of my personal spiritual leadership comprising nine components as distilled from my practice and illuminative evaluation. My contribution to practice relies heavily on how I developed my leadership presence, particularly presence experienced from the four perspectives and shifts in my sense of self emanating from personality, union, oneness and the void. My capacity to hold space for emergence and fullest potential to arise, and being able to “let go” are other significant components of the map. All nine components are described in this chapter.

5.2 Understanding and manifesting the spiritual dimension of my leadership

I discovered that aspects of my mystical experience were reflected also in management literature in the work of Maslow (1970, 1993) who defines peak experiences as ecstatic moments and moments of rapture. Zaleznik (1992:79) adopts William James's (1982), theory of "once-born and twice-born" individuals into a managerial and leadership frame. He posits that the difference between managers and leaders lies in the perceptions they hold deep in their psyches concerning chaos and order. "Once-born" managers seek order and control, to perpetuate and sustain organisations, with ideals of duty and responsibility while "twice-born" leaders can tolerate, or even thrive on, chaos and constant change. The path of the "twice-born" Zaleznik (1992:72-81) argues is leadership through personal mastery in order to overcome the sense of separateness the "twice-born" feels. He suggests that leaders "have much more in common with artists, creatives and scientists than with managers" and argues that "twice-borns" turn inward to generate a created identity rather than an inherited sense of identity. As a leader, and a mystic, I identify with both James's and Zaleznik's descriptions of the "twice-born". Both writers provided me with a management perspective and offered insight into what was happening to me. I have gone beyond any sense of "created identity" through the death of constructed self-identity as described in the previous chapter. A further

aspect of my contribution to the field is to have articulated leading beyond the constructed self and from the influence of integrated mystical experiences.

For eighteen months from 1999 to 2001 my leadership at Guildford College, as the principal and chief executive, was a longitudinal case study for Joseph's PhD dissertation (Joseph 2002), which looked closely at how I was working as a leader, and my impact, from a conscious spiritual dimension. He researched my motivations and actions and compared this with the views and reactions of six college staff in different role positions and proximity to myself. This research provided a rich and unusual opportunity for debate and discussion about and objective observation of my spiritual leadership style and impact. It paid detailed attention to my practice through robust research and deep reflection by an external academic and from the internal perspective of six staff working in the college.

Joseph (2002:117-23) describes my spirituality as strongly steeped in the experience of a benign true reality that was consistently present in the here and now, "based on the notion of living a good life". He acknowledges my attempts to be true to a deep set of spiritual values and to a truer sense of who I was from the spiritual dimension. He comments on how

"she feels able to trust in a Higher Order" and "not only was this (peak experience) a precious time for her but was indeed life changing and had an impact which went far beyond the time of the experience itself".

The Neoplatonic ideal of the Good as "absolutely simple, without form" (Hadot 1998:8) and of attaining union with the Good as the true function of human beings resonates with me. I like the notion of goodness as the source of all things generating from itself the intellectual ability to reason, the "nous", as the reflection of its own being containing the infinite store of ideas and perfect forms. In virtue and philosophical thought the good has the power to elevate itself above reason into a state of ecstasy where it can behold, or ascend to, that one good primary Being whom reason cannot know. Hadot (1998) describes how Plotinus viewed the spiritual as "nothing other than the self at its deepest level", as a return to self as real essence. This has been my primary path, the inquiry into the nature of self and "Who am I". This is reflected in Figure 4 and in my expression of personal spiritual leadership. Neoplatonism views the practice of virtue as the way to transform day-to-day life and live from a state of wisdom that includes presence to spirit, to self, to my body, to others, and to the world.

Kirkeby (2008:29) analyses Greek philosophy, which argues that the connection between leadership and the good is learned and cultivated through "the arts of self-examination and

self-criticism” alongside creating oneself, in each moment, based on abilities, talents, competences, experiences, psychological constellation, goals and ideals. From 1998 to 2002, virtues most interested me and formed the basis of my personal spiritual leadership through attempting to develop my character through cultivating virtues, alongside a deep intrinsic commitment to the ideal of the good and to spiritual growth, both as an individual and as a leader within collective community.

Aristotle viewed virtues as dispositions that we learn by imitation and habit. Virtues are states of mind, emotional attitudes, a disposition, an embodied way of developing and living a good or moral character from which the ultimate good action is done for its own sake, not as a means to an end. The Cardinal virtues, as defined by Aristotle, are temperance, courage, justice and practical wisdom (phronesis), each of which depend upon and amplify the others in an interdependent unity. Saint Thomas Aquinas added an emphasis on the virtue of charity, or agape (love). Phronesis is ultimately goodness that cannot be taught but is developed through experience and experiential learning. Phronesis is also concerned with what is good within the context, ie practical ethical action within specific settings and situations, and enables us to "act upon the world for the common good", Grint (2007:237). I agree with Grint that what counts as good is dependent on the local social context, depending upon and building on what is already there, rather than through an abstract ideal of the good.

The Christian theological virtues of faith, hope and charity were steeped in a sense of goodwill and relationship with, and service to, others. The importance of serving others is articulated in the notion of the stoic cardinal virtue of katorthoma, "the wise person's ultimate way of acting", which involves acting on the basis of your Divine nature through placing the interests or concerns of others above own self-interest and consistently pursuing ends that are for the greater good of all (Kirkeby 2000:198).

Joseph (2002) concludes that the spiritual and virtues dimension of my leadership resides in six specific elements that characterise how I was “different”. These are: a clear awareness of wanting to be good, of higher order and a transcendent dimension; a lessening of the ego expressed by being less controlling; a sense of wanting to be of service; a strong connection with and concern for people; a more all-round (holistic) concern about her job; increased energy; and, finally, a strong, perhaps unstoppable, desire to work and function for the greater good, guided by her spiritual experiences and their meaning for her.

What Joseph attempts to do is to recognise and articulate exactly what this transcendent or spiritual dimension involves and he acknowledges how well I articulate my spirituality. He identifies five specific ways in which I manifest the spiritual dimension: being highly spiritually motivated; taking active steps to develop spirituality by reading avidly; undertaking spiritual formation; pursuing a committed path of spiritual development; and actively seeking to incorporate spiritual understanding and perspective in my leadership of the college. He describes the nature of my “presence”, which affects some people positively; engaging them through trust in an inspiring leadership agenda. He refers also to how I espouse views consistent with how I operate in practice with an approach of “first amongst equals, and co-creation within a peer community”.

What emerges from these points and other key messages in his PhD is that my spiritual dimension is closely connected with the importance I place on my inner life and on cultivating my spiritual state of being, my character, vision, sense of purpose, values and virtues. My core focus lay in how I was being as a leader as much as in what I was doing in the organisation, while recognising that the two are deeply interrelated. Joseph (2002:119) explores my personal spirituality, and my important relationship with the transcendent and my own strong sense of what the spiritual dimension meant for me.

5.3 Impact on others

Joseph (2002:119-123) states that his experience of me did affect him, and he describes the way in which he was touched deeply and

“had the sense of a spiritual level of response in me (himself) ... a response more significant than normal reactions of interest or enthusiasm ... a sense of vicariously experiencing the awe and wonder of something transcendent and beyond regular human experience”.

He reflects that this type of response may be one of the ways in which a spiritually motivated leader can and does affect those with whom she interacts and thus has an influence over and above “good leadership”.

He discovers that the majority of Guildford College staff were not interested as much in my beliefs or my engagement with spirituality as in how I walked my talk, or not, and whether my actions illustrated a true congruence or was false rhetoric. He concludes that what concerned staff most was that I cared about staff and students and evidenced this in all my actions.

He also discusses how a good humanistic and non-spiritually motivated leader might also exhibit many of the traits and actions he found in me as all my actions, decisions and behaviours could be interpreted and explained through other frames, theories and perspectives than spirituality, such as personality profile. He devotes a chapter to explaining my leadership through the different lens of my Myers-Briggs ENFP personality type to offer an alternative explanation.

He concludes that “where leaders are spiritually motivated, this does have an impact, but is generally unlikely to be attributed to spiritual causes by others” and that making spirituality explicit as a belief and source of motivation is likely to provoke significant reaction, which may not always be positive. He concludes also that “the most significant difference for spiritually motivated leaders themselves is likely to be in their sense of personal mission and purpose within a wider, transcendent context” (Joseph 2002: 206).

I find it significant that Joseph identifies that my spirituality was not important to others, and that caring, congruence, competence and communication were most important to them. This implies that it was not experienced as impositional or coercive: more as an irrelevance. This view is supported by Joseph’s comments that I exhibited a “lack of coercion, inclusivity, co-operation and delegated decision making, and sharing that was celebratory and expansive”. Being spiritually explicit was far less important to others than I had envisaged, which causes me to reflect on who my focus on SL and SiW is primarily for, me or others. This is explored further in Chapter eight and in Chapter one Section 1.8.

5.4 Map of my personal spiritual leadership

5.4.1 Overview

From the wide range of evidence available on my practice and the illuminative evaluation analysis in Figure 1 page 33, I have articulated eight components in a map of my personal spiritual leadership illustrated below in Figure 4. All components relate to and rest upon congruence with my personal spirituality, Figure 3 page 56. The combination and content of these components express my unique manifestation of personal spiritual leadership. When all of these components are fully developed and expressed, they enable the fullest manifestation and unfolding of leadership presence from four possible perspectives of self. They also foster the maximum holding of potential and possibilities within an organisation and its members. The eight components, while not easy to manifest, are offered as a framework for leaders

wishing to understand, articulate and populate their own unique aspects of personal spiritual leadership.

Figure 4: Personal spiritual leadership



5.4.2 Eight components of the map described

5.4.2.1 Congruence with personal spirituality

My map of personal spiritual leadership rests upon and is shaped by my personal spirituality. Five components of the map of my personal spirituality in Figure 3 page 56, *anekant*, *unknowing*, *conversatio*, *right action* and *service* are named in Figure 4 above, in each of the five petals, to illustrate how they are integrated into and congruent with my personal spiritual leadership. The other components of Source, *omnipresence* and *being present*, are included in the central circles along with the three senses of self from which my leadership emanates, *union*, *oneness* and *the void*. I have added *ego*, as a fourth sense of self, as I am frequently pulled into egoic reactions as a leader, examples of which are threaded throughout the context statement.

5.4.2.2 Cultivating reflective practice

The two important processes of cultivating spiritual intelligence and reflective practice are both illustrated as running vertically alongside the development of inner leadership motivation, leadership virtues and the four senses of self perspectives. This is to represent how these two cultivations, over many years since 1989, have enabled the fostering, maintenance, stability and manifestation of the spiritual dimension within my leadership practice amid the buffets and strains of daily organisational life. The content of each is described individually in this section and the next.

I have experimented consistently with being a reflective practitioner since first entering education in 1978. Initially I developed my reflective skills through Action Science as developed by Argyris (1965, 1970, 1971, 1976). As a lecturer, I explored his theory and approach for understanding the interrelationships between the competence of the individual as practitioner and how their self-reflection and self-awareness facilitates both interpersonal competence and organisation effectiveness. As a leader, I explored his later work jointly with Schon, Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978), and Schon (1983, 1987), which focuses directly on the skills required for organisational effectiveness and notions of “theories in use” and “espoused theories”. In 1989, I discovered Torbert’s work, which builds directly on Argyris and Schon to develop four levels of experience for leaders to focus on simultaneously – attention, theory, practice and outcome. He focuses on the perspective of the leader as a full participant within the context in which they find themselves, as well as their levels of awareness. Torbert (1991), Torbert et al

(2004), Fisher, Rooke and Torbert (2000), and Rooke and Torbert (1998, 2005) helped me to integrate reflection within the midst of action, as well as in meditation and reflection outside action. The work of Almaas (1990, 1998, 2004, 2008) has taught me how to live in continual inquiry as a way of life. Since 1998, I focused more on presence as a means of living my reflectiveness.

5.4.2.3 Cultivating spiritual intelligence

I have continually developed myself, and have explored intelligences, particularly emotional intelligence (EI) and spiritual intelligence (SQ). The notion of intelligences has been around for many years: Gardner (1983) articulates multiple intelligences; Wilber (2007) articulates several “lines of intelligences”, but it was Goleman (1995, 1998, 1998a) who made the notion of emotional intelligence mainstream and popular within organisational and leadership development. My article Sedgmore (2001) *Emotional Intelligence – The Hidden Advantage* explained how EI could be of huge value, a hidden advantage even, for FE leaders. Along with fifty other FE college principals in 1999 I had my own EI “scored” on the Hay scale and scored very highly. High EI is considered a prerequisite for SQ.

From 2004, I began explorations in SQ for me and for other staff. The notion of SQ was developed primarily by Covey (1989), then by Zohar and Marshall (1999), who stated that SQ cannot be quantified. Zohar and Marshall (2004:3) describe SQ as “the intelligence with which we access our deepest meanings, values, purposes and highest emotions”; they provide a moral and motivational framework and describe twelve characteristics. Wigglesworth (2012:30) has developed her SQ model and defines SQ as “the ability to behave with wisdom and compassion, while maintaining inner and outer peace, regardless of the circumstances”. She refutes all claims that SQ cannot be measured, viewing measurement as essential, with SQ as the “integrating intelligence” that guides all other intelligences. Her model has twenty-one skills in an assessment model that can be assessed and intentionally developed. I undertook her assessment in 2012 and evidenced a wide range of SQ capabilities.

Throughout my career, I have engaged with self-awareness and profiling tests, all of which I scored highly on.

5.4.2.4 Inner leadership motivation

I agree with Kanungo and Mendonça (1994) that a strong awareness of inner motivation is important and that what differentiates spiritual leadership from a self-centered, egoic perspective is "an idealised internal vision" based on motivation to higher purpose and service. Zohar and Marshall (1999) state that "a critical mass of individuals acting from higher motivations" can, and do, make a positive difference for good in the way they lead and behave. I have identified six motivations in myself. The notions of higher purpose, being of service and meaning in the context of worldly organisations resonate strongly with me and form the essence of my inner leadership. In 2004 I was interviewed by Jameson (2006) and publicly professed my love of FE, my resonance with servant leadership and my attempts to go beyond my ego.

How I have fostered the inner life of myself and others and travelled my work as a spiritual path is explored throughout the context statement, as is my use of power.

Using power "with and for" has been important to me from very early on in my life and I have always challenged any misuse of power, as I perceived it, by authorities. I am heavily influenced by Torbert and his philosophy and approach to power and leadership as expressed in Torbert (1972, 1976, 1978, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1994). He proposes that leaders ought to ensure a balance of power, promote the self-realisation of its members and generate liberating structures and peer communities as the means to achieve its goals. I have experimented with his approaches since 1990. Joseph (2002:182-5) devoted a whole section to "power, influence and spirituality" in which he considered the impact of both actual and perceived power within Guildford College, and my use of power as a leader. The word "empowerment" was used frequently by others to describe my leadership style; he commented on my use of power **with** rather than power **over**, alongside my use of open information to liberate. He states that I deployed a high level of "positional and personal power" (Joseph 2002:182), which were "deployed in a benevolent and co-operative way".

How I have remained committed to and developed pluralism and diversity and spirituality for its own sake and fostered collective spirituality is described in Chapter six Section 6.4.5 pages 95–98. Fry and Altman (2013) and many other sections of this context statement provide extensive examples of how I have led from the inner motivation expressed here.

5.4.2.5 Leadership virtues

I have populated my personal spiritual leadership with the virtues I have tried to live by and have affected me most. Robinson and Smith (2014:97) sum up for me the place of virtues in leadership as I have experienced them. They provide connection between spirituality and ethics, “the embodiment of meaning, a living out of the responsive relationship to the social and physical environment ... the building bricks of character and culture”, enabling responsible practice and responsibility.

