

Intrapersonal Communication and Post-Disclosure Dialectics: An Examination of the
Dialectical Tensions Experienced Following Self-Disclosure

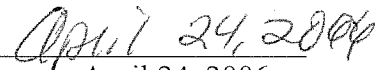
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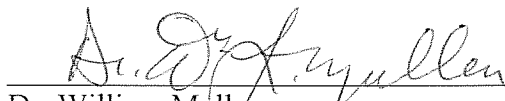
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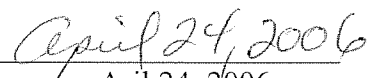
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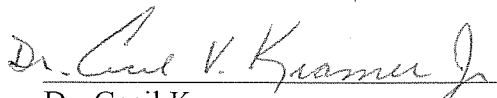
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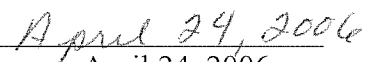

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Running Head: INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND POST-DISCLOSURE
DIALECTICS: AN EXAMINATION OF THE DIALECTICAL TENSIONS
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TABLE OF CONTENTS
PAGES

I.	Abstract.....	3
II.	Chapter I: Introduction to Study.....	4
III.	Chapter II: Literature Review.....	7
	A. Self-Disclosure Defined	
	B. Relational Development	
	C. Social Penetration Theory	
	D. Determinants of Self-Disclosure	
	E. Disclosure Reciprocity	
	F. Gender Differences in Self-Disclosure	
	G. Relational Dialectics	
	H. Intrapersonal Communication	
	I. Literature Review Conclusions	
IV.	Chapter III: Purpose and Methodology.....	38
	A. Purpose	
	B. Narrative Paradigm	
	C. Self- Report	
	D. Method	
V.	Chapter IV: Results.....	50
VI.	Discussion.....	66
VII.	Chapter V: Future Research.....	70
VIII.	References.....	76
IX.	Appendix.....	85

Abstract

This paper studies the time period directly following a self-disclosure act. The narrative paradigm theory was utilized in the study of 62 narratives to reveal themes in participants' post-disclosure intrapersonal communication experiences. The narratives revealed four prevalent themes, judgment, fear, relational growth and relief. These themes were then used to validate the existence of post-disclosure dialectics. Post-disclosure dialectics refers to the intrapersonal tensions participants experiences in the post-disclosure time period.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction

This study will attempt to validate the need to study intrapersonal communication in regard to an interpersonal communication act. The three specific research questions to be addressed in this study are as follows:

- (RQ: 1) What does a person communicate to himself or herself after engaging in self-disclosure?
- (RQ: 2) What types of feeling does the discloser experience?
- (RQ: 3) Does the person question their decision to self-disclose?

The hypotheses are as follows:

- H1:** Persons will engage in intrapersonal communication regarding the act of disclosure.
- H2:** Persons who engage in self-disclosure will feel some internal tensions regarding the information they shared about themselves.

Imagine, if you will, two friends sharing conversation over a cup of coffee. One friend begins to share her feelings regarding her recent divorce. She self-discloses raw details of the hurt, anger and loneliness she is currently experiencing. Immediately after she is finished self-disclosing, her mind is consumed with thoughts. Her intrapersonal communication is filled with questions regarding the information she has just divulged to her friend. An investigation of the intrapersonal communication in situations such as this is the focus of this study.

The existing research in the area of interpersonal communication will demonstrate a lack of attention to the intrapersonal communication process during the period of time directly following a self-disclosure act. While there is a plethora of information regarding self-disclosure from nearly every angle, the literature review suggests a lack of concentration on the discloser's internal communication experiences in the post-disclosure time period. The topics to be covered are as follows: an overview of self-disclosure, including factors that influence the determination of self-disclosure; relational development and self-disclosure; gender differences in self-disclosure; relational dialectics, and disclosure reciprocity. Additionally, the Social Penetration Theory, and the Narrative Paradigm Theory will be discussed.

In 1958, Jourard conducted a study using a self-disclosure assessment test. He noted, "These preliminary findings demonstrate that self-disclosure is measurable and that the present method for assessing it has some validity. The questions now open for explorations are virtually without limit." This paper attempts to continue research in this area of study that is "virtually without limit."

For the purposes of this research, this concept will be referred to as post-disclosure dialectics. Post-disclosure dialectics seems to fit as a title for this concept as this study assumes the possibility that a person experiences internal tensions and contrasting thoughts in intrapersonal communication after the act of self-disclosing. According to Dainton and Zelle (2005) intrapersonal communication is the communication within one's self; it is how individuals analyze others' behaviors, attitudes and messages to assign meaning to a given event. This study searches to identify the existence of this concept. Because this concept of post-disclosure dialectics

is yet to be established as occurring, this study will utilize the research below as well as original research conducted with the use of the narrative paradigm theory to establish whether or not it is in existence. If this concept does exist there will be a clear need for continued research in this area. In an area of study that is “virtually without limit,” post-disclosure dialectics may become yet another avenue through which the field of self-disclosure can be researched.

CHAPTER II.

Literature Review

Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure is defined by Tubbs (1988) as a process whereby an individual shares information in a personal way about his or her "self" that cannot be discovered through other sources (Tubbs, 1988). Self-disclosing communication occurs when a person intentionally tells others something about themselves, which the others would not normally know, and which makes the speaker vulnerable to judgment by the others (Tubbs, 1988). Chelune (1979) establishes,

Self-disclosure must have the following components to be considered self-disclosure: 1.) It must contain personal information about Person A; 2.) Person A must verbally communicate this information; 3.) Person A must verbally communicate this to a target, person B. (p.2)

According to Culbert (1968), self-disclosure has been identified as the information one reveals about oneself that is unobservable to the interactants. The two important attributes of this concept include the idea that, 1.) The topic is private, and 2.) The act is risky. Corcoran and Spencer (2000) discuss how self-disclosures can be used as weapons against the discloser,

We may reveal to a friend or a lover an embarrassing secret only to have our confidentiality betrayed and find ourselves the brunt of ridicule from a wider community. Like so many other valuable possessions, the gift of intimacy through self-disclosure carries with it the risk of loss, intrusion and exposure by

one's confidants to individuals or groups to whom this disclosure was not intended. (p. 6)

According to Derlega (1984), self-disclosure is a way of showing others who we are and what our needs are (Derlega, 1984). Self-disclosure includes any information exchange that refers to the self, including personal states, dispositions, events in the past, and plans for the future. It can be objectively defined as any verbal message that formally begins with the word "I" (for instance, "I think" or "I feel") or any other verbal message about self (Derlega, 1984). Additionally, Derlega (1984) points out the distinguishing factors between "self presentation" and self-disclosure; self-presentation...may represent a particular type of self-disclosure, emphasizing selective use of personal information to control outcomes in social relationships (Derlega, 1984). It is worth noting the difference between the concept of self-presentation and self-disclosure because, according to Schlenker (1984), self-presentation is sometimes distinguished from self-disclosure, with the former regarded as calculated, superficial, and manipulative, and the latter regarded as spontaneous, expressive and truthful (Schlenker, 1984). Derlega (1984) goes on to explain that the concept of self-presentation is often applied when a goal of creating a desired impression on an immediate audience is especially prominent or important; the label self-disclosure is often used when the goal is unimportant or non-prominent (Derlega, 1984).

In 1979, Derlega and Grzelak distinguished seven aspects of self-disclosure, they are as follows:

- 1.) Reward Value: The extent to which the information provides positive and or negative outcomes for either the discloser or the target.
- 2.) Informativeness: The

amount of information that the message provides about the discloser. How much information does the disclosure give the target about the causes that underlie the discloser's behavior? 3.) Accessibility: The ease at which the information can be obtained from the discloser and or other persons. 4.) Truthfulness: The extent to which the message provides information about the discloser's true psychological state. 5.) Voluntariness: The extent to which the information is voluntarily made available by the discloser. 6.) Social norms: The extent to which the message supports or deviates from the existing cultural expectations about appropriate behavior. 7.) Effectiveness: The extent to which the message accomplishes the discloser's goals. (Derlega, Grzelk, 1979). (p.53)

Sidney M. Jourard and Paul Laskow established the Self Disclosure Questionnaire in 1958. Throughout their research and with the use of this questionnaire the authors made the claim that self-disclosure is a measurable concept (Jourard and Laskow, 1958). The conclusions of Jourard and Laskow (1958) birthed a significant amount of research in this area of study. The definition of self-disclosure, as seen above, has many different faces, yet the majority of research supports the findings that self-disclosure is a crucial aspect of relational growth.