Other proponents of virtues (Malloch 2008; Kirkeby 2000, 2008) and of SQ (Wigglesworth 2012, Zohar and Marshall 1999) argue that the virtues are what keep leaders in a space of behaving appropriately, morally, ethically and able to choose to uphold right action. They believe that the spiritual element of the self is expressed in leadership through the authentic living of virtues. Through his model of Organizational Spiritual Leadership as articulated in (Fry 2003, Fry and Nisiewicz 2012, Fry and Altman 2013), Professor Fry calls for an organisational vision and the development of an appropriate organisational culture based on altruistic love, faith and vision. Vision, values and virtues have always played a pivotal role in my leadership alongside a sincere and authentic desire to articulate and to act on them in a congruent manner, with commitment and engagement from staff. Joseph (2000) states how he witnessed my genuine desire to be “of service, to care and love”, which affected others by breaking through their mistrust and previous experiences so that they “felt able to take risks, stick their heads above the parapet and realise more of their potential”. I posit that character and virtues stem directly from living congruently with one’s own personal spirituality. Maitri (2005:20) describes virtues as “inner attitudes and orientations that are expressed as qualities of action, both inner and outer, reflecting the soul’s alignment with Being ... (virtues) express an inherent plenitude and spaciousness, an underlying goodness and abundance implicit in life ... and lack of reactivity”. Writers on virtue seem to agree that as an individual progresses spiritually, or metaphysically, the virtues increasingly inform and influence, through a virtuous circle, inner experience and moral character, which becomes reflected in outer action as action for goodness for its own sake. I call this right action and draw also on the Buddhist notion of “right action”, which also influences my personal spirituality (see Appendix IV for a description).

I have a strong desire to behave morally, and to treat others as I would wish to be treated myself, which has deepened over the years. I have found unethical and self-serving behaviour to be less and less appealing, but more importantly have sensed that I am less and less capable of behaving (knowingly) in an inappropriate manner.

5.4.2.6 Leading from presence and four senses of self perspectives

From 1990, I began intense explorations on the notion of presence, moving beyond just a personal spiritual practice into experimenting with being present within my daily organisational life. It has taken me over twenty years to understand how to consciously manifest presence, through an iterative process of experimentation and deliberate cultivation. My contribution to practice is deeply connected to my ability to manifest presence and to bring about profound change through empowering others.

Currently I attend two eight-day Ridwhan School retreats each year, which focus on the skill of presencing and of being present. The two main practices I use personally and organisationally are first, sensing my body, particularly my arms and legs; and second, meditating on the breath through my belly centre and focusing my attention to directly experience what is happening and arising in the now – whatever that is. I do this twice a day for thirty minutes in the morning and evening in private. I also try to be present in the midst of action through placing my attention similarly in my body, breath and belly centre whenever I can. This includes when I am leading within my organisations.

Almaas (2004:169) describes presence as directly experiential, presence in the present, in the now, is the meaning of Being. The present moment, is not the juncture between the past and future but is the entry into the presence of Being. Presence exists only in the moment and not in the past or the future, thus giving a sense of immediacy, of fullness, of here-ness in the embodied experience of now.

The key insight I have gained myself is summarised by Almaas as:

“Eventually, we recognize that immediacy really means presence. That is, when our experience becomes truly immediate—without the interposition of any mental construct—then we are here, really in the now, fully in our experience. To be in our experience in this way is what we call presence and that is what we mean when we talk about truly being ourselves. We realize that *being here* means, *I am actually the presence that I am*. I am here at this very moment, and my experience is not a mental construction dredged up from my past. I am just what I am in my factness, and I am experiencing this moment completely, directly, without anything intervening. *I am the very awareness, the very consciousness, that is present, that exists, in this very moment, and I am experiencing myself as that very existence*. Further, when we are no longer defined and restricted by the constructs that our mind has imposed on the moment—when we finally can experience ourselves with immediacy and let ourselves be—we recognize what it means not to act internally, on ourselves or our experience. Because “not taking any inner action” and “being ourselves” turn out to be exactly the same thing—the simplicity of just being here”. Almaas (2008:136).

Kirkeby (2008) argues that presence has a spectrum of philosophical and theological meanings from Plato and Christianity through to modern-day business writers, spanning the metaphysical through to the scientific and everyday. Plato perceived presence as “parousia”, the way in which the eternal appears in time and can direct personal experience. Presence requires the individual to be able “to stand firm in the moment ... (in) confidence ... that the divine has a place amongst us”. He outlines also the concept of presence in philosophical traditions and describes “presence as a reflective attitude to life”, which can manifest from a religious point of view or as a fact of biological embodiment. He talks of being present in one’s life for and with others, and of presence as a “merger with oneself”, Kirkeby (2008:119, 122).

A key element of the unfolding of leadership presence is being able to mediate between presence and the physical world of the organisation in real time. Gregory (2006, 2008, 2009) assisted me greatly in understanding the process and the interconnection of the presence and the spiritual. Gregory (2006) provides a highly articulate overview of the nature and components of spiritual presence, and how it can be developed and experienced out of the three worlds of “the senses, (the physical world), the world of the soul, (the imaginal world), and the world of Pure Intelligence, (The Ground of Being)”, (Gregory 2006:1). I use Source in the same way as she is using Ground of Being and Pure Intelligence. She describes presence as “a manifestation of spirit-in-action with the ability to move between worlds, the physical and the imaginal. This movement allows us to work wholeheartedly with our mind, body and soul in the most complete way” (Gregory 2006:2). As a leader, I was able to be present and open to the imaginal realms, nourishing soul within my organisational life through stories, symbols, poetry, chanting, spiritual practices, and experiences of flow; all described in later sections of this chapter. Gregory argues that “spiritual presence enables the individual to engage in transformative change for themselves and to facilitate the same in others” (Gregory 2006:4).

Examples of this include at the opening of CEL senior team meetings, and currently in my role as chief executive of the 157 Group: team members connect and are present together through silence followed by the voluntary sharing of personal thoughts, experiences, and describing how they are in the present moment. Open and intimate exchanges have taken place, including the sharing of the death of loved ones, levels of stress, work concerns, work satisfactions, positive experiences of enjoying nature and the fulfilling of childhood dreams. It allows each of us to locate ourselves into the sense of self we are able to. The business element of the meeting follows on from this co-created voluntary personal sharing. We also offered the cultivation and practice of presence for CEL staff through developmental sessions on the Enneagram, and through using coaches experienced in metaphysical presence.

A beautiful book was given to me as a personal gift when I left CEL. It includes quotes (57 in all) on how I affected individuals, as a leader. It includes comments on values, spirituality, presence and other aspects important to the staff and stakeholders who all contributed voluntarily. The quotes illustrate that people did notice and comment on my presence, in particular the four quotes below illustrate this, all from #19: a full copy of the CEL leaving gift book to Lynne:

"I was thinking about the contribution you have made to our approach to leadership development

Authenticity: the confidence to be yourself
Presence: an ability to stay in the room
Positive energy: a concern to be considered and hopeful
Values driven: in everything!" Fiona Mackay

"There are some people who are 'unique', they add a presence, light up a room and they make you feel special, valued and in a way 'unique' yourself.
I am new to this organisation and in that short time, I have felt that presence".
Margaret

"I shall miss you and your presence, your energy and passion!" Caroline M

"You will be sadly missed. It is your vision, your light and your other qualities which have made CEL the wonderful organisation that it is and that have attracted people of a like-minded vibration to work for CEL. It was great to meet a fellow National Federation of Spiritual Healers member and to see God's work being done in this sector. I felt welcomed and accepted and that is due to the energy and culture that you have fostered". Sonia

As described in previous Chapter four and Figure 1 row ten page 34, my mystical experiences have generated shifts in my sense of self and have formed and influenced my leadership. I have incorporated and mapped into Figure 4 above how they influence and inform my personal spiritual leadership. They are closely related to my experiences of presence within each of the four senses of self, which I have placed in tabular format in Figure 5 below to give an overview of my four senses of self. Figure 5 articulates each of the perspectives of self I experience; how presence is experienced; and how the fruits of my experiences have impacted upon my leadership.

Figure 5: Leading from presence and four senses of self perspectives:

Mystical experience	Sense of self perspective	How presence is experienced	Fruits of the experience, impact on my leadership
<p>Up to 1989</p> <p><i>Occasional glimpses of Source</i></p> <p><i>Steeped in ego and personality</i></p>	<p>Constructed, personality and ego perceptions.</p> <p>Acting from personality fixations, conscious and unconscious emotional and psychological baggage.</p> <p>Actively reforming personality self and exploring my unconscious</p>	<p>Journey TO presence</p> <p>Primarily non-existent</p> <p>Glimpses of something bigger, something beyond myself.</p> <p>Being filled with light spontaneously on occasion</p>	<p>Constant curiosity</p> <p>Search for truth, goodness and excellence</p> <p>Transformational leadership</p> <p>Cultural leadership</p> <p>Values-led leadership</p> <p>Power over</p>
<p>1989–2004</p> <p><i>Union</i></p>	<p>A conjoining of, and seeing of, my <i>constructed</i> self into a transcendent self through a mystical union – the two now united as one in surrender and absorption of my <i>small</i> self which is no longer the me I thought it was.</p> <p>My subjective self dissolves into the greater objective self.</p> <p>There are still two who have been united.</p>	<p>I AM WITH presence.</p> <p>Experiencing a timeless, eternal transcendent presence, inside and without.</p> <p>Being infused and joined with divine presence, light and love.</p> <p>Presence descends on me.</p> <p>Grace descends through spontaneous action of a greater being.</p>	<p>Wanting to be of service to others.</p> <p>Being the face of the Divine in the world.</p> <p>Wanting to live a virtuous and good life in private and public.</p> <p>Servant leadership.</p> <p>Leading through moral and spiritual character and virtues.</p> <p>Collective leadership and power with.</p>

Mystical experience	Sense of self perspective	How presence is experienced	Fruits of the experience, impact on my leadership
2004–2005 Oneness Non-duality	No separate self, being fully the unmanifest. Simultaneously experiencing being manifest but ultimately as the unmanifest. My subjective (small) self has completely dissolved into objective (True) self, the self I already am. Deeper serenity, radical trust	I AM presence. Everyone and everything are presence. Presence is constant and always there. Loss of the sense of presence of a personal God. I am the oneness of all forms that exist.	Interconnected leadership. Flow and synchronicity. Distributed leadership. Spiritual leadership. Power for and through.
2005-current Void Emptiness Non conceptual Ego no-self and spiritual no-self	Loss of personal and constructed egoic identity into an experience of emptiness, unknowing, boundlessness and spaciousness. Being without self, literally the disappearance of constructed self. No longer know self in a conceptualised way. Pure nothingness.	EMPTY presence. Spaciousness with no boundaries. Pure presence, beyond all constructs. Absence of deficit. Unfolding and emergence aligned with Source through letting go and letting come into the potential of now. Power through being presence.	Leading beyond personal ego needs and limitations. Non-action. Awareness of experience of no-self and paradox of how to act, to be in the world in real time. Living comfortably with paradox. Selfless and invisible leadership. Letting go of power.

I am able to lead from any of the four senses of self as identified above and in Figure 4.

The nature of my leadership occurs from the fullest depth of presence and Source I am capable of, ranging from ego, union, oneness or the void and results, at best, in the fruits and leadership identified above.

5.4.2.7 Unfolding of leadership presence – the five petals

The five internal steps, named within the petals in Figure 4, are all ones that facilitate my being in the state of presence, fully or partially. The degree and capacity of my ability to be able to manifest and unfold each of these five steps (petals) influences the impact of my leadership on the field of the organisation. Presence unfolds through each of the five steps like the unfurling of a flower. There is no set order, but all assist presence, and when all five open in synergy, maximum presence can be generated.

Each petal describes an important internal process that I have developed over many years through meditation and sensing practices and continual inquiry. Each of these five processes heightens my awareness to my sense of self, my direct experience of Source and the current interconnection between my inner and outer worlds, in the present event. Each process influences the nature of how I lead in that particular event and time. The right and left bottom two petals are the primary inner processes and capacities that enable me to transcend my ego preoccupations and enable me to let go into the deepest level of unknowing and unfolding of presence and Source that I am capable of in that particular moment. The left and right upper petals are capacities of listening, adapting and generating, and perceiving multifacetedness and interconnectedness that enable me to transition from my inner depths, to be simultaneously in Source while bringing my attention and awareness into the outer world of manifestation. The top petal is the potential of the culmination of all the processes translated into the most appropriate, timely and right action for the particular situation.

The unfolding of the petals all takes place, to a greater or lesser extent, while simultaneously holding an inner and outer space for the organisational manifestation, described in the next section. I believe my five processes are a metaphysical version of Theory-U (Scharmer 2009). His open mind, open heart and open will correspond to my levels of union (heart), oneness (will) and void (mind) and my petals to his seven leadership capacities and five movements. My petals are portals into the metaphysical dimensions of self and no-self beyond personality. My processes are intended for those who can perceive and or abide in the metaphysical realm but would like a set of leadership maps to assist their articulation, understanding and practice.

5.4.2.8 Holding emergent space for the highest spiritual potential and possibilities

Critical to Figure 4 is not only the importance and impact of presence, but also its effect on the organisational field. The result of each or all five petals being open enables what Kirkeby (2008:122) refers to as presence as a “merger with oneself”, which dissolves the distance one

has to one's self, and presence to others. This generates a sense of harmony and interconnectedness, a flow of effortless motion, which fosters a rhythm, attunement and awareness aligned with the presence of others, and the rhythm of the community. In this way presence is both aware of and shapes the collective situation(s) and can transform what emerges and happens through attentiveness to oneself and to others, ideally making a positive (good) difference in the life of the organisation and all involved. I have called this holding emergent space for the highest spiritual potential.

This is dependent upon the interior state and capacity of the leader to hold a space for allowing full spiritual potential and seeing future possibilities. Scharmer (2009, 2013) and Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers (2005) propose that the success of leadership interventions depends upon the "interior condition of the intervener" as it affects, holds, liberates or limits the organisational and leadership field and its capacity or development. It is this interior condition from the perspective of the metaphysical realm in which I am most interested, and which Scharmer (2009) and Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) in Theory-U do not investigate as fully as I have done in this context statement. They appear more interested in the technology of the processes and are describing leaders operating primarily from ego states with only glimpses of union or interconnected oneness. They encourage an open mind, an open heart and an open will so that the leader's defences and usual ways of seeing the world, such as tough judgement, cynicism and fear, are suspended within their personality structures. Theory-U is a process through which leaders travel to the bottom of the U involving a journey through initiating, sensing, letting go, letting come, enacting and embodying to allow "future possibilities to arise" in the moment.

Jaworski (2012:140) claims that "true leadership is the art of working with emerging fields to bring forth new realities". This is a complex aspect to describe but is best articulated by Senge et al (2005:211-12) as a new capacity in three parts:

"observing that no longer fragments the observer from what's observed; stillness that no longer fragments who we really are from what's emerging; and creating alternative realities that no longer fragments the wisdom of the head, heart and hand".

This describes my experience of how I fostered spiritual capital and held an emergent space for CEL and led profound change and innovation through my presence, as well as through actions and interventions. Senge et al (2005:180) also say that "the cultivated self is the leader's greatest tool ... It's all about being able to see the emerging whole from a place of deepest connection to source". For me it was being able to see the patterns and energetics of the

organisation, feeling the disharmonies, knowing when something was not quite right, joining everything together, and perceiving the whole system. I have attempted to articulate this, through metaphor, in talks I have given as illustrated in #20: an extract from one of my talks to Surrey University postgraduate students.

5.5 Writers on presence in organisational and leadership literature

My understanding, experience and manifestation of leadership through presence, and explicit spirituality, are steeped in the metaphysical realm. I have studied also presence as defined by others in the context of organisational and leadership application.

Senge et al (2005:219) say

“in the end it may be impossible to give a very complete explanation of it (presencing). Some things are beyond human comprehension, and it’s actually unwise ... to try to analyse them too far”.

Halpern and Lubar (2004) and Rodenburg (2007) explore presence as understood and derived from the acting profession, primarily as projection and charisma. Scouller (2011) articulates the difference between an understanding of leadership presence as charisma, which relies upon a job title, fame, skilful acting or the projection of an aura of “specialness” by followers; and presence, which is something deeper, more authentic, more fundamental and more powerful – not depending on social status. He contrasts the mental and moral resilience of a person with real presence with the susceptibility to pressure and immoral actions of someone whose charisma rests only on acting skills and the power their followers give them.

Charisma is a term frequently used in leadership discourse. The word was coined by Max Weber, from the Greek term “chara”, meaning grace, joy and kindness, and is defined by Kirkeby (2008:69) as “a quality that a person may possess that brings her closer to the qualities that characterise the divine”. It is not a disingenuous presence that involves seduction and manipulation to satisfy one’s own personal needs or ends.

I have learned tremendously from writers on leadership presence within organisations including Conger 1994; Jaworski 2012; Fry and Kriger 2009; Kirkeby 2000, 2008; Gregory 2006, 2008, 2009; Scharmer 2009, 2013; Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers 2005; Silsbee 2008; Vaill 1998; Western 2008a; and Zohar 2004. I have attended workshops led by Senge, Torbert,

Bennis, Scharmar, Zohar, Wrigglesworth and Fry to understand and apply their work, alongside developing my own practice.

Scouller (2011) provides his view of presence, which he sums up as the rare but attainable inner alignment of self-identity, purpose and feelings that eventually leads to freedom from fear. Presence reveals itself as a magnetic, radiating effect on others through being authentic, giving full respect and attention, speaking honestly and letting unique character traits flow.

Scharmer (2009) and Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) have developed the notion of presence as pre-sensing, a mix of sensing and presencing defined as:

“a heightened state and quality of attention and intention that allows individuals and groups to shift the inner place from which they function. When that shift happens people begin to operate from a future space of possibility that they feel wants to emerge ...”
(Scharmer undated: 9).

Scharmer’s Theory-U includes a “source dimension”, which is a “blind spot” but if accessed is “generative” and incorporates a mix of perspectives including the fields of scientific and energetic interconnectedness, the intuitive, creative and innovation internal processes of a leader, and a shift in attention and awareness to see the perspective of others and the forgetting of one’s own agenda. I find his processes restricting and overly complex with far too many elements to systematically work through: there are sixteen in all, plus all the levels of listening and a wide range of questions. Despite studying Theory-U and attending a week-long course on its application in June 2013, I have never attempted to apply it in my organisations; it has felt too process-prescriptive, overly complex and insufficiently steeped in metaphysical perspectives.

He draws upon sporting and creativity analogies to articulate states of flow and expanded states of attention and awareness. His definition of presencing as “connection to the source of inspiration and common will ... allowing the inner knowing to emerge” (Scharmer undated: 7) can all manifest within the realm of personality and more traditional leadership theories. Yet he also describes “connection to something larger”, “collapse of boundaries”, “a new way of looking at reality”, “communion and grace”, individuals within his studies who are on spiritual journeys, and the requirement of an inner journey “to the deepest source of self”. He has realised that glimpses and experiences of the metaphysical can and do happen.

More metaphysical organisational and leadership perspectives include Silsbee (2008:21), who defines presence as “a state of awareness, in the moment, characterised by the felt experience

of timelessness, connectedness and a larger truth". Vaill (1998:235,237) articulates how "organisational leadership is so much a matter of our capacity to be effective in the moment of action", and how "the present is the place where spirit is most naturally found" and "the only door through which the eternal can enter our awareness".

5.6 Conclusion

Between 1998 and 2004 I gained clarity on the specifics of the spiritual dimension of my leadership and learned how to understand, articulate and live more explicitly the spiritual dimension. As described in Chapter six, I went on, from 2004 to 2008, to integrate my spiritually explicit leadership into a more strategic and comprehensive leadership and whole-organisation approach. I was able to integrate the complex elements of my mystical experiences, sense of self and understanding of presence into my personal spiritual leadership to reach a deeper and more integrated leadership, during these latter years, unusual in its depth and effectiveness.

I believe I am challenging the prevalent paradigm of leadership that believes you can only bring parts of yourself into the workplace. Here and in the following chapter, I evidence how I have brought all of myself, including my mystical experiences and their impact on the nature of my leadership, which has made my leadership stronger and more effective; as well as fostering the capacity of others to bring all parts of themselves into their workplace.

Chapter six: Contribution to practice

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the culmination and success of my original contribution to practice made from CEL the organisation I led as chief executive from 2004 to 2008, with relevant references to my previous practice within Croydon College and Guildford College. It describes two of the four components of my original whole-organisation framework for fostering spiritual capital through spiritually explicit leadership and leadership presence in Figure 2 page 38.

First, this chapter focuses on the spiritual capital aspects of impact and outcomes, (Figure 6 below). Inevitably other aspects of outcomes and capital were achieved in CEL, (financial, human and knowledge); these are described in Appendix I. The main focus here is on how spiritual capital was fostered explicitly.

Second, it provides detail of my contribution to practice, which stems primarily from my ability to lead and foster highly innovative organisational cultures by harnessing collective spirituality through six spiritually explicit interventions developed by me (Figure 7 below). I describe key approaches, incidents and staff comments within each of the six types of interventions to illustrate the nature, originality and spiritual explicitness of my leadership.

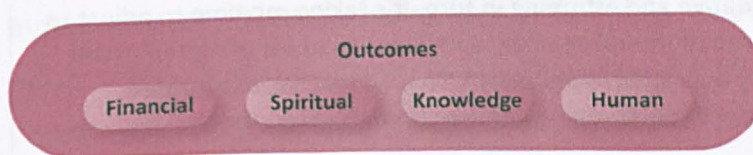
I thread through this chapter relevant aspects of the SL and SiW critiques, (summarised previously in Chapter two, Section 2.5 and 2.6 pages 22–26), to illustrate how I have reflected upon my practice, in real time, and the further reflection I have undertaken during the completion of this doctorate. I include both positive and negative aspects of my practice.

6.2 Context, success and impact of the spiritual dimension in CEL

CEL was a national experiment, sponsored and funded by the secretary of state for higher education and skills, and was set up as a small business with a remit to be financially self-sufficient within three years. In 2004, I inherited a dysfunctional partnership organisation that was failing to meet its targets, had no coherent mission or defined culture, and was not using its budget to good effect. # 14: Fry and Nisiewicz (2012) *Maximising the Triple Bottom Line through Spiritual Leadership* pages 257 to 267 describe the scenario I inherited, and the subsequent turnaround.

Targets set by civil servants were to produce 1,500 leaders in three years; in practice, within five years 40,000 leaders had participated. Bottom-line achievements included profits of between £0.5m and £1m a year, which were invested back into developmental projects for the sector. CEL also achieved 98% customer satisfaction, 82% market niche, significant repeat business, and robustly evidenced impact and improvement. Every traditional performance criterion (and the outcomes of finance, human and knowledge capital), including participants, customer satisfaction, product innovation and staff satisfaction, was outperformed, as described in more detail in Appendix I. In this chapter, I focus primarily on how the spiritual capital of CEL was fostered amid the broader outcomes of financial, knowledge and human capital as highlighted in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Outcomes of CEL



Most, if not all, CEL staff felt a deep sense of purpose, belonging, nourishment, growth and fun, in addition to working hard. As the chief executive, I wanted intentionally to foster collective spirituality and spiritual capital. I resonate most with the definition of spiritual capital by Zohar and Marshall (2004:28)

“wealth that nourishes and sustains the human spirit ... reflected in what a community, or organisation believes in ... exists for ... aspires to ... takes responsibility for”, and that “organisations rich in spiritual capital are not just sustainable they are evolutionary”.

I relate also to Miller (2006) who argues that “to the degree that an organisation can enable, and support, or encourage a depth of personal morality and dedication to a noble purpose, it possess spiritual capital”. Other definitions by (Malloch 2008, Liu 2007) are more overtly linked into specific religious traditions.

The two supporting comments below are from staff and appear in the [#15: CEL \(2007\) winning application to the International Spirit at Work Award \(ISAWA\) titled *Ordinary Heroes, Extraordinary Company*, and its appendix 2](#). They summarise the spiritual expression and freedom within CEL experienced by many staff, and evidence that spiritual capital was a powerful experience in CEL:

"The first thing that someone might notice coming into CEL is the **great company spirit. I feel that CEL has grown culturally and spiritually in such a short time."** Trisya Roberts

"It's rare (in my experience) to work in an environment where the spiritual dimension of leadership is thought about, and where those working in the organisation are encouraged to reflect on their growth and development in a context which incorporates spirituality. What this means for me, is that there is an explicit opportunity to locate moral purpose and my role in CEL, within a broader dimension of spirituality which gives my role greater coherence. This may sound idealised, but the reality is that creating a climate which promotes this exploration of self and relating to others, and working in this environment is both challenging, and rewarding. I have the space and 'permission' to bring more of my authentic self to work, but this brings with it greater vulnerability and honesty in relationships, and highlights the importance of trust and respect in work. I am enjoying the sense of being accepted and valued by my colleagues for who I am, and the difference I bring to CEL, as opposed to an expectation that I conform to a 'type'. I am also enjoying being part of a community that can create spaces for people to grow and develop and experience themselves in new ways. This provides limitless opportunities for creative and collaborative work, and my work feels more creative and affirming in turn. It's taking me time to adjust to the freedom of showing more of myself at work, and knowing more of myself in this new context, but it is a truly liberating experience which I know has many more possibilities, which will help me realise more of my potential". Mary Joyce

While my leadership as chief executive was critical, I must stress how all the initiatives in CEL were supported by the senior team, the board and by individuals at every level of the organisation who stepped into their own leadership and spiritual autonomy, professionalism, and passion to co-create an excellent service. CEL was the culmination of a lifelong journey and a deep inquiry into integrating my educational, organisational and spiritual life, as an effective and authentic leader. By 2004 the strength of my inner life, spiritual awareness and confidence were such that I felt able to lead more consciously to generate collective processes that foster a culture of collective spirituality and spiritual capital.

The qualitative and quantitative research project undertaken by Altman et al (2007) concluded that CEL may be construed as a spiritual organisation within a secular context.

In 2007, CEL was the second UK organisation, after the iconic Body Shop, to be honoured with the prestigious International Spirit at Work Award, (ISAWA), as one of seven winners. In the #21 ISAWA letter informing CEL it had gained the award the judges stated that CEL had modelled spiritual leadership by

"listening to customers, encouraging their feedback and responding to their needs through a strong emphasis on trust, empowerment and delegation ... offering an impressive combination of spirituality-informed policy and spirituality-guided conduct for the benefit and well-being of its staff, learners, stakeholders, and the wider sector".

They noted also our innovative approach to programmes, policies, practices and services; and proactive pursuit for customer feedback. They recognised CEL as a model of excellence for leadership development in the English learning and skills sector. CEL also received the award for its programmes on organisational spirituality, its commitment to spiritual leadership, its focus on reflective practice, and its work to create a new paradigm for organisational performance – one that values well-being, social justice, spiritual development, and sustainability as much as financial success.

Fry and Altman (2013:71-84) claim that CEL was highly successful on maximising spiritual capital and the triple bottom line, of people, planet and profits, through my spiritual leadership. They state that by receiving the International Spirit at Work Award CEL had established itself as a champion, by being at the leading edge of leadership development that included the spiritual and faith dimension of leadership. They also argue that CEL became a model of good practice in organisational spirituality and in spiritual leadership for other organisations through gaining international recognition as an organisation that had developed a model of organisational spirituality to implement workplace spirituality based on personal and organisational leadership. They claim that “Lynne Sedgmore as CEO was widely recognized for developing a model of organizational spirituality and for practising both personal and organizational spiritual leadership”.

Baroness Helena Kennedy, a respected and high-profile UK judge, in her foreword to Fry and Altman (2013:xiii) says:

“I am struck by the collective nature of the journey ... fostering a new level of spirit. Lynne Sedgmore’s professional and personal story is itself uplifting and hugely impressive. She has been a powerful leader in FE for 30 years”.

Another source of acknowledgement was from the National Ecumenical Association for Further Education, (NEAFE), and its 2007 inquiry into *Making Space for Faith in FE*, which acknowledged CEL’s role as “the lead for the sector in modelling ways in which the dimensions of spirited leadership and the spirit at work movement can be appropriately adopted by the sector”. #22: *Making Space for Faith in FE*, relevant pages.

In recognition of this initiative and my explicit work on spirituality in CEL, I was appointed in 2008 as personal adviser to Bill Rammell, the minister for further and higher education, on a three-month project to work on violent extremism in further education. I produced a report;

set up a working group of principals, which still meets in 2013; and established a number of initiatives to enhance and support faith work and the tackling of extremism nationally across all FE colleges. My work was considered highly successful as acknowledged by #23: Bill Rammell's letter, project papers and press coverage.

Other positive acknowledgements include Smith and Charles (2013:83) and Robinson and Smith (2014:212-3), who recognise CEL as another example of a public sector organisation in the UK grappling with the challenges a more spiritual focus presents, and being an example of an organisation that has achieved a balance of embracing a wide variety of spiritual beliefs, while at the same time enabling free expression and practice of the individual's particular beliefs. Previously my work in Guildford College was cited by Howard and Welbourn (2004:173) as one of eleven spirit-led companies in the UK.

6.3 Distinctiveness of CEL

Zohar and Marshall (2004) say that spiritual organisations see themselves as distinctive; we certainly did, and revelled in that distinctiveness. A word coined by a member of the senior team was "our CELishness", a word we used to capture the specialness, uniqueness and magic of CEL. Before the merger happened, in 2008 we co-produced a staff book to convey and celebrate this "CELishness" from different staff perspectives, and to leave a signature of who we were.

I include four illustrative quotes by staff below to provide a flavour of CELishness and how community and belonging were experienced; all comments are from the #24: CEL 2003-2008, Our book, which is included in full to provide further evidence of the wide range of comments voluntarily made by staff to describe their experiences in CEL.

"The CEL family is a very special thing, everyone supports each other and the feeling of helpfulness and friendship is real, which can be quite rare in organisations". Sandra Farrell (p7)

"For me, CEL is distinctive by the way it models its core messages by putting humanity at the centre of its leadership values. It can do all the target-driven 'stuff' that happens in any organisation – but it also breathes and nurtures ... encouraging people to take risks, challenging them to achieve high goals and helping to find solutions when things go wrong. It brings out the best in people". Ian Pritchard (p19)

"As a strategic associate and regular visitor to the CEL offices, I am constantly amazed and delighted by how different the experience is from that of working with most other

organisations. The two most striking things about CEL are the lack of an obvious hierarchy and the constant buzz". Sid Verber (p23)

"Gwen's stream of consciousness ... CEL = energy, passion, freedom to 'do', stretching the mind, opening doors, sense of satisfaction, learning from talented people, being challenged, new friendships, large glasses of wine, flipcharts around the walls, laughter and fun, making a difference, high standards, pushing boundaries, being inspired, feeling valued, being proud, delivering results, going the extra mile, raising my game, fabulous OD consultants, more laughter, giving it a go, vibrant, young, energetic, passionate with a sense of purpose ..."

Gwen Stirling (p.27)

As late as July 2013, in an email to me, a former member of CEL's staff, totally unsolicited, says how he is still feeling the CELishness he had experienced and cherished within CEL and wishes to express it in his current work.