Relational Development

The topic of self-disclosure is closely associated with relational development. Assuming that a person comes to understand us by knowing how we react to things, self-disclosure can have a direct influence on our relationships with others. Pace, Boren and Peterson (1975) claim that developing a willingness to be self-disclosing and an

ability to support and accept others when they are self-disclosing is important to interpersonal relationships and their development. Intimate self-disclosures, presumably, require that the information revealed by the individual would be perceived as harmful to that individual if made known to other people other than the partner; such self-disclosure is risky, and the very intimate self-disclosure incurs vulnerability (Bowers et al, 1985).

Culbert (1968) addresses the ways in which risk plays into the process of self-disclosure,

Even with the most predictable receiver, the discloser is always less than certain that the receiver will hear him as he intended to be heard or react as he expected him to react. A quality of risk emerges which is inherent in every disclosure.

Risk is also closely tied to the intensity attributed to the self-disclosure by the communicator...that is, the risk in self-disclosure is a function of the intensity or importance the communicator places on the disclosure divided by the product of the probabilities that the receiver will hear the disclosure as the communicator intended and that the receiver will react as the communicator. (p. 8)

Thus, self-disclosure forces relationships to form or pushes relationships further in their growing process. Wheelless and Grotz (1976), (as cited in Martin and Anderson, 1995) reported finding a positive relationship between amount, depth and honesty of self-disclosure with trust in a relationship. As trust in relationships grow, so too, depth, honesty and the self-disclosures within in that relationship expand. According to Baxter and Montgomery (1996) self-disclosure provides relationship parties with the cognitive

knowledge they need to transform their relationship from impersonal to personal. Additionally, it is the mutual act of self-disclosure that provides parties with the evidence that they are trustworthy and trusting, thereby affording emotional security and comfort (Baxter and Montgomery, 1996).

Tardy et al (1981) (as cited by Martin and Anderson, 1995) recognized the multidimensionality of self-disclosure and they now investigate the: (A) amount of self-disclosure that takes place; (B) intentionality of the self-discloser; (C) honesty or accuracy of the self-disclosure; (D) depth or intimacy of the self-disclosure; (E) and positiveness or negativeness of the self-disclosure.

Self-Disclosure and the Social Penetration Theory

The Social Penetration Theory gives some insight into the idea of how self-disclosure will take place. The Social Penetration theory, one of the most widely identified theories of relational development, suggests that self-disclosure is what drives relationships closer. However, before we self-disclose to a stranger, or even our best friend, the theory suggests that we mentally consider the threat of vulnerability and the discomfort of sharing (and other costs) with the rewards of companionship and intimacy (Baldin, Perry and Moffitt, 2004).

According to Baldin, Perry and Mofit (2004) part of the reason for the theory's appeal is the straightforward approach to relationship development. There are four main assumptions that formulate the Social Penetration theory: 1.) Relationships progress from non-intimate to intimate, 2.) Relational development is generally systematic and

predictable, 3.) Relational development includes depenetration and dissolution and finally, 4.) Self-disclosure is the core of relationship development.

According to the theorists' Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor (1973), the formulators of the Social Penetration Theory, personalities that humans have are much like the layers of an onion. These personality layers are penetrated through self-disclosure. The top few layers of personality will be generally the most superficial, with the innermost layers holding the most personal of information. They also differentiate between two types of disclosures, depth and breadth. Depth refers to the degree of intimacy involved in the disclosure, while breadth refers to the number of topic areas disclosed. The social penetration process, therefore, necessarily includes verbal behaviors, nonverbal behaviors, and environmentally orientated behaviors.

The second portion of the theory discusses the use of rewards and costs in relationships. According to Altman and Taylor (1987), parties engaged in the social penetration process seek to maximize gains and minimize losses. According to Altman and Taylor (1987), the ideas of costs and rewards comes in part from the findings of Thibaut and Kelley in their Theory of the Social Exchange. Additionally, according to Altman and Taylor (1987), the greater the ratio of costs to rewards the more rapid the penetration process. Stated differently, the growth of relationships will be a direct function of the extent to which good or satisfying aspects of the experience outweigh bad or unfavorable ones. Altman and Taylor (1987) utilize the concepts of costs/rewards as a motivational basis for relationship growth through the various stages of development. Continuous exchanges (communication, self-disclosure, etc) occur as long as individuals mutually experience a favorable reward/cost balance (Altman and

Taylor, 1987). More about these theories will be discussed in the disclosure reciprocity portion of this literature review.

Relational goals influence the way in which costs and rewards are interpreted. According to Rubin, Rubin and Martin (1993),

People who decide to communicate with another to further relationship development consider the rewards and costs of each self-disclosive interaction message according to their goals and expectations for the relationship. Their self-disclosure is influenced not only by the desired and predicted outcome, but also by the situation and their awareness of the situation. (p. 117)

The discussion of the Social Penetration Theory is necessary as self-disclosure is the cornerstone of the theory. Because of the rewarding aspects of information exchange, many theorists agree that self-disclosure may be an effective vehicle for the development and maintenance of social relationships (Derlega, Grzelak, 1979). One of the rewards linked to friendship development may be the therapeutic benefits to utilizing self-disclosure.

The act of intimate and profound self-disclosure can be in itself therapeutic. To confess a secret in total confidentiality to a psychiatrist or a priest can lift a burden which lies heavily upon us....In a no less profound and intimate way friends, family members and sexual partners form close interpersonal bonds by revealing themselves, letting go as they do, their clothing of formality, public manners and social inhibitions. It is in this very process of getting to know one another that we see how disclosure becomes a force, a procedure, a carefully

guarded mechanism that enables us to discover and confirm cherished values, special meanings and prized behaviors (Corcoran and Spencer, 2000). (p. 5)

One study, conducted by McAdams (1994) dealing with self-disclosure and friendships, found that when respondents were asked to focus on a highpoint or a peak experience that bonded their friends closer together, the results for respondents high in intimacy motivation overwhelmingly described these high points as including some kind of personal revelation. This revelation was on the part of one friend and the acceptance of that revelation on the part of the other (McAdams, 1984). According to Duck (1991) "The satisfactory development of a relationships will depend on the 'proper' use of self-disclosure and personality communication...people look for reciprocation, for proper pacing and for deepening intimacy of disclosure, and disclosure is normally expected to be voluntary." (p.71)

While there is much information about how acts of disclosure will propel relationships to the next level, once again, there is an absence of information regarding internal feelings regarding the act directly following the act of self-disclosure.

Determinants of Self-Disclosure

There has been a great deal of research conducted on the determinants of self-disclosure. During his work on self-disclosure, Jourard (1971) found the most powerful determinants of self-disclosure to be the identity of the person to whom one might self-disclose himself and the nature and purpose of the relationship between the two people (Jourard, 1971). Reis and Shaver (1988) noted that the purpose of self-disclosure in personal relationships is often to receive confirmation, not to identify

similarities (Reis and Shaver, 1988). Additionally, Reis and Shaver (1988) conclude that people's interpersonal motives influence their communication, specifically their self-disclosure, which does have influence on their communication satisfaction.

Rosenfeld et al (1979) list a number of differences that may influence self-disclosure, they are as follows; attractiveness, status, age, target anatomical sex, and verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

According to Derlega et al (1993), decisions that persons make about self-disclosure have consequences not only for the individual partners, but also for the relationships itself. Berger et al's (1976) study (as cited in Hosman and Tardy, 1980) found that the determinants of self-disclosures are governed by a complex set of norms. As for the specific differences of these norms, cultures play a large role in creating these differences according to Duck (1991),

Naturally there are cultural differences here, and in some countries (e.g. the Unites States) an open style of self-disclosure about one's personal feelings is expected and encouraged. In others, (e.g. Japan) self-disclosure of feelings is thought to be inappropriate and self-indulgent, but information about family, status and social position is entirely suitable for disclosure. In all cultures, however, normal people open themselves up in the appropriate ways more and more as their relationships grow, and they are increasingly prepared- at the right sorts of moment, and in the right circumstances- to reveal these personal thoughts. (p.79)

Hosman and Tardy (1980) also assert that people can make distinctions between the intimacy of messages that are perceived to be appropriate with targets differing in

age, sex, educational level and occupational role (Hosman, Tardy, 1980). This concept of appropriateness most defiantly will influence a discloser's decisions as to what, when and with whom to share. Culbert (1968) set forth several dimensions regarding determinants of self-disclosure; one is intensity of the disclosure: Intensity: This construct characterizes that subject importance an individual places on a govern bit of self-data. Intensity may be operationalized in three ways:

A,)The level of intimacy, or the number of others whom the discloser has explicitly communicated the self-data: "How many others know," "What is my relationships to those others who know?" or "closeness to others who know" would be in the index of intensity. B.) The degree of emotional charging the self-discloser experienced while revealing the self-data. C.) The risk entailed in making self-data known: operationalized by asking the discloser for objective or subjective consequences he anticipates in making some self-data known and the likelihood that each consequence will take place. (p.21)

This concept of intimacy of message can play a large role in the determination of a person to self-disclose. The appropriateness of the self-disclosure is a large determiner of relational development.