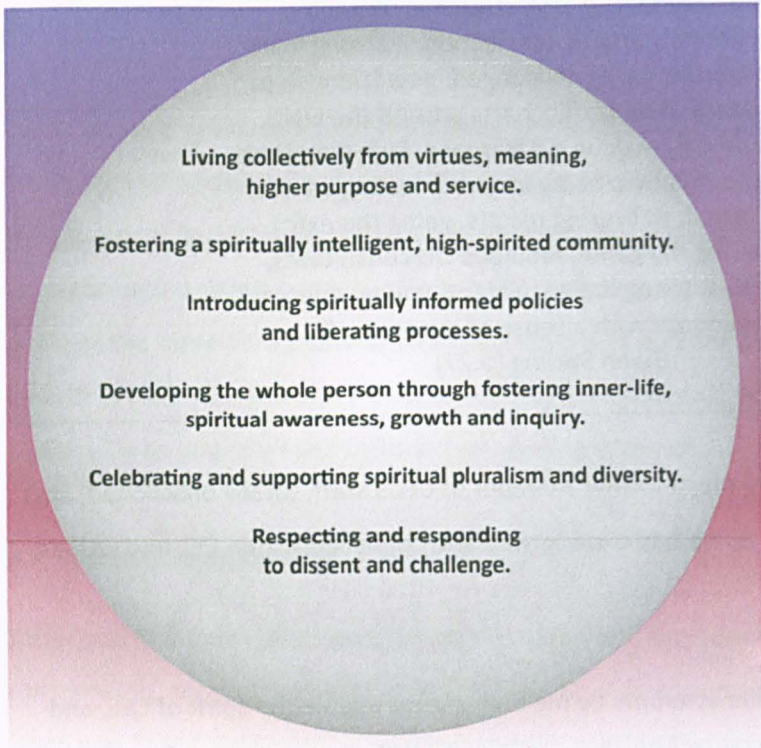
Fry and Altman (2013:126) describe attempts by me and staff to enable the spirit of CEL, and "CELishness" to live on through a star fish analogy, giving all staff a star paper weight and the buying of a star in the sky so that we could all remember CEL into the future, beyond the merger.

6.4 Whole-organisation approach to leading innovative cultures through six spiritually explicit interventions

Figure 4 below is the organisational component of my whole-organisation approach for the effective fostering of collective spirituality and organisational spiritual capital, as illustrated in Figure 2 page 38.

Briskin, Erickson and Callanan (2009:11), state that "we cannot will collective wisdom to arise in groups, we can (only) make preparations for it to emerge", which is what these interventions were intended to achieve.

Figure 7. Six spiritually explicit interventions for leading highly innovative and high-performing cultures



In the rest of this chapter, I describe in detail how I led highly innovative organisational cultures, culminating in CEL, through this whole-organisation approach through six spiritually explicit interventions. I draw on my experiences, highlight critical incidents, share successes and failures, and reflect upon academic critiques. I illustrate critical incidents within each of the six interventions to evidence how I developed what Jaworski (2012) calls “scaffolding” the organisation’s developmental growth through practices, guiding ideas and operating principles that enabled CEL to perform at exceptional levels. I focus on the interventions that had most impact, including where I succeeded and where I fell short. I thread through relevant aspects of the eight academic critiques of SL and SiW practices, (as introduced and explored in Chapter two and critiqued in Appendix II) to simultaneously describe my practice, reflect upon that practice and integrate relevant academic critiques.

6.4.1 Living collectively from virtues, meaning, higher purpose and service

I have used values-led corporate processes, facilitated by external consultants, to encourage the articulation and the living of values and virtues in all of my organisations, and have spent

considerable time co-creating collective meaning, higher purpose and identity based on strong staff engagement and influence.

Joseph (2002) commented on how vision, values and virtues played a pivotal role in my leadership in Guildford College, with a sincere and authentic desire to articulate and to act on them and to co-create an organisational culture with staff that included their own personal values and views on how the corporate culture should be shaped and lived collectively. Fry and Altman (2013) argue that a culture centred in clearly articulated values and lived virtues provides the foundation and benchmark for fostering collective spirituality. CEL encouraged all staff to articulate their own personal values and moral purpose, as well as understanding how they resonated, or not, with the corporate values.

Kirkby (2000, 2008) explores the interrelationship between virtues as an individual endeavour and as social collectivity and how the leader permeates virtue within an organisational culture and context. He illustrates how the reciprocal relationship between individual and social, collective and organisational virtues is key in leadership, as the leader has to reflect the social virtues in their behaviour, though at different levels. Malloch (2008:19) argues that “businesses led by faith create the moral space required by virtue”, which is what I was attempting to do in CEL. Malloch (2008:36) also defines “business virtues” as creativity, building community and practical realism – qualities that contribute to business success and vindicate the place of business in society and explores the virtues of business.

The values and culture of CEL encouraged open and free expression of who you considered yourself to be, as a person of faith or no faith, and that you belonged in the organisation however you identified. In CEL’s open plan office, all kinds of spiritual symbols were evidenced; the hijab was worn, as was crucifix jewellery. A Buddhist Tara sat on a desk next to staff who openly expressed their atheism or agnosticism. It was also accepted that spirituality could be manifested outside traditional religion, through nature, environmental concerns and service to others. The vision and mission of CEL was focused deeply on the leaders and the students we served. The CEL board articulated a clear strategic statement to all staff that “growth was for service not for profits”, while encouraging the achievement of financial surplus. Values were integrated into appraisal, providing two opportunities annually to reflect on the individuals’ living of values and virtues, and fostering a thoughtful and conscious connection to our collective purpose.

An astute quote in #24: the *CEL 2003-2008, Our book*, captures the way in which virtues were manifested collectively:

“other organisations have policies which they struggle to put into practice. CEL just gets it right and then thinks about whether there ought to be a policy to cover it”. Sid Verber (p23)

I believe he is evidencing what Malloch (2008:126) summarises as

“the virtuous company, building on spiritual capital, does not need to be told how to treat its employees, its customers or the environment; it knows ... that it is steward of all that it touches, just as virtuous people are”.

Lips-Wiersma, Lund Dean and Fornaciari (2009) and Tourish and Pinnington (2002) present a myriad of potential dangers of an overly strong focus and insistence on compelling visioning, corporate cohesion, coherent culture, and shared or universally held values, arguing that these can lead to “corporate cultism” and the “detriment of internal dissent”. They argue also that the power and intention of a leader who is able to “change the goals of followers” even if “for the collective good” must always be suspect and held in check by appropriate balances and feedback within the organisation to avoid cultism, abusive location of power, unhealthy dependency on leaders, spiritual engineering and monocultures.

As I will describe in Section 6.4.6 of this chapter, I did consistently encourage ways in which I was held in check by appropriate balances and feedback, by external perspectives, evaluators and researchers, by feedback from staff, and by my own constant inquiry, critical reflection, and need for diversity, inclusiveness and pluralism. I had no desire to impose “one way” or set of beliefs on anyone.

Tourish and Tourish (2010) and Berman Brown (2003:398) challenge the premise that “organisations have the right to invade people’s internal cognitive space to reshape their values” or to “engineer their souls”. They claim that spirituality has no place in the workplace and that the public sphere, particularly in public sector organisations, is no place for the expression of such a private, potentially contentious and personal aspect of people’s lives. I have experienced a few staff who felt this way and I have honoured their reluctance by ensuring that their views were respected and their privacy ensured. Indeed, I have found consistently that most staff enjoy working out their values and have viewed it as a liberating process rather than a coercive one, feeling deeply inspired when values are actually lived, particularly by senior management. The numerous staff quotes on how values were lived in CEL, included throughout the #24: *CEL 2003-2008, Our book*, evidence this.

6.4.2 Fostering a spiritually intelligent, high-spirited community

In all my organisations, I have attempted consciously to co-create spaces of possibilities and creativity and innovation; what I called “oases of freedom and autonomy”. In CEL I was keen to foster a liberated peer community that was top-down and bottom-up, with the structure, flexibility and scope to respond to constant change.

Fry and Altman (2013:72) claim that:

“Lynne’s underpinning philosophy of leadership was one that embraced spiritual leadership as a collective and relational activity that goes beyond the classic leadership model of the lone, charismatic, egoic hero. Her approach to spiritual leadership had moral purpose at its core and a strong sense of service while encouraging a student and staff-centred, empowering style that enabled and allowed everyone to develop to their fullest potential.”

Vaill (1998:172) states that “all true leadership is indeed spiritual” whether conscious or not, and “if there is inherent spirituality in organisations, it is to be found in the experiences members and others have in them”. This resonates with my personal spiritual principle of “evolutionary spirituality” (as depicted in Figure 7 page 84, and defined briefly in Appendix V).

I consider that collective spirituality, through the actions and experiences of our relationships with others, within community, simultaneously challenges form and develops the essence of our spirituality.

CEL’s model of leadership was expansive and inclusive and included all the intellectual, physical, social, emotional and spiritual dimensions. CEL’s collective underpinning philosophy of leadership was one of servant leadership with strong spiritual elements, encompassing leadership as a collective, distributed and relational activity that moves beyond the traditional model of the lone, charismatic, egoic hero model. This philosophy held moral purpose at its core and encouraged a distributed, student-centred, empowering leadership approach to enable and allow all staff, at every level, to develop and lead to their fullest potential, including the spiritual dimension. I attribute much of the success of CEL to its collective and peer working, with all of us, including me, being prepared to work in teams beyond the formal role hierarchy. We recognised functional or knowledge expertise as more important than hierarchy, and were good and willing team players, understanding that we are all interdependent, but in difficult times taking full responsibility.

There were several reasons why I was able to foster collective spirituality and spiritual capital within the whole CEL community. CEL was a smaller organisation, which that grew from six people to eighty full-time and two hundred part-time staff, built from scratch, so as a community we grew and developed together. I could employ people sympathetic to, and interested, in the spiritual dimension or their inner life, thereby attracting highly competent staff, senior managers and board members sympathetic to overt expressions of spirituality. The twenty-five researchers seconded from Lancaster University Management School (LUMS) to deliver the £3 million research project on FE leadership consisted primarily of researchers with post-modern critical management perspectives. They acted as a valuable counterpoint to my spiritual proclivities, and consistently challenged what I was doing, consistently deconstructing my behaviours verbally, but not in a manner that could be captured and built upon constructively. On one level I welcomed this, but the consistent negativity did draw me out of my presence and irritated me. In hindsight, I wish I had been able to harness their talents and challenge in a much more valuable manner. Having read the academic critiques in more detail, I would behave very differently with such researchers in the future, being less triggered by their negativity and assumptions.

Proactively led by me, and fully supported by the senior team, spirituality within CEL incorporated both the horizontal and vertical levels of spiritual expression. We defined horizontal as expressing spirituality primarily through living beings and the environment with a strong desire to be of service to others and to the planet. We defined vertical as relationship with a higher power or source, a sense of connecting or relating to something beyond our selves, however that may be experienced. As a publicly funded organisation, the focus was primarily on the horizontal dimension, although we encouraged and fostered vertical discussions, explorations and discourse as they emerged naturally and organically. CEL encompassed a wide range of individual definitions and approaches to spirituality, including the traditional religious and faith paths, views of more modern spiritualities and what might be defined as New Age and green spirituality, as well as openly self-defined agnostics and atheists. All were respected, acknowledged and listened to. CEL encouraged and allowed everyone to explore, clarify, articulate and understand their own spiritual, transcendent or non-transcendent way of being within their life and work. Simultaneously CEL respected that the desire and capability to engage, or not, was the choice of each individual. Conversations and exchanges about soul needs, personal fulfilment and spiritual aspirations abounded in the organisation. Facilitators and coaches were aware of occasions when individuals experienced vertical dimensions on CEL's programmes, but these were private and confidential unless the individual chose to share.

On the imaginal level, CEL recognised the value of storytelling and not only produced many case studies and stories of customer experience and success but also encouraged staff to share their own personal and professional stories. I wrote about the setting up of CEL as a story, titled #25: *The Ever Renewing Story of CEL* – booklet and presentation. I narrated this story on a staff away day and encouraged staff to share their own stories with others as part of staff development events.

I instigated personally the annual staff away days and gave a clear remit for them to include four key dimensions: enhancing team effectiveness and spirit; nourishing creativity and the soul; facilitating the “stepping into leadership” of junior staff; and tackling together difficult organisational issues and tensions. Formal, and informal, feedback from staff on their experience of the away days was consistently outstanding in all four arenas and they feature consistently with positive comments in research, in #1 Fry and Altman *Spiritual Leadership in Action- The CEL Story* (page 11) and in #24: *CEL 2003-2008, Our book*, (pages 11, 13, 17, 21, 31, 33), as powerful events for personal change, professional development, collective fun and high spirits. Venues were in beautiful places and allowed time for inner nourishment, walking and reflective space and staff voluntarily shared their creativity by providing workshops in knitting, salsa dancing, hand massage, poetry and other activities that nourished and inspired them.

Social events abounded, the kitchen was a central space to socialise and eat together, comments on food and social activities are numerous in #24: *CEL 2003-2008, Our book*. Altman and Baruch (2010:13) wrote an article titled #26: *The Organisational Lunch*, which features CEL and describes how food and eating manifested in CEL and supported diversity and inclusiveness.

6.4.3 Introducing spiritually informed policies and liberating processes

CEL had the full range of policies expected of a nationally funded government agency and we also attempted to incorporate spiritual aspects and energy into our policies and practices.

The most innovative and radical way we introduced liberating processes was through a major project named the Democratising Strategy in-house development programme, led by Dr Western, my coach, a leadership writer, and an experienced organisational consultant. This project attempted to engage and involve all CEL staff in “a radically inclusive approach” to the articulation and decision-making of CEL’s strategic planning through strategic forums,

networking, open communication and creativity. It is described in detail in #10: Democratising Strategy, in particular, pages 173 to 175 and 181 to 196.

Dr Western and I decided on this process as part of our coaching relationship after I had gained sufficient trust in him to take such a radical and experimental step. We approached the project from a systems mindset, and it involved three stages: forums specifically for project leaders; forums for all staff; then an organisation-wide exchange process between all the forums.

The three stages enabled the whole system of CEL to interact through the work of the forums. The forums involved space to think, free association matrixes, a systems game and network mapping. Staff engaged in an open and profound manner. Three key themes emerged: fostering genuine distributed leadership; identifying sustainable success; and, third, designing collectively business models that could really work as a joined-up whole. This project contributed significantly to increasing staff confidence so that they could initiate and lead at every level in the organisation, with permission and encouragement to bring their creativity, power and enjoyment to work.

The aim of the project was to maximise staff participation in the CEL strategic process and to "build a culture that was emancipatory; a culture where employees had increasing agency to influence change ... and create new thinking space". The outcome was not to create a strategic plan, but to provide physical spaces for openness, creativity and distributed leadership as well as opportunities for the development of strategic thinking for junior staff; with the space and climate for new strategies and innovation to emerge from all parts and perspectives of the organisation. I attended the end of every forum to hear the content, issues and feedback emerging, directly from participants. This was my way of supporting the importance, impact and legitimacy of the project as well as enabling me to experience the more personal aspects and emotional nuances of the forum experiences and insights.

Outcomes encompassed specific suggestions for change initiatives from all parts of the organisation, particularly administrative staff. Suggestions included improvements to the appraisal processes, intranet communication and social networks alongside more integrated business process for working more holistically across functions and teams. There was also a noticeable shift from reactive management to proactive strategies for longer-term, sustainable performance and success.

In addition to this highly experimental process we had clear targets, values, accountability and ownership with significant delegation of power, responsibility and autonomy to innovate and to change and influence how things should be done; staff suggestions and feedback and challenge were always respected and acknowledged, even if not implemented. We worked hard to have a no-blame culture and a developmental framework in which competence and conduct issues were dealt with fairly, transparently and supportively, with significant support. We communicated openly and extensively through dialogue, transparent information, delegated budgets, and encouraged bottom-up organic networks and task groups. There was constant dialogue, conversation and sharing of ideas; the junior and frontline staff were given freedoms opportunities and budgets to experiment.

Another staff member speaks of:

“my frustrations with some of the ways CEL is organised. The excellent lack of bureaucracy in getting things done is mirrored in the lack of effective processes to deal with difficult problems”. Europe Singh (p 23)

The relationship between spirituality and policy was an arena I had made mistakes in previously in Guildford College with an aborted attempt in November 2000 to introduce a *Spirituality Policy* for the whole college. I circulated a draft, which I had written to my executive team and to six external colleagues whom I trusted and who had expertise in this arena, to seek their advice and views. My intentions were that after seeking their improvements I would take it to the broader group of thirty managers and to the academic board for discussion and eventual implementation. The policy outlined a manner in which the college would “recognise the non-material dimensions” and the ways in which the college would provide support to learners and staff. I received initially very positive feedback from all the external colleagues with thoughtful comments and with serious notes of caution from two of them, but I knew that I needed the full support of my executive team to move forward. All of my executive team responded that the timing was not right, it was considered too risky and too few people understood or wanted such a policy with spirituality still too contentious an arena on which to introduce a policy. The replies were thoughtful and gave genuine consideration, but definitely expressed a no. On this basis, despite my strong enthusiasm I decided not to pursue the matter.

What this incident illustrated to me was how differently people respond to the spirituality issue, the depth and intelligence of the discourse involved with the people I engaged with, and that dissent and genuine expression of the individual’s position was present in the executive team discourse. While difficult for me, and despite my own enthusiasm, I was prepared to

listen to my team, rather than to external people, and to adapt my behaviour and desire to the organisational context as seen from their perspective. It also illustrated that I needed to understand how to be more timely, wise and appropriate in this area. #27: spirituality policy draft, emails, and pages 183 to 184 in Joseph (2000) refer to this incident.

Having learned how important it was to allow staff to co-create and want policies themselves, one of my senior managers in CEL successfully led and co-created the *CEL Quality Improvement Policy*, which expressed the desire to release energy and innovation while building systems that would satisfy increased scrutiny by funders. It had a section titled *Quality Spirit and Aspirations – Approach Based on Values*, which expressed the view that “quality is energy” rather than just a procedure and that everything undertaken needs to be infused with a spirit and essence of quality. It talked about the aspiration to build on the “joy in achieving excellence” and how everyone who engaged in CEL’s quality procedures and with the CEL portfolio would be “inspired, stretched, supported, challenged, affirmed, intrigued and eager for more.” Within this “spirit and energy” of excellence, the policy provided a rigorous process for integrating the hard and soft features of quality into a robust quality process that fostered a living, high-energy quality delivery on all programmes and services.

We had two organisational structures: one for funders and a circular holistic diagram for ourselves to reflect how we experienced the interconnections and complexity of our scope and service as illustrated in #28: CEL organisational organogram.

To facilitate perception of the whole system and energetic field of CEL, we moved offices three times so that the all staff could be in the same room, in an open plan office.

In summary, our strategies and processes were constantly emerging through dialogue, possibilities and experiments, and we used the language of “dynamic steering” and Mintzberg’s (1987) “crafting”, which he describes as a way in which “strategies can form as well as be formulated ... emerge in response to an evolving situation ... requiring control just as much as responsiveness”. He also describes grass roots and umbrella strategies, which I also experimented with in CEL, particularly with diversity and sustainability.

6.4.4 Developing the whole person through fostering inner life, spiritual awareness, growth and inquiry

One of CEL's values was "we are reflective practitioners continually improving our professionalism and seeking feedback". CEL staff were highly creative, articulate, autonomous individuals with a strong desire to continually learn and improve and to practice self-reflective skills. They were living proof of what Briskin et al (2009:11) articulate, that the "power of collective wisdom lies in its ability to be an emergent phenomenon – from uncertainty, inquiry and dialogue come new meaning, learning and unanticipated ways to move forward".

In Croydon College, my leadership and interventions on the inner life of staff had been ad hoc. In Guildford College, I had begun serious inquiry into how working explicitly from the spiritual dimension affected the learning, behaviours and responses of staff, including the positive and negative consequences of taking an overt leadership stance based in the spiritual dimension. I had encouraged staff to explore their inner lives and to expand their ability to see other perspectives, but only on a small scale.

In CEL, I developed comprehensive processes for developing critical self-reflection and awareness, including the spiritual dimension within the voluntary development of staff, investing an average of £3,700 a year for each member of staff, significantly above the norm of £500 a year for UK Business Schools, which we benchmarked. Our commitment to and investment in reflection and self-awareness was an aspect of CEL that the ISAWA judges commented upon as a very positive and well-developed area.

A range of coaching, mentoring and 360-degree diagnostic and self-reflective tools were available, including the Global Executive Leadership Inventory, Myers-Briggs, Facet 24, the Enneagram, and the CEL Leadership Qualities Framework. Emotional and spiritual intelligence were viewed as key components of leadership effectiveness. Staff were encouraged to engage in whatever inner work appealed to them, and it was made very clear that engagement was not compulsory, and that individuals could engage to whatever depth they could or wanted to. Meditation, massage, healing, and yoga were also offered by CEL staff on a voluntary, unpaid basis, as were their own stories, passions and hobbies, such as knitting, salsa dancing, hand massage and poetry on staff development events.

This eclectic, open and diverse approach encouraged a huge appetite and engagement from staff, most of whom were keen and willing to involve themselves. Most staff members

engaged in their own structured self-awareness activity at some point in their employment with CEL and the majority of staff took up access to a coach or mentor for personal and professional development. Those who chose not to engage were reassured that this was not a problem.

Fry and Altman (2013:34) state that:

“the source of organizational spiritual leadership is a context that supports employees’ inner life ... taps into spiritual well-being ... which then fosters higher levels of organizational commitment and productivity, employee life satisfaction, financial performance and corporate responsibility - the triple bottom line”.

As part of staff development, CEL sponsored two workshops in 2007, which were delivered with the Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion, (JMSR), and led by two renowned leaders in the SiW field; Judi Neal and Martin Rutte. Don Beck consulted in CEL personally using his Spiral Dynamics framework (Beck and Cowan 1996) to support the CEL senior team in the forthcoming merger process in 2008. He also gave a workshop for our associates, generating huge engagement and excitement.

While external feedback, and staff feedback, on this inner work development was very positive it is important to consider alternative perspectives. Critiques (including Bell & Taylor, 2003, 2004; Berman Brown, 2003; Lips-Wiersma, 2004) examine the detrimental effect of SiW on employees and argue that rather than being the beneficial, widely welcomed and positive intervention advocated enthusiastically in SiW literature, the approaches that I describe above can be harmful or stressful to employees in a number of ways. These include engendering of mistrust and cynicism in staff if they are unable to relate or identify with the spiritual perspective. They argue that such employees can feel manipulated or coerced into having to conform to expectations with which they feel really uncomfortable.

I consider these perspectives to be very useful, and can see in hindsight that, despite my good intentions, I did not give sufficient time and space to a collective and more open discourse on the potential negative aspects of what we were doing. The twenty-five researchers from LUMS did challenge the efficacy and legitimacy of the approaches we were using, an internal verbal discourse that I could have drawn upon far more robustly.

Bell & Taylor (2003:462) raise concerns of leaders pressuring employees into accepting stressful conditions, or making the intolerable tolerable by placing the onus on the individual

to develop their own spiritual and inner strength and coping skills. This is based on the premise that “the primary source of stress is within yourself”, rather than leaders improving the stressful conditions generated by the organisation with the resultant outcome having “the potential to be repressive rather than enlightening”. I held the view that our approaches assisted staff to enjoy work more and to be more productive, but we also introduced the process of democratising strategy, described previously in Section 6.4.3 pages 89–92, which encouraged staff to be proactive in shaping the nature and form of the organisation and to strongly influence its strategic direction. It was never our intention to place the onus of organisational dysfunction and stress on to the individual; rather to equip and empower them to be more challenging and well-informed.

Bell (2008) and Bell & Taylor (2003, 2004) argue that spirituality in the form of spiritual intelligence, inner resourcefulness and higher performance through spiritual management development (SMD) or SiW interventions can become yet another demand on the time and development of staff, yet another aspect, skill or quality they have to acquire to be acceptable within the organisation. We had lots of voluntary engagement, and where some staff did express resistance to spiritually being in the organisation so overtly, we reflected upon and respected that view and accepted the fact that not everyone was comfortable or engaged with the spiritual aspects of CEL, nor did they need to. Their views were included in research reports and in public statements to evidence that dissent was not a problem, and the inclusivity of CEL meant that a culture existed in which all views were respected, unless a conscious attempt was made to disregard or harm the dignity of others.

6.4.5 Celebrating and supporting spiritual pluralism and diversity

Commitment to diversity was a core strand of the CEL mission alongside a core value of being “diverse” in that all differences were truly celebrated and respected, while seeing through to the unity and harmony of what, at the deepest spiritual core, bound staff together in meaningful and common purpose. As part of the values dialogue, CEL was explicit about diversity, including gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability and faith; developing a powerful diversity strategy, which I led personally. I also had sessions with a specialist coach, who was of black African heritage, to assist me in carrying out leadership of diversity as wisely as I could. To encourage appreciation of diversity, we undertook appreciation exercises, and activities that enabled us to “walk in each other’s shoes” on away days.

As the CEL offices were based in London – a multicultural, highly diverse city – it attracted people of many different faiths and of no faith. For those who experienced difficulty or were resistant to bringing their personal spirituality or religion into the workplace, spirituality and religion were placed within the context of diversity – in particular the UK Religious Discrimination Act. Profound discussions took place on the Dignity at Work days, which I attended myself to highlight its importance. There was deep discourse among the highly diverse staff from more than ten countries, who between them spoke fifteen different languages and were from a wide range of ethnicities.

Diversity awareness training was available for all staff and included space to explore all facets of diversity. They were counselled that disrespecting other faiths, beliefs and values or attempting to “correct” others inappropriately were not acceptable in the organisation. Yet the emphasis – in line with CEL’s values – was always to hold this discourse in a respectful manner to enable people, with trained facilitators, to work through their prejudices and biases. The diversity training was explicitly designed to do this and was supported by the CEL *Dignity at Work* policy. Staff were encouraged not to choose to opt out of diversity training, yet in every other aspect of their own personal values, beliefs or spirituality, they were free to engage or not, as long as the organisational values were lived and respected.

Clear guidelines were set for acceptable and desirable behaviour within the *Dignity at Work* policy with specific reference to spirituality; in particular:

“employees are free to express themselves as they choose, and no form of spirituality is excluded from the organisation so long as behaviour does not discriminate against or harass others.”

We discoursed also on the hierarchy of equalities issue. In CEL this was translated as not using your faith to oppress anyone else. For example, Christian, Muslim or other religious objections to gay sexuality may be a belief held within the doctrine or scriptures of a religious tradition, but in CEL individuals could not act in a way that was disrespectful of the rights and dignity of another, or disregard professional conduct and ethics. To highlight this, we entered the UK Stonewall Diversity Champion list and found ourselves, on our first entry, placed forty-seventh in the top one hundred gay-friendly companies. We also won the British National Diversity Award in 2006 for the work of our Black Leadership Initiative (BLI) project.

Another way in which CEL modelled the value of being “diverse” and truly celebrating and respecting differences while embracing the unity and harmony of the spiritual values that

underlay CEL's vision was by producing, in November 2005, # 29: the *Faith Communities Toolkit* to support and assist sector leaders to understand different faith traditions and belief systems. The July 2007 bombings in London led to significant new interest in faith literacy and faith awareness for leaders. The toolkit was the first of its kind in the FE system, and was in continuous usage, with supporting workshops introduced to assist leaders in using it and fostering debate on issues of religious controversy and confusion.

The toolkit was highly popular, with over one thousand copies requested in the first three months of publication. It was strongly supported and endorsed by faith groups and by Bill Rammell, minister of further education and higher education, as well as a wide range of well-known national interfaith leaders. The toolkit described all the major and minor faith tradition core beliefs, practices and origins, and also acknowledged non-religious beliefs and included sections on agnosticism, atheism and humanism.

It was launched in the East London Mosque at NEAFE's 2007 national conference, *Leadership in a Pluralist Society*, with a keynote address by me, titled *Helping Sector Leaders*, published by the Journal of Chaplaincy as Sedgmore (2006) and included in full as #30: *Leadership in a Pluralist Society*. I argue that Britain is a multifaith society and that FE colleges "serve many learners from diverse and ethnic communities, religions and cultures", thus requiring understanding and competence by leaders in leading on faith issues in their colleges and in their local communities.

CEL established itself as the national FE agency willing to champion faith and spirituality as a vital part of the FE education curriculum and as a key aspect of the work of college leaders. CEL developed a strong partnership with NEAFE to establish CEL as a key source of leadership and faith knowledge, support and advice to UK ministers, particularly to Bill Rammell MP, who was also the government's minister for multifaith matters. He held CEL in high regard, as was evidenced by his public comments and personal launch of its publications and his frequent attendances at CEL's national events. CEL also supported, sponsored and advised NEAFE on the initiation and implementation of a national inquiry into the opportunity for spiritual and moral development across learning and Skills entitled #22: *Making Space for Faith*, described in more detail in the next chapter.

I include two examples of staff views from #19: CEL leaving gift book to Lynne on how I led on diversity:

"You have supported and encouraged the work I have done, and this has been fantastic - thank you so much. The work we have done on sexual orientation equality really does seem to have set things in motion across the sector - the issue is now on the agenda, work is springing up all over the place, networks are coming into life, conferences and seminars are being held. The lives of learners and staff are being changed. All this from a small research report supported and nourished by you and Debs!" Phil Barnett

"The first time I had a one to one conversation with you, I was surprised by how much knowledge you had of Islam and the fact that you had taken time to learn and to remember amazed me and I was impressed." Amina

6.4.6 Respecting and responding to dissent and challenge

Joseph (2002) describes how I consciously reflected and worked on my personality weaknesses and acknowledged my weaknesses and mistakes, showing vulnerability in public forums, not just in private. When first appointed chief executive of Guildford College, I acknowledged publicly in my first address to six hundred staff the very real dangers of being out of touch with the reality on the ground and asked them to give me accurate information and feedback so that I could remain in touch with what was actually happening within the college in order to make relevant and healthy decisions based on fact. I also made clear to my executive team members that they had a duty to speak truth to power and help me to keep my ego, excesses and flaws in check.

In all the research reports published, I never changed feedback that was written about me, including open criticism and observation of character limitations on my part. Joseph (2000:174, 175) refers to my tight knit, well-motivated executive team developing "blind spots" over the issue of staff morale by underestimating or being unwilling to recognise just how bad morale felt at the operational level. Another aspect he found was the phenomenon of "group-think" as he noticed that the words used by two or more of the executive interviewees were almost the same as those used by me when talking about the same issue. He interpreted this as a high degree of unanimity, but also felt a level of involuntary collusion amongst the executive team with their views and responses potentially overly affected by the strength of my personality.

Altman et al (2007:51) has a section on my positive attributes, but also states that some staff

"felt, (her) style is not to everyone's taste, she takes a bit of coping with, and she needs to develop her patience, listening to others, understanding and empathising with others".

I now consider that I had not given enough in-depth consideration to issues of power and coercion, nor to the shadow side of my leadership. This doctorate has been invaluable in enabling me to explore my narcissism in relation to how I have needed and applied spirituality in my workplaces. A core theme in the post-modern and critical theory critiques is the claim that abuse of power and flaws in the leader's personality, i.e. the "dark side", are insufficiently researched, acknowledged, articulated and understood in the SiW field, with an attendant lack of case studies and examples of potentially problematic aspects. Ciulla 1995, Conger 1990, Kets De Vries 2004, Maccoby 2000, Tourish and Pinnington 2002, Tourish and Tourish 2010 all explore pertinent issues of narcissism, cultism, location of power, unhealthy dependency on leaders, spiritual engineering, delusion, and monocultures.

They make two main criticisms, first that SiW insufficiently explores the core constructs of leadership and the organisational dynamics and power relations involved. Second, they claim that leadership arises out of transformational leadership and charismatic leadership theories and approaches, which present a myriad of potential dangers.

Western (2008a) argues that many of the characteristics described for spiritual leaders are ones that cannot be separated from leaders with humanistic or values-based approaches, and that many spiritual leaders have behaved unethically or immorally, wreaking havoc to greater or lesser degrees. He is concerned by the evangelical and hubristic aspects of spiritual leadership and that leaders may indulge in what he terms a "Messianic" leadership approach, an approach that is self-serving and run from a leader's narcissistic drives; encouraging disengagement by workers and abusing of power through a driven ego while presenting themselves as spiritual leaders. He argues that inner work is deep and difficult to do, especially while holding down a high-pressured and demanding leadership role. I worked with Dr Western, as my coach, for three years, with a strong emphasis on my spiritual growth as well as deep challenge to my narcissism and inappropriate behaviours.