According to Chelune (1979), a wide range of social norms govern whether a disclosure is seen as appropriate or deviant. The discloser who departs from these social norms is generally evaluated negatively. Chelune (1979) also found that attribution regarding the disclosers' motives is another important factor in relational development. According to Gonzales (1985), the main contributors to a person's decision to self-

disclose has to do with relationship with the target, target gender, intimacy and valence of disclosure. According to Chelune (1979),

Disclosers are considered favorably when they are viewed as discriminating and non-manipulative in their disclosures. However, if disclosures appear to be indiscriminate in what they reveal, or if they disclose personal information for ulterior motives, they are negatively evaluated. (p.5)

According to Culbert (1968), individuals differ greatly in the content categories they are willing to self-disclose. Some of the most common content areas are: personal values, religious beliefs, political ideologies, sexual practices, and finances. Additionally, Culbert (1968) found,

Contributing factors to the determination of a person's content selection for an act of self-disclose, are as follows: an individual's values, areas of guilt, needs for privacy, perceptions of societal or referent-group norms, needs for acceptance, perceptions of rewards and punishments, needs for safety and doubts of personal adequacy. (p. 25)

According to Petronio (2000) deciding between disclosing and remaining private is an extremely complex process. According to Petronio (2000), this decision to self-disclose depends, for example, on how a person will balance the risks of disclosing with the rewards, their feelings about the information they might share, their expectations of the culture in which they live, the situation in which they need to decide whether to be more or less open, the relationship they have with the target of their disclosure, and the extent to which their disclosure fits the conversation (Petronio, 2000). According to Petronio (2000), there are still other considerations that play into a

person's decision regarding their disclosure, including: How deeply do they need to disclose? Do they need to disclose everything, or can they disclose part of what there is to say? To what extent do they need to talk about related topics so as to provide a context for what they choose to disclose? And what are their alternatives if they choose not to disclose (Pretronio, 2000). Further, an additional determining factor in the decision to self-disclose may be a person's desire for control within a relationship. According to Duck (1986), partners utilize self-disclosure as a tool for the control of relationships. Duck (1986) found that,

For instance we will occasionally overdo a disclosure so that we plunge our partner into a "norm of reciprocity" requiring him or her to respond with something equally intimate and revealing...lack of self-disclosure can thus also sometimes be strategic and can help to preserve the relationship because it keeps it away from topics that can be inherently threatening. (p.88)

Derlega and Grzelak (1979) named five most prevalent reasons people self-disclose, they are listed below: 1.) For release of pent up feelings, 2.) For clarification of personal opinions/values, 3.) For feedback about attitudes, values, beliefs and or worries, 4.) To control the outcome or involvement of the relationship, 5.) For advice, 6.) To encourage the other person to give information about him or herself, 7.) To gain approval from him or her, 8.) To provide information that would help the person know more about you.

Lastly, Jourard and Lasakow (1958) proposed that self-disclosure is intrinsically rewarding, leading to an increase of positive feelings (liking) for the discloser, and suggested that a linear relationship exists between self-disclosure and liking. Along the

same lines, Taylor (1979) has suggested that both male and female subjects self-disclose to a liked target and liked individuals who disclose to them. This, in many cases, causes a person's liking to influence their decision regarding their self-disclosure. According to Gonzales (1985), self-disclosure is multidimensional, with many different factors affecting and determining its occurrence. Variations in the discloser target, reciprocity effects and situational considerations such as appropriateness, are all elements, which in one-way or another, determine why people self-disclose (Gonzales, 1985). Now a discussion of the concept, disclosure reciprocity, is appropriate.

Disclosure Reciprocity

An additional component regarding determinants of self-disclosure is disclosure reciprocity. According to Wilmot (1979), dyadic relationships continue only when reciprocity is present to some degree. It is through the process of reciprocal communication that Wilmot (1979) found relationships are formed and maintained. Chelune (1979) found the most reliable and situational determinant of self-disclosure is the disclosure of another person. Chittick et al (1967) (as cited by Hosman and Tardy, 1980) found that when one member of a dyad increases the intimacy of his/her conversation, the other member will also tend to increase the intimacy of his/her conversation. There are two different explanations regarding disclosure reciprocity. The first, called the Social Exchange Theory was developed by Thibaut and Kelly in 1978 and was discussed by Rubin (1974). This theory asserts the assumption that self-disclosure is perceived as occurring between two friends, and the recipient of the disclosure believes that he/she is liked and trusted by the self-discloser. Since the

disclosure is rewarding, the recipient wants to reward the discloser and does so by reciprocating his/her disclosure (Rubin, 1974). Wilmot (1979) suggests that within interpersonal relationships people expect the other person's behavior to be somewhat contingent upon their own. This is a portion of the reward of being in interpersonal friendships. Wilmot (1979) is clear, in stating that reciprocity does not mean that the behaviors of any two persons are identical. It does mean that each one's behavior is affected by the behavior of the other. According to Taylor (1979), the process toward self-disclosure is motivated by four sources.

These motivations are a compilation of finding from theorists in the field of self-disclosure and include Jourard, Altman, Chaikin, Derlega and Rubin, many of whom have been represented in this literature review as well. The four motivations are as follows, 1.) rewarding social exchanges and a healthy personality, 2.) Social obligations and reward/costs outcomes, 3.) Modeling and trust, and 4.) Equitable exchange and personalism. (p.150)

This orderly exchange of information follows implicit social rules, and allows interactants to build a data base from which to infer the subjective meanings of the information exchanged regarding their relationship (Chelune et al, 1984).

According to Taylor (1979), social behavior is regulated by feelings of obligation or indebtedness incurred by accepting a benefit; these obligations of repayment are contingent upon the imputed value of the benefit received. Taylor (1979) then links the concept of disclosure reciprocity with the Equity Theory. According to Taylor (1979), the key principal of the Equity Theory is that the ratio of inputs to outputs from one individual should equal the input/output ratio of the other individual.

Also, according to the Equity Theory, when this is not occurring, the resulting tensions motivate both individuals to seek ways of restoring balance (Taylor, 1979). Linking the concept of equity to disclosure reciprocity, Taylor (1979) explains that the discloser has rendered himself or herself vulnerable to the possibility that the recipient could use the disclosure to cause harm, the resulting tension should generate efforts to restore equity—a reciprocated disclosure is a likely outcome (Taylor, 1979). According to Chelune (1968),

The discloser is in an excellent position to exercise controls over the discloser.

The receiver's response structurally parallels what information theorists call feedback. One might visualize receiver responses on a continuum: at one end, the receiver intends them as rewarding and serving to encourage the communicator to make self-disclosures; in the middle, he intends them to be neutral—neither rewarding nor punishing, encouraging or discouraging; at the other end, he intends them to be punitive and to discourage the communicator from making additional self-disclosures. (p. 7)

According to Jourard (1971), two persons generally proceed to uncover themselves to one another at a mutually regulated pace, “If it is generally true that intimate self-disclosure begets intimate self-disclosure, while impersonality begets impersonality, then certain implications follow for a number of areas of interpersonal endeavor (Jourard, 1971).” (p.19) Interestingly enough, disclosure reciprocity may affect how intimate the message and the experience may be perceived.