With Dr Western, I worked on a range of negative aspects of my personality, which included acting too fast; being overly convinced that certain projects and new innovations were the right thing to do; forgetting to consult sufficiently; being overenthusiastic; being too keen to be leading edge; going with flavours of the month that were not adequately tested; taking too many risks; and being overly experimental. I wanted to work with the exasperation I felt with those whom I perceived as not caring enough or insufficiently pulling their weight. I was also strongly aware that I was not responding patiently or diplomatically enough with civil servants. On my part, our coaching relationship was a genuine attempt to keep my narcissism in check, a

process and relationship articulated in #9: Western and Sedgmore (2008) *A Privileged Conversation* and #10: Simon (2008) *Democratising Strategy*, a chapter in *Organisations Connected* pages 193 to 194, which describe an example of me apologising to staff for my inappropriate behaviours:

"At the Annual Dialogue, the CEO made an honest and soul-bearing comment on feedback she had received about her leadership style, and how she, like others, was working hard to make changes in order to further change the organizational culture. This was 'signifying leadership' at its best and brought power into the open so it was available for debate and negotiation".

Fry and Altman (2013:59, 61) describe also this important moment for all involved.

Reading the critiques of SL and SiW has given me deeper insight into how I did deploy my need for spirituality in ways that were far more invasive than I realised, and which staff would have found more difficult to challenge and resist due to my being the chief executive. One of my flaws was to think that I could speak out on things as Lynne, simply a human being, speaking my mind, expressing my emotions and sharing my spirituality with others, as if there were a more equal power relationship than existed in reality. I was being naive, and possibly unintentionally coercive, with unrealistic expectations of what was possible within a traditional organisational space and power base. The naivety lay in expecting it to be as easy, open and safe for others, as it was for me, the person with the ultimate hierarchical power. The potential invasiveness lay in others potentially not being able to resist to the extent to which I felt they could, and would, if they wanted to. I would approach the power issue very differently now, with more sensitivity and with more safe spaces for staff to express their views. There were too many times in which I was not being sufficiently present to know what was most appropriate.

Tourish and Pinnington (2002) argue that a strong focus and insistence on corporate cohesion leads to the "detriment of internal dissent", particularly as "the handling of dissent is one of the most problematic aspects of transformational leadership theory". Tourish and Tourish (2010) argue that SiW regards the complex and multifaceted identity of staff as homogeneous in a manner that any dissatisfaction or dissent is considered to be disrespectful and may result in negative consequences for staff considered to be out of tune with the dominant culture and the power relations of the organisational hierarchy. They also state that even if such a perception is not true, junior staff may feel it is accurate. I genuinely believe, as confirmed by all the researchers, that we did get a unique balance in CEL, of fostering high levels of individual expression and of constructive dissent, simultaneously.

6.5 Reflecting on mistakes

Even though, from several perspectives, CEL was a huge success, we did make mistakes. We were insufficiently linear for the civil servants, and in hindsight some of the things we said to the civil servants were provocative. There was suspicion and fear, as well as admiration, from the civil servants and we did not give sufficient energy and time to explain CEL in ways that made sense to them. We were too loud in our marketing, we flouted our successes, and we did not respect the upside of bureaucratic organisations – we lacked humility.

My biggest mistake, as chief executive, was in not seeing the merger coming before it was a fait accompli at ministerial level, after which it was impossible to change.

6.6 Conclusion

Over four years, CEL moved from being a disjointed partnership and dysfunctional culture to a high-spirited, high-performing, innovative organisation with outstanding reputation, service, fun, and high levels of customer and staff satisfaction. There were many reasons for this, a key one being clear processes and interventions for fostering high levels of spiritual capital. My leadership presence and spiritually explicit leadership and interventions were unusual in their depth and sophistication, after nearly thirty years' work on my spiritual growth. A critical mass of staff were employed, developed and empowered through the spiritual dimension with a higher level of articulation on spirituality than in other FE organisations, and in most mainstream and public sector organisations. CEL was extraordinary in enabling and empowering forty thousand FE leaders and one hundred and fifty CEL staff to work from an expanded perspective and to make informed choices about whether or not to incorporate the spiritual dimension into their leadership, and to grow a dimension of themselves not usually included.

The success of CEL has drawn interest, awards, acclaim and dialogue from all over the world, and I conclude this chapter with a summary of the legacy of CEL by Fry and Altman (2013:131, 134):

“once in a while we find an organisation whose performance so greatly exceeds expectations that it is difficult to believe that its level of success is what it seems. The people of CEL who embraced CEL’s ethos ... are still working to recreate ... CEL’s spirit and the successes ... that came with it”.

Chapter seven: Contribution to knowledge creation

7.1 Introduction

In 1989, the research field of spiritual leadership (SL) and spirituality in the workplace (SiW) was very new, but by 2004 these two fields of research had grown significantly with numerous publications and conferences. Since undertaking my MSc in 1990, I had tried to keep abreast of the fields amid my busy work activities; as the chief executive of a national leadership organisation I was able to focus on intentionally contributing to new knowledge from my practice, and was very keen to do so. This chapter describes the contribution made to knowledge in the SL and SiW fields from CEL as a research laboratory and draws also on my personal and professional contribution to knowledge through my writing, and through my presentations as an international keynote speaker and workshop leader. I have also made an additional contribution to knowledge, with my original mapping of my practice steeped in spiritual leadership, spiritually explicit interventions and spiritual practices in my workplace.

7.2 FE leadership research in CEL

From its inception, CEL was committed to original research on leadership in FE with a strategic aim to improve the quality and impact of research on leadership within the sector. One of its three primary partners was LUMS – five-star rated for research – and £4m was allocated to a programme dedicated to original FE college leadership research. CEL employed twenty-five full-time researchers, including the nationally recognised Professors Keith Grint, John Burgoyne and David Collinson, to carry out exciting sector-based leadership research. Innovative research on FE leadership was a key feature of CEL, and research and development was used as a means to encourage mutually beneficial interrelations between theory, development, policy and practice. Over the four years, seventy-one original leadership research publications were produced and a successful FE community of research practitioners was formed. The final publication by CEL (2008) *#31: CEL as a High Performing Organisation* [page 45](#) concludes that research and development had been central to CEL's mission and that a particularly distinctive feature was enabling sector staff to participate in the setting of research agendas, and to undertake investigation of key FE leadership research themes, with research rated the most important strategic area for CEL by stakeholders, and the third most important by customers.

Building on this success, I began to experiment with research into the spiritual dimension and spiritual leadership of CEL itself. My motivations for commissioning extensive research on the spiritual dimension were eightfold. First, it was to provide a more objective external perspective to articulate the elements of what CEL was doing. Second, we needed to respond to pressure from funders to evidence objectively that our outstanding performance was really as good as we reported. Third, I wanted to understand and articulate the factors for CEL's significant outperformance, and to counter growing suspicion. Fourth, it seemed important to evidence that SiW was a worthwhile investment in a high-profile, publicly funded organisation. Fifth, I wanted to justify the high investment in staff and to evidence that its return on investment was value for money and appropriate use of public funds. Sixth, I was keen to further the debate on SiW and its application and development within FE. Seventh, I wanted to showcase our work on a broader stage; and last, I was interested in making an original contribution to the SiW field, nationally and internationally in terms of both practice and knowledge. We engaged well-known and respected academics in the SiW field, nationally and internationally, to validate our practices through external rigorous perspectives. Many CEL staff felt that we were doing something special and felt it was time to be more explicit and overt in what we were doing, and to explore spirituality within CEL in a more structured, academic and robust fashion.

7.3 Illuminative evaluation analysis and conclusion

My illuminative evaluation, already presented as Figure 1 page 33, revealed that, of the research activities I was involved in since 1989, my original contribution to knowledge was generated primarily, but not only, from the four years in CEL during which CEL acted as a research laboratory for academics seeking new knowledge creation based in original and leading-edge practice. Joseph's PhD in 2002 had been one of the first in the SL field to case study the reality of a leader's practice in real time within their organisation.

Over three years, CEL engaged with five separate major research projects on spirituality and faith. These involved a two-year organisational study led by respected academic researchers; a sector-wide inquiry into making space for faith; a dedicated academic research project on colleges and faith in their local communities; cultivating presence on a senior leadership programme; and a book written on CEL that described its four-year journey, drawing on all the rigorous research undertaken.

The scope and detail of all these research activities are described in a chapter written by me (Sedgmore 2013) titled #32: *Illumination of Practice through Research and Inquiry*. It is indicative of CEL's profile on research into SL and SiW that I was invited in 2012 to submit this chapter to an influential book, *The Handbook of Faith and Spirituality*, edited by Neal (2013), along with an impressive array of pioneers in this field.

My personal and professional contribution to knowledge in the SL and SiW fields has been primarily through presentations as an international keynote speaker and workshop leader.

As a result of the research projects in CEL and the additional research of Professor Fry, three papers and ten Professional Development Workshops (PDWs) on the spirituality of CEL, and on my experiences as chief executive, have been presented collectively and individually at AoM between 2007 and 2012. In addition, the interview with me by Altman (2010) #13: *Transcendence in the Workplace* was published, as was #1: Fry and Altman (2013) *Spiritual Leadership in Action – The CEL Story*. In pages 4 to 13 and 88 to 94 the key CEL research activities are described in detail.

I have sat on the editorial board of the Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion (JMSR), now in its tenth year, and am currently a board member of the International Association of Management, Spirituality and Religion, which runs international conferences for academics and practitioners. In August 2013, I was invited, and I accepted, to be a member of the Practice Theme Committee of the Academy of Management. #33: invitation email.

Through this doctorate, I am making an additional contribution to knowledge, with original and theoretical mapping of my practice.

7.4 CEL as a research laboratory generating three strands of original contribution to knowledge

My illuminative evaluation (Chapter three) highlighted four strands of original contribution to new knowledge creation from my leadership and organisational practice as articulated in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8: Four strands of original contribution to knowledge

- Developing an original whole-organisation framework for fostering spiritual capital through explicit spiritual leadership and presence
- Commissioning, supporting and co-authoring publications and case studies by respected academics to the SiW and SL fields from my practice
- Contributing to SL and SiW academic knowledge and discourse from a practising FE leader's perspective and experiences
- Initiating original research and innovative leadership development on the spiritual dimension within English FE

In the following sections, I describe the core elements of these strands.

7.4.1 Developing an original whole-organisation framework for fostering spiritual capital through explicit spiritual leadership and presence

This framework is illustrated in Figure 2 (Chapter three page 38) and has been explained in detail through Figures 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 in previous chapters. It is original in that it is distilled and theorised from my illuminative evaluation and my practice. I intend to write papers for respected academic journals to share this framework within wider academic circles, as well as within the FE sector in the UK.

7.4.2 Commissioning, supporting and co-authoring publications and case studies by respected academics to the SiW and SL fields from my practice

In November 2006, CEL commissioned a two-year groundbreaking research project published by Altman et al (2007) titled *#11: Organisational effectiveness and well-being at work: CEL as a case-study*, which researched and benchmarked the whole organisation simultaneously on both traditional HR performance criteria and the spiritual dimension. Its purpose was to examine organisational effectiveness and well-being in CEL through an in-depth study as seen by internal and external stakeholders. A specific objective was to examine the spiritual essence

and leadership of CEL as a non-faith organisation that strived to do good and to study the connection between high performance, well-being and a spiritual orientation within the workplace.

The unique aspect of this research involved two simultaneous inquiries taking place by two research teams into five questions: does spirituality and well-being influence CEL's performance and if so, how?; is CEL a high-performing organisation against traditional performance benchmarks?; is there a correlation between a culture of spirituality in the workplace and organisational performance?; what insights could assist CEL in developing further?; and what new models of organisational life could be originated?

A case study methodology with two parallel lines of inquiry was adopted: first, a 'traditional' HR approach, explicating people and organisational processes; and second, a 'new' spirituality approach, examining transpersonal and trans-organisational issues, meaning and sense-making. The work was conducted in four stages. At each stage, there was discussion and consultation with relevant CEL personnel.

The researchers involved included Professors Altman, Bournois, Fry, Gabriel, Mitroff and Ozbilgin. The internationally renowned Professor Mitroff (Mitroff and Denton 1999) chaired the research steering group and commented that:

"this is a very powerful study, indeed one of the most powerful I have ever read. The model of organisational spirituality is excellent. Since no organisation is perfect, the discussion about CEL's strengths and weaknesses is important, and the discourse about all the facets of CEL's spirituality very powerful. All in all, CEL is a very interesting and important case study."

#34: Professor Mitroff email

All the practical recommendations of the research project were implemented by CEL, including moving offices to a more conducive environment; introducing additional sustainable practices; encouraging staff to undertake charitable work in paid time; and ensuring an improved prayer room.

A range of articles, case studies and books were published as further outcomes of this study. Publications referred to and referenced previously include Altman (2010), Altman and Baruch (2010), Altman et al (2007), Fry and Altman (2013), Fry and Nisiewicz (2012). In addition, three other papers were presented at AoM conferences: Altman, Wilson

and Ozbilgin (2007), Wilson, Sedgmore, Altman and Ozbilgin (2008) and Fry, Sedgmore and Altman (2009); (their content has been superseded by later publications so I have not included as evidence to save repetition).

In addition, out of this project a new and original evidence-based model of organisational spirituality was formulated against which CEL as a spiritual organisation could be described and assessed. It was first publicly described in #12: *Living Spirituality in the Workplace – The CEL Way* page 5, and was presented at the 2007 AoM international conference by the researchers and me. It features in Fry and Altman (2013:5). This model of organisational spirituality proposes that the spiritual organisation has a virtuous cycle. It highlights how a critical mass of individuals with a spiritual orientation had joined the organisation or had developed their spirituality through their work in the organisation, and how a precipitating event or process was discerned as the starting point that triggered the organisation toward organisational spirituality.

The research project centred on the *Model of Organisational Spiritual Leadership* developed by Fry (2003, 2005, 2007) and utilised his innovative *Spiritual Leadership Survey*, which he had developed and validated in a number of previous studies. The project attempted to assess CEL's spirituality through a series of individual, team and organisational measures and to evidence a causal link between spirituality and high performance across the triple bottom line. The survey questionnaire utilised various qualitative and quantitative methods with a scale of one to ten (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) in a response set to a range of nine fields of questions on inner life, vision, altruistic love, hope/faith, meaning/calling, membership, organisational commitment, life satisfaction, and productivity as detailed in Fry (2003, 2005, 2007, 2008) and described in detail in #1: Fry and Altman (2013) *Spiritual Leadership in Action: The CEL Story*, chapter seven, pages 88 to 94. The findings in CEL were highly positive with:

"empirical evidence that CEL was a spiritually led organisation with high levels of inner life, spiritual leadership, spiritual wellbeing, and organisational commitment and productivity. Averages for all variables except inner life (6.88) were above 7.0".
(Fry and Altman 2013:93)

A significant factor is the positive shift between the questionnaires taken in 2006 and in 2008 for the organisational commitment variable, which increased from 5.88 to 7.23. Researchers attributed this to the culture initiatives based in spiritual leadership implemented during that period.

The project also included questions on Csikszentmihalyi's (2003) flow states, defined as "the mental state of operation in which the person is fully immersed in what they are doing". The questions revealed that 40% of CEL staff participating experienced flow regularly and 70% once to twice a month. As these results were so high, a highly innovative follow-up project was undertaken, which involved volunteers filling in a journal of how they were experiencing flow, or not, when a buzzer went off randomly during the course of their working day. In addition, a range of forums, staff discussions, focus groups, interviews and questionnaires were used to explore how staff bring their spirituality to work, if they experience "flow" and what else they believed contributed to the high performance of CEL and to their own well-being. Due to the merger, this project was not completed or taken to a final report.

7.4.3 Contributing to SL and SiW academic knowledge and discourse from a practising FE leader's perspective and experiences

I have attended the Academy of Management's prestigious international research conference each year, from 2007 to 2012. I have presented three joint papers on the work of CEL with well-known professors in the SL and SiW fields: Altman, Wilson and Ozbilgin (2007), Wilson, Sedgmore, Altman and Ozbilgin (2008) and Fry, Sedgmore and Altman (2009). I have also co-presented at ten PDWs on topics such as Passion and Dispassion, Waking up at Work, Should Leaders be Benevolent?, The Corporate Mystic, Informal and Formal Workplace Spirituality, and have led Special Meditation Sessions. Outlines of these PDWs are included at [#35: AoM - Personal Development Workshops sessions, a sample](#).

In addition I have been invited to a number of universities, business schools and professional bodies to give keynote speeches, lead workshops or to talk with students on my work, as a chief executive, on spirituality. These include Yale University in 2013, Exeter University in 2013, Arkansas University in 2011, London School of Economics in 2011, CIPP, a Parisian Business School in 2009 and 2010, Surrey University from 2002 to 2004, the UK National Health Service from 2008 to 2013, the charity sector, adult education, and the Tavistock Centre. I have been interviewed on local radio stations on three occasions. [#35: AoM - Personal Development Workshops sessions, a sample](#) includes also a sample of programmes of keynotes and talks from such events.

In a seminal policy paper titled *The Learning Age*, David Blunkett (1998), the secretary of state for education at that time, included spirituality as a key element in fostering and enabling responsible citizenship and the release of individual potential. It identified relevant elements

of recent government policies and called for the development of “the spiritual sides of our lives ... and to nourish our souls”. This gave me the opportunity to write openly about spirituality, as it was now in the mainstream of FE policy at the highest level, which I did between 2000 and 2005 in six published articles. Two of my articles have been referred to previously; #4: *Full Circle* Limb and Sedgmore (2008) and #30: *Leadership in a Pluralist Society* Sedgmore (2006). Copies of the four additional articles are included as evidence in #36: Lynne’s articles - Sedgmore (2002) *Learning Excellence*, Sedgmore (2001) *Emotional Intelligence*, Sedgmore (2000) *Personal Reflections on Workplace Ministry as Leadership*, Sedgmore (2000a) *Doing All for the Glory of God*.

My intention in writing these articles was to discourse with other leaders interested in the spiritual dimension, and I shared my own professional and spiritual explorations into reflective learning, personal learning and spiritual leadership, developing my own articulation and clarity of working with spirituality in the public domain as a chief executive. I articulated specifically the spiritual dimension of my leadership; my own need for meaning and purpose; and how important it was for me to integrate my spiritual growth and experiences with my everyday world of leading and educating individuals. I explained how I considered spirituality as one of a range of leadership responsibilities alongside the academic, vocational, moral and social. I stated explicitly that I viewed spirituality and spiritual intelligence as an essential element of a good education. I acknowledged the issues of language and power, and the need for sensitivities to those who were alienated from their religious traditions and may struggle with religious language. I described how I experienced my leadership as “my service and my ministry in the world”, and that work for me was “worship”, but I recognised how, for many staff, values, meaning, or purpose, without any spiritual or religious connotation, could be their way of expressing goodness and truth. I articulated explicitly my explorations on states of being, developmental stages, self-awareness and personal mastery, all of which I linked directly to my professional work as a principal. The definition of spirituality I used in the public domain in Sedgmore (2000) was “connection with and direct experience of an immanent and transcendent power that enables inner peace, strength, joy and meaning; enabling the expression of love, service and right action”. I called for a new form of leadership within FE, which included the spiritual dimension. My articles were used on the FE developing leaders programme for aspiring principals, and many participants would ring me to discuss them. These articles consolidated my position as a leading-edge FE thinker on leadership and spirit, as did an interview on servant leadership in which I explained the place of love and service in my leadership, published as a chapter in Jameson (2006).

7.4.4 Initiating original research and innovative leadership development on the spiritual dimension within English FE

In addition to the thirty plus leadership services and programmes offered by CEL, in April 2006 I personally instigated an experiment we called *Spirited Leadership*. This was a research project in which key CEL staff were interviewed to inform and shape an innovative pilot programme of nine days to move individuals towards a liberating structure of self-awareness, to challenge existing paradigms of leadership and of learning, and to generate a new pedagogy of “spirited leadership in work”. A one-day *Spirited Leadership* introductory workshop was held as a pilot to “model the desired state of being and becomingness of the leader”. The workshop was marketed as a new initiative in advanced leadership development to discourse on new perceptions of leadership purpose, potency and presence in the sector. It was led by Dr Josie Gregory of Surrey University, a facilitator highly experienced in humanistic and transpersonal approaches, learning, leadership and being present. Experiential exercises, including visualisation, meditation and silence were experienced by the ten participants to develop the key skills of storytelling, deep inquiry and being present and mindful in the midst of everyday work. Feedback from a report on the day included the following responses from participants:

“The time has flown – being in the unfolding moment – wonderful!”

“Feels exciting, pushing the boundaries of leadership”.

“Affirming and energising”.

“To lead a course of this nature in this sector is a brave choice”.

Unfortunately the full pilot programme did not run, due to the merger of CEL and another agency.

Two other innovative research initiatives involved faith issues. CEL supported, sponsored and advised the FE sector faith representatives’ group NEAFE on the initiation, implementation and publication of the results of a national inquiry into opportunities for spiritual and moral development in FE, #22: *Making Space for Faith*. The inquiry’s core purpose was to compile a clear picture of what FE learners wanted regarding issues of faith, values and belief and how the whole FE system could improve its responses and future actions. It had a number of recommendations, which called on all sector agencies to act, and in particular, asked CEL to

carry out three key tasks. The *Faith Communities Toolkit* was to be developed further and disseminated more widely. Leadership, equality and diversity programmes were to include more specific attention to the contribution of values, beliefs and faith as a dimension of achieving excellence. CEL should continue to take the lead for the sector in modelling ways in which the dimensions of “spirited leadership” and “the spirit at work movement” could be appropriately adopted by the sector. These recommendations evidence the high reputation and regard for CEL’s work on spirituality.

Following the 7 July 2005 bomb attacks, CEL commissioned a research project by well-respected academic researchers Professor David Collinson and Margaret Collinson into how college leaders could develop a better understanding of and improve their responses to the expectations held by their Muslim community about the further education of their children. This project was useful for colleges in understanding their local Muslim communities better and was the first project of its kind for FE. It discovered that Muslim students are very positive about how faith issues are managed in colleges, but parents have significant concerns. The report also suggested that the colleges researched were making good progress in facilitating faith integration. The executive summary is included as #37: *Faith in the Community: Leadership Challenges in the Learning and Skills Sector*.

7.5 Conclusion

I contributed not only as a leading-edge practitioner but also as a thought leader within English FE, initiating innovative case studies and new insights. My contribution to knowledge has been well received by key academics, as evidenced by the publications produced by them and by the numerous invitations I receive to contribute to AoM and to speak at international conferences alongside invitations to work directly with leading figures in the SiW and SL fields: including Altman, Biberman, Fry, Goldman Schuyler, Neal and Torbert. I have shared platforms with Andre Delbeque, Malloch, Zohar, and Anita Roddick.

I have initiated organisational and sector-wide discourse, reviews, programmes and innovative actions on SiW and SL, alongside disseminating new thinking and knowledge through publications and national conferences, working in strong partnership with faith groups, agencies and representatives. I have commissioned FE sector-wide research on faith issues facing college and sector leaders and have paved the way for others to carry on the legacy of leading-edge work on diversity, faith and SiW issues, and was given a clear remit to do so by government ministers. I extended the boundaries of FE leadership development into the

spiritual dimension and have received recognition for my leading-edge contributions from the “leading lights” in the SiW and SL fields, all of whom were incredibly helpful and supportive to me. Leading-edge case studies that encompass the spiritual dimension from the UK are now in the international domain.

Chapter eight: Reflections on the impact of completing this doctorate

8.1 Reflections

Working to doctoral-level academic standards has been a huge challenge, and I have had to stay focused and determined to write to the level I have achieved. Boyce-Tillman (2007) refers to the nature of unconventional wisdom and spiritual knowing and describes how different this is from mainstream academic mindsets and approaches. As an intuitive person and a mystic, I identify with her powerful articulation. Learning the skill of describing my spirituality to academic standards has been challenging, stretching, painful at times, yet immensely valuable. I can now articulate concepts on the transpersonal aspects of my journey in new ways, and have developed original maps and frameworks, gaining confidence and huge satisfaction.

During the months of writing this context statement, I have inquired deeply into its emotional impact, and through deep reflection I have gradually seen and let go of some deep-seated beliefs concerning the nature of my leadership and of my attachment to the importance of being seen as a spiritual leader, and perceiving my effectiveness as being highly dependent upon my spirituality. As a result, my spiritual identity as a leader has loosened, and I have questioned the value, need and drive of being spiritual and of expressing explicit spirituality in my workplaces. I have inquired deeply into this and have connected my need for explicitness to therapeutic inquiry and how in my birth family I was not seen or held in the spiritual dimension, even though I was strongly held in the aspects of physical, emotional and intellectual. I can manifest powerfully in the world across those three latter dimensions; it is the core deficit of not being seen adequately in the spiritual dimension which, for me, explains why, as a leader, I needed to grow and expand the spiritual dimension in my workplace so intensely and overtly.

As chief executive of the 157 Group, I organise twenty-nine large urban FE colleges, with a combined budget of £1.6 billion, as a collective force for good to raise the reputation and status of FE; and as a lobbyist, my role is to influence policy, politicians and funding decisions. My primary organisational leadership influence is on my small central team of seven people. The focus on explicit spirituality in my current workplace has lessened significantly over the last five years. As a leader, in this role, I have no need, within my inner life, and within my public leadership, to be so overt, or spiritually explicit, in my leadership: something I have understood and changed, as a direct result of undertaking this doctorate.

Experiments with the 157 Group central team of seven with spirituality and presence have been valuable, but there is no serious appetite among the staff to continue with this work, other than one member of staff who does so outside the organisation, fully supported by me. The other five are more interested in other avenues of professional development, including the Enneagram, and I have accepted that. I wonder if the same might have been true of CEL if I had not been so proactive on spirituality. I am able now to work in a much quieter manner, responding to spirituality in others as and when they raise it, rather than my initiating it. I have experienced several exchanges of spirituality with my principals, all at their instigation or as a natural extension of our conversations.

As a result of external examiner feedback, I have identified five insights and new perspectives as articulated in Chapter one, Section 1.8 pages 16–17. To summarise: first, the understanding that whether I was spiritual, or not, mattered far less to others than I had anticipated. Second, the realisation that explicitness is far less important in my current leadership practice than is the quality and nature of my presence, my sense of self and my non-reactive responsiveness to others. Third, the fostering of the ability to bring the fullest potential of others, their wholeness and their whole self into the workplace is more important to me than any specific form, nature or expression of spirituality or religious tradition. Fourth, my in-depth explorations have revealed an element of my self-image and identity that has been closely bound with my spiritual narcissism and my attachment to my sense of self as a spiritual leader. Fifth, spiritual explicitness mattered to me as an expression of the fullness and manifestation of my deepest mystical truth and experiences.

Perhaps my thesis challenges the prevalent notion of having to adopt a professional persona, or mask, to be a successful leader. My integrative journey illustrates that to be a truly effective, authentic, empowering and impactful leader one needs to bring one's authentic, whole self into the workplace, being as fully present as possible. In my case, this involved bringing in all of my mystical self and exploring this fully to be able to further integrate my spiritual expression within my temporal leadership contexts.

As I move towards retirement, writing poetry, being a student of the Ridwhan School and a newly developing life in Glastonbury are becoming other means of explicit spiritual expression outside my workplace. My journey of integration of spirituality within my workplaces has been challenging, painful, liberating and powerfully rewarding for me. I hope it bears fruit for others too, following dissemination. It is an experience I deeply cherish and feel privileged to have walked.

I conclude with the words of one of my highly successful 157 Group college principals, who manages a budget of £75m. She sent me a card, on 14 August 2010, with this unexpected response below, a deep and nourishing soul exchange for both of us:

"Dear Lynne

As you do in the quiet days of August in college, I was tidying out my briefcase and forgotten 157 meeting papers when I discovered your publication of poems

"Enlivenment" much to my chagrin at the neglect of such a beautiful gift and also to my delight in equal measure at the discovery!

I have just spent the most enjoyable two hours on my balcony with the sun caressing my skin, the chant of Buddhist monks stroking my ears and your beautiful poetry embracing my soul. The experience was cocooning, all enveloping and deeply enriching.

Your poetic talent is self-evident and I am deeply touched that you shared your gift with me.

With warm thoughts

Heather x".

Appendix I: Summary of traditional high-performing outcomes and evidence

I have always been able to lead high-performing organisations, even when my spirituality felt cut off from my work practice, so I have a strong track record of organisational success before 1989. However, since becoming head of CBS my progression as a senior manager in FE became even more successful and prominent through the mainstream achievements of myself, my staff and my organisations, all of which consistently outperformed. #1: Fry and Altman (2013) *Spiritual Leadership in Action: The CEL Story* chapter 8 pages 103-107 gives a powerful and comprehensive account of CEL's mainstream contribution and achievements.

Before becoming the new chief executive of CEL, I had been an FE college senior manager and principal since 1984, with a powerful track record of turning colleges around, alongside major improvement in student success; achieving higher staff morale; reducing major financial deficits; curriculum innovation; and leading a successful merger. I had a growing national profile, and #3: my curriculum vitae gives a clear picture of achievements since I entered FE in 1980, and as evidenced by #3: press coverage articles and interviews. I was also considered as an FE leadership "thinker" due to published articles as in #36: Sedgmore (2002, 2001, 2000, 2000a). I held trust and legitimacy from a majority of key players and influencers across the sector, as well as a proven track record of generating significant outcomes and impact, including the financial, social, and sustainable, but I felt that I wanted to prove myself as proficient in fostering and harnessing spiritual capital on a whole-organisation-wide scale.

In Guildford College as the new chief executive, I inherited a budget of £15m (with a £3m deficit), 660 staff and over 19,000 students and left a college of £28m (with £440k surplus), 890 staff and 24,000 students. The college improved overall student achievement by 26%, maintained retention at 86%, raised significantly its national and local reputation and improved efficiency by 10%. Communication improved drastically, alongside a major culture change programme. Inspection and Investors in People (IIP) reports praised the college's strong and effective leadership, the raising of standards, strong support to students, the professional development of staff and the wide range of effective partnerships. In 2001 the college was named as one of the UK's top 100 visionary companies, and achieved the "GoodCorporation" quality mark for corporate social responsibility and the SEEDA Business Excellence, Bronze Award. In 2003, I led a successful merger with a land-based college, with strong project management across all aspects of the merger.

I now focus on the achievements and contribution of CEL as this is where my whole-organisation practice across both traditional performance and spiritual capital were at their height.

By March 2008, less than five years after its launch, CEL had recruited nearly 40,000 individual participants and worked with 91% of the organisations in the learning and skills system, exceeding original targets by 200%, with customer satisfaction at 97%. CEL exceeded all bottom line and other traditional performance successes, with staff retention at 93%; an increase in annual budget from £2m to £16m; income dependency reduced from 100% to 49%; and significant investment in staff development of £3,700 per person, way above the business school sector norm of £500. Cash flow was extremely healthy, fixed costs were low and the annual surpluses of over £1m were reinvested into the development of new products and services, and CEL left a financial legacy of £3m in 2008. This has been used to fund leadership development in succeeding organisations.

CEL published an independent evaluation document to evidence its overall impact and success titled #38: *Review of CEL's Impact in the FE Sector*, which described the outstanding output measures of CEL, and the strong impact that CEL interventions had on individuals, organisations, learners, the wider environment and the further education sector as a whole. Its summary concluded by saying:

“We can say with a high degree of certainty that CEL, in its first years of operation, has justified its creation and lived up to the expectations within the sector. It has raised awareness of key management and leadership issues in the sector and provided at least partial solutions. There is convincing evidence that CEL is having a strong and positive impact on the FE sector, has been a catalyst for change, has raised the debate about leadership, management, governance and diversity; and has had a direct effect on individuals and on institutions. There is evidence that these impacts will in turn have a beneficial effect on learners.