The intimacy process is initiated when one partner (the speaker) communicates personally relevant and revealing information to another partner (the listener). In

return, the listener must emit disclosures and behaviors that are responsive to the specific content of the initial disclosure and that convey understanding, validation, and caring for the speaker (i.e., partner responsiveness). For the interaction to be experienced as intimate by the speaker, the speaker must also perceive the listener's responses as demonstrating understanding, acceptance, validation, and care (i.e., perceived partner responsiveness). Thus, an important mechanism that mediates the link between a speaker's self-disclosure and corresponding experience of intimacy is the degree of partner responsiveness that is perceived by the speaker (Laurenceau, Barrett and Rovine, 2005). (p.3)

Additionally, Derlega et al (1993) contend that although people are often not consciously aware of conversational norms, these norms help people to know when it is their turn to speak and know the kinds of comments that would be appropriate given certain topics. According to Derlega and Grzelak (1979), norms help to maintain cultural values by regulating expected forms of behavior, but they also serve individuals' instrumental goals. For instance, the fact that others follow norms enables people to forecast the possible outcomes in social relationships. Derlega and Grzelak (1979) continue,

Early in a relationship among strangers or acquaintances, a partner's willingness to reciprocate disclosure (by adhering to the norm of disclosure reciprocity) may provide information about that person's trustworthiness and willingness to pursue the relationship. This obligation to match disclosures may not occur among close friends; instead the needs of partners may influence one another's disclosure tendencies. (p.50)

According to Archer (1979), self-disclosure follows liking, and disclosure from another leads the recipient to disclose as well. However, the reciprocity effect is the strongest when a relationship exists between discloser and recipient and is still in the growing stage (Archer, 1979). According to Rubin (1974), reciprocity may be the product of the modeling process in which the interactants tend to emulate each other and/or trusting processes in which there is an orientation toward the other person. Research in disclosure reciprocity has shown that disclosure reciprocity is not dependent upon liking and that it can be induced solely by modeling and demands in an experimental situation (Kleinke, 1979). According to Kelnke (1979), it is most reasonable to conclude that disclosure reciprocity can be a function of modeling as well as social exchange and that the relative influence of these two processes depends on the context or situation. Hugenberg and Schaefermeyer (1983) assert that there are several other possible motivations for self-disclosure, these include: the resolution or affirmation of one's perceived roles, a search for sympathy, support and self-evaluation. The amount of trust the discloser places in the receiver is an important determinant of disclosure reciprocity as well. According to Jourard (1971), people disclose only when they experience it as safe to be known in their authentic being, or lost if they are not. The discloser must trust the receiver.

Derlega et al (1987) found that reactions to intimate self-disclosures may also depend on whether or not recipients perceive that they have been singled out or "personalistically chosen" as a disclosure recipient. Being singled out as a recipient may lead to inference that one is liked and trusted, which could serve as a reward. This could, lead in turn, to greater liking of and self-disclosure to the other person, and this

increases disclosure reciprocity (Derlega et al, 1987). Disclosures are purposeful, that is, the communicator views disclosures as having some resultant benefit to be gained (Hugenberg and Schaefermeyer, 1983). This may mean that the discloser may be choosing to self-disclose to a receiver for the purpose of allowing the other person to feel "personalistically" chosen.

According to Altman (1993), four variables are thought to influence disclosure reciprocity: 1.) Stage of relationship 2.) Topical intimacy or level of exchange 3.) Situational factors and 4.) Personality or group compositional factors. Derlega and Grzelak (1979), found that in many situations self-disclosure might help in solving interpersonal problems. Self-disclosure in interdependence may serve two purposes: 1.) To reduce uncertainty about the partner's preferences and thus reveal the probable structure of interdependence and 2.) To coordinate necessary actions and to reduce uncertainty, partner must take certain actions (Derlega and Grzelak, 1979).

According to Baxter and Montgomery (1996), there have been many studies regarding the reasons people engage in disclosure reciprocity, some are as follows: maintaining or enhancing a relationship with another person, eliciting personal information about another person from that person, gaining insight into one's own thoughts and feelings through feedback from the other person...engaging in catharsis and controlling the other persons actions through manipulation.

The ability for a recipient of a self-disclosure to reciprocate may have to do with the receiver's attribution for the self-disclosure. According to Derlega et al (1993), recipients make attributions about the source of the disclosure and the discloser's motivations. Reciprocity is more likely when the recipient makes positive attributions

and judges the disclosure received to be rewarding (Derlega et al, 1993). Another variable that influences the likelihood of reciprocity is the relational goal of the recipient (Derlega et al, 1993). According to this concept, if the receiver does not desire to further the relationship, he or she may refrain from disclosing in order to do so. Also, the developmental stage of the relationship has a profound influence on disclosure reciprocity. Among friends and other types of developed relationships, however, disclosure need not be reciprocated except in the broad sense of being willing to exchange the listener role periodically; there is less need to reciprocate intimate self-disclosure immediately and during the same interaction (Derlega et al, 1993).

In Hosman and Tardy's 1980 study, they found one of their most important findings regarding disclosure reciprocity, was that persons who failed to reciprocate a disclosure were seen as highly incompetent; "Subjects in this study had the opportunity to evaluate communication competence..." Interestingly enough, even though subjects in the study were given the option of attributing the person's reciprocity behavior as a personality trait, the study revealed that the participants still attributed the persons' lack of reciprocal communication to a lack of communication competence. According to Duck (1991),

Just as such people make skillful use of self-disclosure so, conversely, the people who have the most difficulty with normal relationship development seem to be least adept to this part of it. People can be trained to get self-disclosure right, partly by guided exercises that indicate the different depths of information that are appropriate at different stages of relationships, and partly by putting them in a warmly accepting atmosphere that encourages them to open up. (p. 83)

Another problem area in disclosure reciprocity can be found when a person discloses too intimately too soon, this may make him or her appear to be peculiar, indiscreet or untrustworthy. Also, according to Duck (1991), the person who tries to get someone to disclose too intimately will be thought driving and pushy, unless there are special reasons why they are doing it.

As shown above, there is a plethora of determining factors regarding a person's decision for or against engaging in self-disclosure. Martin and Anderson's (1995) findings support Reis and Shaver's (1988) contention that motives precede a person's self-disclosures. In regards to how disclosure reciprocity will change throughout the span of the friendship, Hosman and Tardy (1980) found that because self-disclosure aids in defining the relationship by making one person more vulnerable to another, that person trusts the other person not to exploit the information.

As a relationship develops, the demands and modes of exchange or control become more diversified... This is if one member of the dyad makes an intimate disclosure, he or she does not necessarily expect immediate reciprocity, since it is understood that the other person may reciprocate later or reciprocate in a way other than matching the intimacy of one's communication. In this case the norm of reciprocity would assume less importance in a developed relationship. (p. 21)

This seems to advocate that the reciprocity levels in relationships developing as the relationships develop. At different points in a relationship, a target may need differing levels of reciprocity or the reciprocator may feel more comfortable to do so further into a relationship. However, disclosure reciprocity appears to be a key ingredient in the interpersonal relationship process.

Gender Differences in Self-Disclosure

Across varied contexts and types of relationships, women generally disclose more about themselves and disclose more intimate information about them than do men (Dindia and Allen, 1992). Research has shown that men typically reveal less personal information about themselves to others than women (Jourard, 1971). Dindia and Allen's (1992) research regarding self-disclosure found that self-disclosures are more likely when two women are talking than when two men or a man and a woman are talking (Dindia and Allen, 1992). According to Archer (1979),

A high discloser is likely to be a women or at least persons who possess feminine psychological characteristics, usually not first born, from the white majority, not introverts, may have the socially outgoing and gregarious nature of the field dependent person and not likely to be neurotic or over concerned with obtaining approval. (p. 34)

Hill and Stull (1987) discuss the difference in self-disclosure practices and have found that self-disclosure differences may have more emphasis on topics disclosed. "A number of studies have found sex differences as a function of disclosure topic although precise topics have varied somewhat from study to study. Hill and Stull (1987) also found that women have disclosed more about themselves, their homes, their relationships with family and friends, their feelings, and other topics rated higher in intimacy. Men, on the other hand, have disclosed more about cars, sports, work, politics, sports, money...things they are proud of and other non-intimate topics (Hill and Stull, 1987). According to Derlega et al (1993), this may be due in part to social conditioning;

On one hand, as part of learning sex roles, boys may be praised and rewarded for being self-assured, decisive, independent, rational, and not losing control in the face of crisis...Girls on the other hand, may be rewarded for being affectionate, sympathetic, understanding and sensitive to the needs of others...These gender differences in social learning may affect how men and women value showing their feelings and emotions. (p. 70)

Collins and Miller (1994) found that women may perceive self-disclosure as more of a diagnostic of developing closeness and more socially rewarding than men. In addition, because of traditional sex-role stereotypes, men may feel more threatened by unsolicited intimate conversation. As a result, the relationship between disclosure and liking may be stronger for female recipients than for male recipients (Collins and Miller 1994).

Derlega et al (1993) arrive at three main reasons governing gender differences in self-disclosure, they are as follows: 1.) The different value placed on self-disclosure in male and female subcultures; females may value talking about feelings and personal concerns with a friend or relationship partner more than males do. 2.) Gender-related social norms about appropriate self-disclosure for males and females (including whom to talk to, what topics are appropriate to talk about and at what level of intimacy), 3.) Different expectancies about self-disclosure for males and females; people may perceive that men are unwilling or less comfortable talking about personal feelings than are women. Hence, people may be less willing to talk to men about personal topics, a reluctance that, in turn, might discourage men from talking intimately about themselves (Derlega et al, 1993).

Derlega and Grzelak (1979) found that males and females might adopt different self-disclosure styles (at least in American culture) partially to avoid ridicule for sexually inappropriate behaviors. According to Collins and Miller (1994), traditional sex-role stereotypes suggests that women are more skillful communicators and are more concerned with issues of intimacy than are men. This may make an intimate disclosure by a man violate expectations and be seen as less appropriate than a similar disclosure by a woman. As a result, men may be viewed as maladjusted if they do disclose, whereas women may be viewed as maladjusted if they do not disclose (Collins and Miller, 1994).

Also closely related to gender differences in self-disclosure are listening skills. A study done by Leaper et al (1995), found that women use more active listening with female friends. Active understanding relates because according to this study, active understanding as well as clarification questions are both supportive responses that acknowledge the other's disclosure. Davis and Perkowski (1979) (as cited in Leaper et al, 1995) claim that since females more heavily practice active listening, they may encourage the partner to explore the disclosure topic more. This is insofar that responsiveness functions to prolong an interaction and lead to greater feelings of intimacy. Men may avoid using supportive strategies due to the more competitive and emotionally reserved nature of their traditional friendships (Lewis, 1989). One explanation for this result is that women tend to avoid self-disclosure when they want to avoid its potential consequences of personal hurt and problems (Kito, 2005). According to Duck (1991), there are very clear differences between the two sexes when we look at the amounts of intimate information that is disclosed to a partner; "Females, generally

dialectical tensions most closely associated with self-disclosure are the concepts of openness and closedness, which, according to Baxter (1988), are the tensions between the simultaneous need to reveal and strategically withhold information (Baxter, 1988). The concept of self-disclosure is clearly related to notions of privacy and secrecy. If privacy concerns keeping things hidden, and secrets are the specific messages chosen not to be shared, then self-disclosure is the process that grants access to private things and to secrets. Yet, according to Rosenfeld et al (1979), "One might argue that it is impossible not to make yourself known once you choose to say anything; even what you choose to say about others says something about you." In regards to the inner struggle, Dinida (1998) looked into self-disclosure of stigma topics and found that dialectical tensions were very much apparent. Individuals are simultaneously pulled in opposite directions and struggle with the contradiction between revealing and concealing stigma (Dinida, 1998).

Additionally, according to a study conducted by Rawlins (1992), regarding dialectic tensions, ten in-depth interviews revealed that the dialectics of expressiveness-protectiveness were inherent to the development of relationships. Through expressiveness or self-disclosure, two friends open up their areas of vulnerability to each other. In achieving this openness, however, the dyad also creates the conditions for closedness (protectiveness). Friends must thereafter strategically manage their communications so as to protect their friend's exposed vulnerabilities (Rawlins, 1992). In attempting to protect their friends they are also attempting to manage their friends' impressions of the event. According to Wilmont (1979), this ties closely into the assignment of meaning to someone's behavior and how is not an objective or fixed

event. This dialectic process of expressiveness and protectiveness occurs in people's heads, this point reiterates the intrapersonal nature of the interpersonal process. Wilmot (1979) goes on to say that no matter what one does say one does not control the impressions of others.

According to Jourard, (1971)

The activity of self-disclosure, once undertaken, follows the principles of operant behavior, in that it's structure is shaped by the reinforcers that are yielded as feedback. Thus, the form and content of my disclosure, once I have chosen to disclose myself, is affected by my experience of partial reinforcers that guide me, like signposts, to the goal I seek in commencing to disclose, namely evidence provided by the other that he is receiving and understanding my disclosure, and changing his concept of me accordingly. (p.4)

Hayes (1988) suggests more research into the process by which friends handle relationship dissatisfactions and tensions is needed in order to better understand our understanding of friendships.

Another set of opposing tensions are the tensions of autonomy and connectedness; the tensions between the simultaneous need for independence and dependence in relationships (Baxter, 1988). The focus on people constantly moving away from or toward each other suggests that relational development itself can be perceived as dialectical. Bochner (1992), (as cited in Kramer, 2004) claims that relational development has often been used synonymously with greater amounts of closeness and intimacy. Therefore, the patterns of developing toward greater degrees of

closeness deteriorating to lesser degrees of closeness can be viewed as dialectical (Kramer, 2004).

As for how these dialectical issues will affect future communication patterns, for example, Baxter and Montgomery's (1996) work found that dyads react to dialectical tensions by communicating, and these messages modify the future dialectical tensions that the pair will face. Also according to Baxter and Montgomery (1996), the connection and autonomy tensions were found to be the most salient in a study conducted in 1998. From the findings regarding connection and autonomy, Baxter and Montgomery (1996) drew two conclusions: relationship parties may regard the connection-autonomy tension as an inherent feature of all personal relationships and secondly, the dissatisfaction with connection-autonomy may be with how the contradictions are managed moment by moment (Baxter and Montgomery, 1996). This relates very much to self-disclosure and relational development because as discussed above, self-disclosure drives relational development and relational connection. If a person experiences tensions in this area of connection-autonomy, they are likely to experience tensions regarding their yearnings to utilize self-disclosure, but also feeling an unwillingness to self-disclose.

Altman (1993) also deals with several different interpersonal dialectics that people may encounter. First, the interpersonal dialectical processes involves the over display of oppositional dynamics between two people in a relationship. Thus openness/closedness and others may occur between participants in a relationship. Most importantly, however, to this research would be what Altman (1993) calls intra-

interpersonal dialectical processes, this is the dialectical process that is played out within an individual;

Thus for example the classic Freudian personality struggle between the id and the superego is an intra-individual dialectical process as are the James, Mead, Cooley ideas of the "I" and the "me." Indeed, one can conceive of dialectical processes of openness/closedness, individuality/communality, and autonomy/connection functioning in the minds of individuals in a relationship. (p. 28)

Here Altman (1993) echoes the thrust of this study in examining the intra-interpersonal communication process of engaging in self-disclosure and exposing the private parts of a person. A simple overview of relational dialectics is as follows: "To commit to a relational dialectics view is to accept that individuals are socially constructed in the ongoing interplay of unity and difference. Communication events, relationships and life itself are ongoing and unfinalizable, always 'becoming,' never 'being.' ... We think of this phenomenon as akin to an off-balance pendulum moving unsymmetrically through time at an irregular pace (Baxter and Montgomery, 1996)." (p.47)

Intrapersonal Communication

Self-disclosure does not merely affect a person's interpersonal communication; it also has a significant effect on a person's intrapersonal communication as well. Quite simply, intrapersonal communication is the communication within one's self, it is how

individuals analyze others' behaviors, attitudes and messages to assign meaning to a given event (Dainton, Zelle, 2005). Edwards (1981) (as cited in Apple, 1989) said,

The communication process involves the sending and receiving of message through some channel-with a resulting response. However, the process does not always require two or more participants. Intrapersonal communication-communication within oneself-involves all of the elements (e.g. sender, receiver and transmitter) of other levels of communication such as interpersonal, public speaking, or mass communication, but the process takes place within the a single person. (p.1)

In relation to intrapersonal communication and interpersonal relationships, there is no end in the connection. Thinking about relationships affects the trajectory at early formative stages and when the relationship runs into problems, relationship thoughts are dialectical rather than in simple unidirectional influence pattern (Duck, 1985). Thoughts about partner, and information gathered about partner, are also affected by relationships (Duck, 1985). According to Hinkins (1989), there are eight essentials components of intrapersonal discourse that together constitute a powerful rationale for a significant amount of research. They are as follows: 1.) Self talk functions to articulate judgments about the world, 2.) Self talk serves to certify those judgments as accurate or inaccurate, 3.) Self talk is unobservable and is not amendable to direct empirical study, 4.) Self talk may occur contiguous to, but not necessarily congruent with, publicly observable discourse, 5.) Self-talk is the essence of higher-level intellect, 6.) Self talk can easily transmigrate from intrapersonal realm to the publicly observable realm, 7.) Self talk accounts for all the attribution of meaning, 8.) Self talk is ubiquitous.