CEL's reflective and learning approach provides a model to the rest of the sector. CEL has gained a high reputation within the sector and its programmes are recognised as being relevant to the sector. Research is a key area, providing an intelligence-led approach to programme design.” (p 7).

The last publication by CEL (2008), #31: *CEL as a High Performing Organisation*, concluded there was sufficient and consistent evidence to suggest that CEL was a successful, high-performing organisation. This document included summaries of independent validations of high customer satisfaction levels, strong brand reputation, effective leader development and significant impact on organisational improvement as well as praise from senior ministers and the UK prime minister. It described the wide range of official and independent perspectives through which CEL was perceived to be having a powerful and profound impact.

Appendix II: My critique of the spiritual leadership and spirituality in the workplace critiques

The wide ranges of critiques do provide very useful challenge and arenas for reflection for both academics, and for leaders attracted to or working with SL and SiW.

They enrich and extend the SL and SiW fields through suggesting additional areas for new or deeper analysis and exploration. They challenge blind spots, prejudices, overemphasis on the positive, omissions and flaws in the current field. They call for more sophisticated understanding and working with power, the social dynamics of organisation and the complexities of identity; plus the encouraging of all forms of responses to spirituality, including dissonance. I can see how delusional “danger” or “cultism” as defined by Tourish and Tourish (2010), is particularly pertinent to leaders with deep religious and spiritual beliefs or experiences as so much of SL and SiW is in the realm of the nature of true reality, transcendence, or the unknowable. I recognise that the critiques are valuable in drawing attention to potential pitfalls that are genuine and credible, and that they offer useful solutions at times, as well as raising pertinent issues for reflection and further debate.

Having said that, the critiques do suffer also from their own blind spots, prejudices, biases and limitations.

I would like to see more transparency in the awareness of and articulation of the critique writers’ own defence patterns, authority biases, ego patterns, organisational experiences and value judgements: a higher level of self-awareness could improve the quality of the academic critiques.

Most themes of these critiques, particularly abuse of power, instrumentality, delusion, narcissism and the alienating of staff, are potentially true of all leaders and leadership theories or approaches in action, not just SL and SiW.

I find the perspective of the critical management theorists potentially naive in that achieving bottom line results is a part of what leaders do. Theorising about whether the two can be separate is of limited value and does not reflect the daily reality and paradox of a leader’s organisational life.

The integration of wanting others to be autonomous and free and recognising the need to hit targets need not be incompatible. As Ket de Vries (2004) says, for healthy leaders continual reflection of motives and personality issues is the key.

Many of the critiques are primarily theoretical and not steeped in evidenced research and practice and the complex realities of leader follower relations which usually contain both positive and negative aspects. They are based also on doubt and supposition, premised on the fear of what may happen, rather than what is evidenced in case studies or research. I perceive a deep suspicion of authority and a belief that the worst is not only possible but highly likely, thus equating SL and SiW with the most negative aspects of the potential abuse of power. There is insufficient room to consider, explore and articulate the good practice inherent and possible in SL and SiW. A similar issue of overclaiming on negativity is inherent in these critiques, in the same way that the SL and SiW literature overclaims on positivity.

As the field matures, I anticipate that more balance will arise on both sides of the debate. Writers give insufficient weight to existing good practice and tend to highlight the negative aspects of leaders without sufficient evidence that, in reality, the bad practice in SiW outweighs the good practice or is worse than mainstream leadership practice. There is no acknowledgement that many leaders in SiW, on the whole, may have done lots of work on themselves and may be working from genuinely good motivations or higher levels of altruism.

An area I want to concentrate on is the tension of critiquing SL and SiW paradigms from very different worldviews, sets of assumptions, beliefs and experiences. A mismatch can result in tension, conflicts and misunderstandings. Different research ontologies, methodologies and world views operate from within the SL and SiW fields and from within the critical management theory or post-structuralist paradigms. They both function very differently and may struggle in being able to see or understand the other sufficiently. This is true in many fields, but may be particularly pertinent in that the spiritual dimension with all its numinous and ineffable qualities can perhaps be only partially critiqued from dimensions and commentators who are dismissive of the more intangible aspects of spirituality.

The emerging field of neurotheology, in particular the work of Alston (2007), Hamer (2004) Newberg (2010), Newberg and Waldeman (2006) and Newberg, D'Aquili and Rause (2001), has assisted me in my thinking on this issue of different paradigms seemingly unable to relate to each other. Their research studies evidence how the brain creates belief, and they posit that all human beings have a neurological capacity, and need, to believe and to create meaning in their lives, but some more than others. They argue that people who do not believe in God, or

have never had spiritual experiences, face genuine neurological barriers to being able to understand the people who do have, and who do value such experiences. Newberg and Waldman (2006:75) state that

“the mere mention of God evokes a negative reaction in some people’s brains ... the atheist ... must overcome many ... neurological barriers in order to appreciate the values of the other person’s orientation”.

Newberg (2010), Newberg and Waldman (2006) and Newberg, D’Aquili and Rause (2001) through detailed research on the brain have discovered six functions of the brain – abstractive, quantitative, cause-and-effect, dualistic/oppositional, reductionist and holistic. They posit that some people are more in touch with the dualistic and reductionist parts of their brain than the holistic.

My hypothesis is that most critiques are analysing the holistic mindset and approach of SL and SiW from a dualistic, reductionist mindset of critical management theory and post-structural perspectives. I am not suggesting that this negates the critiques, but that the critiques may be unable to perceive or empathise with the holistic synergies and genuine altruistic intentions of many leaders involved in SL and SiW. Joseph (2002) when studying my “spiritual leadership” stated that he could not satisfy the formal academic rules and formal rigour requirements of his PhD to evidence the “power of what he knew he had found in the spiritual dimension” even though “he knew it was there”. I consider this as an example of the reductionist and holistic research paradigms attempting to dialogue with each other but the one not seeing the other because its “rules” do not encompass or allow the reality, perspective or truth of the other.

Appendix III: The three stages of my illuminative evaluation analysis

Observation	Immersion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immersion in data and evidence • Familiarisation • Perceiving of multiple perspectives of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – stakeholders – staff – learners and clients – researchers – business literature – my own experiences and views
Inquiry	Narrowing and focusing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrowing down the broad scope of evidence • Identification of key themes • Writing of a narrative in descriptive manner • Recurring, core themes and transition points identified • Table produced – Figure 1
Explanation	Interpretation and illumination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illumination of new insights into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – components of the whole picture of my practice and knowledge contributions – understanding and clarification of the core nature of my contribution – mapping of the four components of my organisational practice – Figure 2 – identification of three stands of contribution to knowledge – Figure 8

Appendix IV: Further explanation of the eight terms in my personal spirituality map

In this appendix, I explain each of the eight terms used in Figure 7 page 84 to offer an explanation and understanding of the core nature of my personal spirituality. I include references to spiritual traditions, and the spiritual and leadership thinkers who have most influenced me. The primary influences have been Christian, Buddhist and Jain.

Levels of mystical experience and sense of self

My map contains describes four perspectives of how I know my sense of self, the self of ego, personality or constructed sense of self; then three types of mystical experience of knowing of self; union, oneness and the void. The movement and transformation of my sense of self is first, from ego identity within the structures of personality to the experience of being filled with source and seeing true reality; second, the shift to the experience of being source and oneness interconnected with and through that source; and third, to realising the boundlessness of spaciousness and knowing the void beyond all conceptual understandings, leading to an experience of the end of all identity into no-self.

Source

My use of the word "Source" is my name for an ultimate reality, or sense of transcendence that is both myself, but is also beyond all aspects of my personality, and is the unmediated knowing of true reality and the sense of self, or no-self, that arises. Many faith traditions use this term, or others, such as the Ground of being, God, Goddess, true nature, essence, nonduality, the absolute, the divine, the universe or spirit; all of which are expressions of an experience of a "truer" reality beyond everyday experience and usual perception. Jaworski (2012:197) provides an excellent set of essays on the meaning and practice of Source and the definition he offers – "source is realised as the underlying reality out of which all form, including you yourself manifests" – expresses most accurately my own sense of and relationship with Source.

Omnipresence

Omnipresence is defined in the Oxford dictionary as "present everywhere at the same time"; it is frequently used to describe a quality of God within a theistic religious belief system. Its personal meaning for me is best expressed by Almaas (2004:262) as "true nature in

manifestation appears to be omnipresent ... in self-realisation the soul will experience that she is everyone, she is everything, she is infinite, she is boundless".

Anekant

This is a concept from the Jain faith tradition, which literally means many-sidedness and expresses the perception that there are an infinite variety of paths towards the same truth, and so the search for truth must be undertaken with humility. It is a concept I immediately related to as an accurate description of how I perceive the nature of reality and truth. I have explored the concept in depth with Rankin (2010), a western authority on Jainism and Anekant, and through the work of Shah (2007) and Mardia and Rankin (2013). In his book on Anekant, Rankin (2010:xiii), wrote in his acknowledgements "I wish to thank Lynne Sedgmore ... for living out so many of the principles I have tried to describe in these pages ... CEL ... is an example of Many-Sidedness in action" as he believes I really have attempted to live Anekant in my life and leadership work. In traditional Jain teachings, Anekant operates through a process known as Syadvada, which means awareness and acceptance of multiple viewpoints through which the seeker of truth can maintain their own sense of truth while simultaneously being aware of and reflecting upon other viewpoints without denouncing or dismissing them.

Unknowing

In my experience, this is about loss of a personal, or egoic self, into a void of emptiness and unknowing and pure nothingness; the disappearance of the small self into no-self, going beyond any previous knowing or conceptions of Source; moving beyond anything that can be known or conceptualised in any way while experiencing simultaneously that all is already divine, empty, nothing and everything; living consciously with paradox and unknowing.

Loy (1988:181) describes unknowing as "knowing in which there is no distinction between the knower, the act of knowing, and that which is known" – no thinker apart from thought. This is thinking that is open, receptive, fresh (beginner's mind), and that allows thoughts to arise and form without control or causally. He contrasts unknowing with dualistic thinking, which clings to familiar, preconceived and comfortable thoughts.

The Cloud of Unknowing is an anonymous work of Christian mysticism written in the latter half of the fourteenth century. The text is a spiritual guide on contemplative prayer, which proposes that the only way to truly "know" God is to abandon all preconceived notions and beliefs or "knowledge" about God and be courageous enough to surrender your mind and ego to the realm of "unknowingness,". It is in the unknowing that you can glimpse the true nature of God, God as a pure entity, beyond any capacity of mental conception and without any definitive image or form.

My understanding of the Taoist paradox of Wei Wei is not passivity or noninterference but action free from the superimposition of egoic will and intention. The sense of no action or unknowing lies in the loss of perspective of a self, or agent or subject who acts or knows, and the experience of flow that ensues with the action stemming directly from alignment with Source, as the doer, or knower manifesting through you as an integral part of the higher will, intention and cosmic action.

Being present

I have explored and articulated presence more fully in Chapter four as part of my personal spiritual leadership, and continue to do so in Appendix VI, where I describe what happened after my mystical experience in 1989, when I was first affected by notions of state of being, being present in the here and now, and by notions of presence in both spiritual and organisational writings. Presence has fascinated me constantly since 1989, and has taken many years of effort and practice to integrate, understand, articulate and manifest meaningfully. My desire to learn how to truly be present became a lifelong inquiry and practice that lies at the heart of my personal spirituality, and my personal spiritual leadership, as articulated in Chapter four in my model of leadership presence.

Spiritual and religious literature from early times have explored presence, being in the "now" or practising the presence of God. Texts that have particularly influenced me include the medieval texts – *Cloud of Unknowing*, *Practising the Presence of God*, the writings of mystics such as John of the Cross, Theresa of Avilia and Hildegard of Bingen. Kirkeby (2008:119) describes how the concept of presence has a "spectrum of philosophical and theological senses" from Plato to Christianity, to existential and modern philosophy; he condenses their understanding of presence into the expression of "meeting the eternal in time as direct personal experience if one is able to stand firm in the moment". He also adds the notion of presence as "meeting oneself" and of "awareness of the event". I discovered similar

preoccupations with being and presence, and the power of being in the now, in the modern spiritual classic of Tolle (1999).

Service

The Oxford Dictionary defines service as “the action of serving, helping or benefiting ... another”. Its spiritual meaning is commonly used to describe being a vehicle through which God, the transcendent or a higher purpose, is served, beyond the egoic-led personality, for the benefit of others. The well-known prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi, “Lord make me an instrument of thy peace”, is a beautiful expression of the notion of service as I experience it. My specific expression of service is made explicit in Jameson (2006).

Right Action

Right action from a Neoplatonic and virtues theological perspective is described in Chapter 4; it is also a Buddhist term which means acting “rightly,” without selfish attachment to our work, acting mindfully, and in harmony, without causing discord. It is the fourth aspect of the eightfold path and involves three main precepts – avoiding all harming of any living being, abstaining from taking what is not given, and stopping all abuse of sense-pleasures. It is closely aligned to right livelihood, which involves earning a living that does not involve killing, harming, corruption, lying, use of false measures and weights, sexual abuse, selling of alcohol, or illegal drugs. This has always mattered to me as it describes my relationship to work and making a living through good and honest means and through making the world a better place. I have found FE to be my right livelihood and a way of manifesting right action.

Conversatio

This is a Christian Benedictine monastic term and is one of three vows taken by monks and nuns – of obedience, stability and *conversatio morum*. At its simplest level, it means an ever repeating renewal of life and being open to continual change and development. I took vows as a Benedictine oblate, a lay member of Douai Abbey, in 2000, committing to live a life of prayer, work and *lectio divina* (spiritual study) within my daily life in the world; supported by the monks, daily office and regular retreats. Sister Joan Chittister (1990) best describes what *conversatio* in community means to me on a daily basis within my workplaces as

"to live community life well is to have all the edges rubbed off, all the rough parts made smooth ... Life itself is the discipline ... [as] ... community life is filled with opportunities ... that will truly smooth out our rough edges and bring us closer to Christ."

The term *conversatio morum* is found in chapter 58 of the Rule of St. Benedict.

For me, *conversatio* is also part of living inquiry as being curious about everything. Almaas's Diamond Approach, of which I am a student, fits me perfectly as this inquiry is "the desire, the wanting, the curiosity to know what is unknown that fuels whatever unfoldment arises out of consciousness". (Almaas 2002, 2008; Davis 1999) describe inquiry as a way in which we attend to and explore any process that is naturally occurring through intentionally following a particular internal thread, often initiated by a specific question or experience. It involves becoming aware of our current experience, consciously engaging it, and inviting its unfoldment through our immediate presence. Inquiry enables understanding or insight to arise, insight that is not merely intellectual, but also includes heart, body, mind and intuition, and requires full presence with immediate experience. This form of inquiry is a core part of my spiritual practice and expression.

Glossary

AoM	Academy of Management
BLI	Black Leadership Initiative
CBE	Commander of the British Empire
CBS	Croydon Business School
CEL	Centre for Excellence in Leadership
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EI	Emotional Intelligence
ET	Executive Team
Fbfe	National Council of Faiths and Beliefs in Further Education
FE	Further Education
FIOD	Fellow of the Institute of Directors
FRSA	Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts
ICOS	International Conference on Organisational Spirituality
ISAWA	International Spirit at Work Award
JMSR	Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion
LUMS	Lancaster University Management School
MCIM	Member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing
NEAFE	National Ecumenical Association for Further Education
PDW	Professional Development Workshops
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
SI	Spiritual Intelligence
SiW	Spirituality in the Workplace
SL	Spiritual Leadership
SMD	Spiritual Management Development
SQ	Spiritual Intelligence
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
WCRP	World Conference for Religions and Peace

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