Additionally, Apple (1989) discusses the notion that intrapersonal communication is not restricted to "talking to ourselves;" it also includes such activities as problem solving, resolution of internal conflict, planning for the future, emotional catharsis, evaluations of ourselves and others, and the relationships between ourselves and others.

According to Doster and Nesbett (1987), self-disclosure is regarded as both an intrapersonal and interpersonal communication process through which the individual becomes known to and knows others, develops a sense of rootedness or identity in communion and fellowship with others, achieves self-congruence, acquires positive feelings of worth, and develops a moral and spiritual fulfillment (Doster and Nesbit, 1979). As persons are engaged in relationships their understandings of their partners change rapidly.

We transform our views of our partners as we get to know them better, and behavioral changes (e.g. , increased intimacy) are indicators of such mental changes. Partners' view of themselves, their partner and the relationship develop in parallel with the development of the relationship itself (Duck, 1986). (p. 92)

According to Cunningham (1992), intrapersonal communication is the youngest and least developed notion of all the communication types, and about which the least is printed. One of the strongest claims made repeatedly is that intrapersonal communication is the basis of all other forms of communication (Cunningham, 1992).

The link between intrapersonal communication and interpersonal communication, within the area of personal relationships, is exactly what this study is hoping to discover. The connection between the two types of communication and the

tensions that emerge because of those connections are the focus of this study. Study is needed in the area of intrapersonal communication and the existence of dialectics warrants study in this area as well.

Literature Review Conclusions

Altman (1993) agrees with the argument that within the intrapersonal communication of people there exist dialectical tensions, this specifically relates to dialectical tensions that occur after an act of self-disclosure. As identified above, and according to Wolfson and Pearce (1983), for self-disclosure to take place the topic must be private and the act risky. With these two characteristics present the intrapersonal dialectical tensions must be extremely high in a post-disclosure situation. Bowers et al (1985) asserts that, "When self disclosure does occur, it may either relieve or produce added emotional stress. Some disclosure is better emotionally than none, but more is not necessarily better than less" (Bowers et al, 1985). Therefore, the topic of post-disclosure dialectics is worthy of research. Although there is a plethora of research in the interpersonal communication field, there is virtually nothing regarding post disclosure dialectics in the post-disclosure time period. There is also nothing that specifically studies a self-discloser's intrapersonal communication reaction to the self-disclosure act. According to Berscheid (1994),

The movement toward an examination of cognitive processes as they occur in the context of actual ongoing social relationships is the most recent illustration of the mutual dependence between basic theory and research in psychology and theory and research in interpersonal relationships. (p. 119)

Regarding the future of the study of self-disclosure Jourard commented, "The questions now open for exploration are virtually without limit" (Jourard, 1971). This is another area of the communication studies that needs exploration. The intrapersonal communication field shows a real need for further research, and this study targets one specific aspect; the intrapersonal communication is closely associated with interpersonal relationships and research is truly needed.

CHAPTER III.

Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of this study is to utilize narrative analysis to identify the intrapersonal communication individuals experience after engaging in self-disclosure. The study assumes, as does the Narrative Paradigm Theory, that a person's reality is constructed through the act of narrating their stories (Fisher, 1984). Thus, the analysis of the respondent's narratives will provide a true depiction of the internal state of mind of the participants. Several research questions, as well as a few hypotheses, lay the groundwork for this study. A few of the research questions as stated above are as follows:

- (RQ: 1)** What does a person communicate to himself or herself after engaging in self-disclosure?
- (RQ: 2)** What types of contradictory feelings does the discloser experience?
- (RQ: 3)** Does the person question their decision to self-disclose?

Additionally, several hypotheses are as follows:

- H1:** Persons will engage in intrapersonal communication regarding the act of disclosure.
- H2:** Persons who engage in self-disclosure will feel some internal tensions regarding the information they shared about themselves.

With these questions and hypotheses presented, a discussion on the research method as well as an explanation of data collection techniques will be discussed.

Methodology Review

Narrative Paradigm

With the aforementioned and the hypotheses constructed, it is appropriate to discuss the proposed method of research to be used in accessing the possible occurrence of post-disclosure dialectics. In Hirokawa et al (2000) book, Narrative Analysis of Group Communication, the narrative paradigm, a narrative or a story is a written or oral composition that describes a sequence of events and actions resulting in a particular outcome or ending. A narrative, according to Manning and Cullum-Swan (1994), is defined as a story with a beginning, middle, and end that reveals someone's experiences. Narratives take many forms, are told in many settings, before many audiences, and with various degrees of connection to the actual events or person (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994). According to Fisher (1984,) the originator of the Narrative Paradigm theory, there are four underlying principles alive in any narrative.

The presuppositions that structure the narrative paradigm are: (1) Humans are essentially storytellers; (2) The paradigmatic mode of human decision making and communication is "good reasons" which vary in form among communication situations, genres, and media; (3) The production and practice of good reasons is ruled by matters of history, biography, culture and character...(4) Rationally is determined by the nature of persons as narrative beings-their inherent awareness of *narrative probability*, what constitutes a coherent story, and their constant habit of testing *narrative fidelity*, whether the stories they experience ring true with the stories they know to be true in their own lives. (p.7)

According to Young (1996), (as cited by Feldman et al, 2004), narrative can be loosely defined as a sequence of events, experiences, and actions with a plot that ties together different parts. The information presented in narratives is valuable. According to Feldman et al (2004,) through the events the narrative includes, excludes and emphasizes, the storyteller not only illustrates his or her version of the account, but also provides an interpretation or evaluative commentary on the subject. Also significant to the narrative is the sequencing; the structure of the narrative reveals what is significant to people about various practices, ideas, places and symbols (Feldman et al, 2004). According to Fisher (1984) the term “narration” is not meant to be a fictive composition whose propositions may be true or false and have no necessary relationship to the message of that composition. Rather, Fisher (1984) says,

By ‘narration,’ I refer to a theory of symbolic actions-words and/or deeds that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them. The narrative perspective, therefore, has relevance to real as well as fictive world, stories of living and to stories of imagination. (p.8)

According to Kirkwood (1983), narrative expression can convey what a particular “essence” comes to in very concise and often primitive terms (Kirkwood, 1983). Hirokawa et al (2000) in his book, Narrative Analysis of Group Communication, discusses Polkinghorne’s (1988) descriptions of how the narrative account is obtained by asking people to retrospectively sort out the multitude of events and decisions that are connected to the event in question. Then, to select those that are significant and draw together the various episodes and actions into a story that lead through a sequence

of events to an ending (Hirokawa et al, 2000). Additionally, narrative accounts are significant because they convey basic understanding of what happened, why it happened and what resulted when it happened (Hirokawa et al, 2000). Also, Polkinghorne (1988), as discussed by Hirokawa et al (2000) argues that understanding the human experience is best accomplished by analyzing the stories people tell. According to Riessman (1993), a primary way individuals make sense of their experiences is by casting them into narrative form. It is through creating a narrative that Riessman (1993) concludes narrators are able to create plots from disordered experiences.

Hirokawa et al (2000) discusses the book, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*, in which Polkinghorne (1988) maintained that human experience operates largely in the mental realm. That is, human experience involves personal meanings derived from our direct and indirect contact (or interactions) with the material and organic realms of human existence. Hirokawa et al (2000) discusses Polkinghorne's (1988) contention that many attempts to account for "why" human experience requires a focus on personal meanings and hence the analysis of the mental realm of human experience (Hirokawa et al, 2000).

According to Conville and Rogers (1998), the best source for studying relationships is in the stories that relational partners tell, because relationship stories depict the interaction of partners and record their subjectivity (Conville and Rogers, 1998). This is where the use of narrative allows a researcher to access the mental realm of the "human experience" by allowing the person to narrate their experiences. According to Berscheid (1994),

An increasing number of researchers focus on the reconstructive quality of autobiographical memories to learn how people make sense out of past relationship events. The meaning individuals accord to those events is presumed to have a number of implications for their future behavior in that relationship or others, whether or not their memories are congruent with other evidence. (p. 93)

Thus, narrative analysis is a method by which researchers are able to decode the “human experience” by looking through a narrative story. According to Hirokawa et al (2000),

Narrative analysis has been used successfully in many different ways. The basic idea is to obtain “narrative accounts” from people who had first hand experience with an event of interest and then to analyze those stories to understand those people’s interpretations or understandings. (p. 575)

Bochner and Ellis (1992) challenge the formerly held social science perspective with the use of narrative analysis by saying,

To move the study of close relationships toward a social or interpersonal mode of research centered on lived experience, it may be necessary to create research practices that conform more closely to the practices of relationships than to the practices of mainstream social science. (p. 561)

Bochner and Ellis (1992) go onto to say that narrative analysis is a systematic and replicable way of examining some of the most important qualities of interpersonal relationships. According to Hirokawa et al (2000), narrative analysis has been justified both theoretically as well as philosophically. Hirokawa et al (2000) does emphasize that narrative analysis is based on the assumption that people’s realities are constructed

through the act of telling stories. In other words, not only is a person's reality unique, but it is not fully experienced by the individual until he or she has talked about it (Hirokawa et al, 2000). According to the Personal Narratives Group (1989)

When talking about their lives, people lie sometimes, forget a lot, exaggerate, become confused, and get things wrong. Yet they are revealing truths. These truths don't reveal the past "as it actually was," aspiring to a standard of objectivity. They give us instead the truths of our experiences...unlike the truth of the scientific ideal; the truths of personal narratives are neither open to proof or self-evident. (p.262)

In reference to a study of small groups where narrative analysis was utilized, Hirokawa et al (2000) expressed the goal was to understand what happened in a group from the perspective of the group members. According to Fisher (1984), people naturally interpret, recall, and convey their group experiences narratively. At the conclusion of his study Hirokawa et al (2000) found that narrative analysis represents a practical, and user-friendly approach to studying groups (Hirokawa et al, 2000). The value of using the narrative in research does not, however, end with the study of small groups. According to Conville (1998), narratives hold the lived experience of personal relationships, structural. Methods unveil their formal qualities and dialectical interpretations tell of their dynamics. Investigators often find the best access to personal relationships is found in participants' narratives about those relationships.

In relation to a study Conville (1998) conducted using analysis of the narrative and dialectical issues, he found the dialectical dimensions of personal relationships are not to shun the "contradictions, contingencies, non-rationalities, and multiple realities"

of a person's daily narratives. It is to plunge headlong into those ordinary stories, affirm their insights and bring wisdom into the conversation (Conville, 1998). Berscheid (1994) agrees, "Most researchers who use account narratives especially appreciate the power of this method to obtain self-reports that are relatively free of the influence that structured interview questions and questionnaire items impose on respondents' reports." (p. 85) Gonzales (1985) is in agreement, he found self-report as an instrumental way of obtaining data regarding self-disclosure practices, "We consider this methodology as superior to questionnaires...due to the fact that it relies on reports describing actual behavior as it occurs in the everyday life of college students." (p. 67)

According to Harvery and Omarzu (1999), regardless of accuracy, when people tell stories they still communicate meaningful points. All details may not be historically, objectively true, but the points people make have narrative truth. John Meyer (1995) used the narrative paradigm to study the concept of organizational culture and found narratives to be very effective when utilized in this research. According to Meyer (1995) narratives regarding the knowledge of an organization's values and how they are advocated within narratives allow the members of the organization to make sense of their experiences within it. According to Kirkwood (1983), "In addition to confronting a person with an experience, stories also provide a form of argument which is simple and compelling, but difficult to contradict." (p.72) Meyer (1995) believes that while the story is heard, the values and the worldview, which constitute it, must be taken as given in order to understand the story, which relates specifically to the values and views held by an organization. Also according to Meyer (1995), "An analysis of the values from the narrative provides observers as well as organizational members with key insights

into which behaviors are desired in an organization.” (p. 213)

Additionally, the Personal Narratives Group (1989) used narrative analysis to study the concept of gender and women’s life experiences. According to this group, personal narratives are particularly rich sources because, when attentively interpreted, they illuminate both the logic of the individual courses of action and the effects of system-level constraints within which those courses evolve.

The truths of personal narratives are the truths revealed from real positions in the world, through lived experience in social relationships in the context of passionate beliefs and partisan stands. They attempt recount efforts to grapple with the world in all its confusion and complexity and with the normal lack of omniscience that characterizes the human condition (Personal Narrative Group, 1989). (p. 263)

Bochner et al (1998) found that narrative inquiry focuses on the functions of stories and story telling in creating and managing identity in a social world. Bochner et al (1998) consider narrative to be an expressive form for making sense of the lived experience and the ability to communicate those to others.

The entanglements that permeate how interpersonal lives are lived and how they are told to others, and the reflexive dimensions of the relationship between storytellers and their audiences, and the canonical narratives that circulate through society and culture, offer scripted ways of acting (Bochner et al, 1998). (p.50)

Narrative analysis also enables the researcher to explore assumptions at work in the narrative. Researchers can isolate and examine closely the “linguistic and cultural resources” drawn on by the creators of a narrative. This enables the researcher to assess

how these resources persuade the reader to accept the narrative as a realistic portrayal of events and people (Bishop, 2003).

Self-Report

Self-report is also a part of narrative paradigm, and Harvey et al (1988) found much validity in studying self-report because they found it gave a better understanding of relational development.

It should be clear that some of the richest data available on relationships drive from diaries and other forms of reported accounts. Giving individuals an opportunity to provide accounts offers them a means of extended reflection and report on their relationships. Such reflection and report may be more natural and less subject to reactivity than approaches involving more condensed, questionnaire responses (Harvery and Omarzu,1999). (p.95)

The concept of self-report is a very important aspect of the narrative paradigm. It is simply analyzing narratives that individuals tell about themselves in an effort to find the realities of those individuals. According to Baxter and Montgomery (1996), using qualitative interviews and self-report questionnaires, many researchers have documented the openness-closedness dialectic, and found that is was common in the everyday interaction of the respondents. According to Berscheid (1994) "Most researchers who use account narratives especially appreciate the power of this method to obtain self-reports that are relatively free of the influence that structured interview questions and questionnaire items impose on respondents' reports." (p. 84) In a study regarding married couples relationships, Harvey and Omarzu (1999) found that couples self-reports about the processing of major events in their relationships were vital items

of information that cannot be found in more indirect methods. Harvery and Omarzu (1999) contend that, "We view couples' own reports on their sense of these states as being of great value in determining the amount or level of closeness and satisfaction in their relationships."(p. 22)

Rubin (1975) points out that subjects in laboratory studies of self-disclosure are typically aware of the fact that their patterns of self-disclosure are being scrutinized. Because of this, they may be motivated to behave in ways that would be considered appropriate by the researcher. Rubin (1975) commented, "In a field experiment in a large airport departure lounge, it was found that subjects self-disclosed more intimately and were more likely to match their partner's level of intimacy when they were asked for a written self-description." of that self-disclosure experience. Additionally, according to Jensen (1989), introspective writings are records of the mind at work. They often mirror inner speech and are valuable resources for the study of intrapersonal communication. These records of introspection not only reflect the workings of individual minds, they may also reveal universal patterns and processes of human thought (Jensen, 1989).

This merely serves as another example of the benefits of utilizing self-report in understanding self-disclosure and intrapersonal communication.

To reiterate the perimeters of the narrative paradigm, as stated above, it is through the telling of stories that people create and recreate their realities. Due to the power of the narrative, the narrative paradigm has been used in a plethora of studies including interpersonal relationships studies, small groups research, gender studies, as well as organizational culture studies. If it is true that individuals create and recreate

their experiences by telling stories, as this study assumes, then the use of these stories will provide a wealth of research material.

The previous research stated above confirms the validity of the use of narrative paradigm and self-report in research in the possible occurrence of post-disclosure dialectics. Hirokawa et al (2000) utilized narrative analysis in a study of small groups and approached the research with this query, "Think about your most memorable experience or a group or a team. In a narrative (or story) form please provide a detailed account of that success...please tell your story in as much detail as possible." (576) A similar approach that has been taken with the current study; as discussed next.

Method

With the description of the Narrative paradigm presented, an explanation of the present study will be explained. The Narrative Paradigm will be used to study the concept of post-disclosure dialectics. Sixty-two students in an introductory Communication course at a medium sized southern liberal arts university were used in gathering this data. This sample size presented an ample amount of narrative material for the purposes of this study. The students were between the ages of 18 and 22 and consisted of both males and females. The first questions the students were asked solicited limited demographic information including sex and age, which provided additional insight in analyzing the narrative texts. The students were then given a brief definition of self-disclosure and intrapersonal communication. They were asked to respond in the form of a narrative, to the following:

Think about a time when you felt risky in sharing some very personal information about yourself to another person. Please describe what happened after you shared this information. What types of feelings, or thoughts did you experience after you shared this information? What type of things were you saying to yourself about your act of self-disclosure? Please tell the story in as much detail as possible.

After the responses were collected, basic units of analysis surfaced, and were used to identify commonalties in the responses. As the narratives were analyzed there were several reoccurring concepts that surfaced. These concepts became the themes of the study. Because this type of study has not been conducted within the area of intrapersonal communication, this study did not assume certain themes would arise, instead a preliminary read through provided four clear themes. These themes were fear, judgment, anticipation for relationship development, and relief. These themes were then used to analyze the dialectics present in each narrative. If the narrative held two contradictory themes, then post-disclosure dialectics would be considered present.

This method allowed for each research question as well as the hypotheses to be answered. Because of the "free write" format, where each student was given, only a blank piece of paper and the directions listed above, the study was able to identify their self-disclosure experiences, their contradictory feelings, if present and their possible regrets because of those feelings. These narratives, after being analyzed, answered both hypotheses and the research questions through the use of the themes that emerged.

CHAPTER IV.

Results

In analyzing the narratives several re-occurring themes surfaced and proved very functional in understanding the post-disclosure time period. The four most prevalent themes included judgment, fear, relief, and anticipation of relational growth. Judgment was used to categorize all comments regarding participant's feelings of uncertainty in regard to the changed opinions of the receiver of the disclosure. For instance, one respondent stated, "The first question cycling through my brain was, how will this person view me since I just revealed something so personal?" The statement exposes the discloser's concerns about experiencing judgment regarding their disclosure. Because the topics of self-disclosure are often private it is not surprising that the concern of judgment would surface. The theme of judgment will provide an understanding of some of the negative thought patterns that occur in the post-disclosure time period.

Fear is another theme that was very prevalent. The example of a statement illustrates fear, "I knew it was the right thing to do, but as I was telling him I was filled with anxiety and fear, wondering if I had made the right choice." Fear was the most common feeling found throughout these narratives; which is closely related to concerns of judgment as well. The theme of fear has to do with the fear of judgment, the fear of exposure to other parties, fear of negative relationship change, and fear of lack of reciprocity.

The next re-occurring theme that surfaced was that of relief. “It felt good to say it out loud, like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders,” illustrates the relief felt by the individual. Self-disclosure can be a cathartic event and in many cases the participants expressed feelings of catharsis. In these cases, it seemed as though the self-disclosure brought cognitive healing.

The last theme was related to the anticipation of relational development, as expressed in the statement: “Then the person responded to my disclosure and then added onto my experiences with their experiences...and I felt more able to express my feelings and I had more trust in that person. I felt liberated afterwards.” As discussed above, self-disclosure is a catalyst for relationship development, and is confirmed through the use of narrative analysis. Self-disclosure brought particular friendships to another level in the relationships of the participants.

After the most prominent themes were established, the task of understanding the dialectics in each narrative was to be accomplished. As discussed above, this study set out to study the concept of post-disclosure dialectics and to identify the possible existence of this concept. Dialectics, as described above are tensions people experience. As discussed by Altman (1993), a person can conceive of dialectical processes of openness/closedness, individuality/communality, and autonomy/connection, and all of these can exist within the minds of individuals in a relationship. This study sought to access the intrapersonal communication regarding the interpersonal act of self-disclosure in the post-disclosure time period. According to Baxter and Montgomery (1996), in a dialectical perspective partners experience something like intra-role conflict

to the extent that they perceive incompatible expectations associated with their “role” as a member of a personal relationship.

Through the narratives, the themes that arose identified contradicting thoughts/feelings and intra-role conflict as described above, showing validation for the concept of post-disclosure dialectics. The tensions in this study manifested themselves when there was an existence of two of the above contradictory themes.

A total of 62 participants wrote narratives. Of those 62, 42 expressed thoughts/feelings of tensions regarding their self-disclosures. That is, 67 percent of participants experienced post-disclosure dialectics. Many narratives held tensions in more than one of the four categories that were established. For instance, a narrative may have had themes of relief, positive themes, but also fear and judgment, two negative themes, which shows tensions being present. Also, any narrative that showed both anticipation for relational growth, a positive theme, coupled with fear or judgment, both negative themes, would also show tension. These opposing forces/contradictory themes serve as intrapersonal dialectics with the mind of the self-discloser. With a total of 67 percent of participants experiencing these tensions it is clear that the time period directly following a self-disclosure act is filled with uncertainty and tensions regarding the self-disclosure. These are important findings and a more in-depth look at each dialectic will be useful in validating the existence of the concept.

Relief/ Fear

Out of the 62 participants, 30 participants expressed through their narratives the presence of the contradicting themes of relief and fear. The concepts of fear and relief

both present in a person's intrapersonal communication will be analyzed first. Some examples that illustrate fear and relief are listed below:

"After I told this to my friend, I was like so worried that it would break our friendship forever...but I was so glad. She understood what I went through."

"I felt scared because I wasn't sure if I could honestly trust them yet, at the same time I felt better because they let me get this issue off my chest."

"I felt a weight lifted off my shoulders, but she has not talked to me since...now I know how much of a gamble it really was."

"I was so scared, but relieved that she liked me too."

"At first I was so scared and worried about what the person would think...but I quickly got over my doubt, I realized that that person I told could be trusted...I felt an ease and a relaxing feeling came over me."

"I was contemplating whether this person was trustworthy or not...and then felt relieved that someone knows. The best feeling is to know that they respect what you had to share."

“I felt embarrassed about what I had just revealed to that person, but I also thought it was fine because of the nonverbal reactions the person I told gave me after they told me.”

“I felt like I had done something wrong, yet I felt happy and relieved to get it off my chest.”

“I felt really nervous about how they would react or what they will say about what you’ve told them. But it also makes you feel good knowing that you’ve shared a part of you to someone knowing that you can trust them and they will keep it between the two of you.”

“It felt good to say it out loud. Like a weight was lifted off my shoulders. But after I said it I kind of had second thoughts about who I told it to.”

“It felt relieving, yet also it made me nervous, I wouldn’t tell just anyone this...but in the end I was glad that I told someone else.”

“I felt very nervous and uncomfortable, and worried about it...I was very relieved that we had talked about it and then I calmed down.”

“As soon as I told him I was happy I did...but I as I was telling him I was filled with anxiety and fear, wondering if I had made the right choice.”

“I felt very nervous she wouldn’t understand...but also relieved not to feel guilty anymore and relieved that she understood.”

Although all of these excerpts show evidence of fear and relief, the final narrative excerpt is a prime example of the existing tensions. The fear in this particular narrative is directly tied to the discloser’s fear of the receiver not understanding the disclosure. This may also have to do with the discloser’s need for reciprocal communication. If the receiver of the disclosure does not understand what was shared, how can he or she respond in a reciprocal manner? These intense feelings of fear of the unknown are then coupled with relief, “...also relieved not to feel guilty anymore.” It is clear that this person is simultaneously feeling both relief and fear.

These contradicting tensions are also known as dialectics. These dialectics found within the present study are also discussed above. Rawlins (1992) found that in the area of self-disclosure, dialectical tensions of expressiveness and protectiveness were very apparent, he also found that the dialectics of expressiveness-protectiveness are inherent in the development of relationships.

Through their expressiveness or self-disclosure, two friends open up their areas of vulnerability to each other. In achieving this openness, however the dyad also creates the conditions for closedness (protectiveness). Friends must thereafter strategically manage their communications so as to protect their friends exposed vulnerabilities. (p.67)

Rawlins' (1992) findings are in accordance with Baxter's (1988) views that the Dialectical Theory defines relationship maintenance as the normal, ongoing struggle of continually coping with dialectical tensions. These theorists' findings are further validated the findings of the present study. In the case of this specific study, the participants were asked to think back to a time when their self-disclosure was risky in nature. According to Culbert (1968), the more intense a disclosure, the more likely an individual is to perceive himself as vulnerable. At high levels of vulnerability the discloser has greater need to trust the receiver. According to Culbert (1968), a discloser has given the other person access to the private information which if misused, that is, not used exclusively in the service of the project for which he intended it, may lead to personal hurt.

It is clear, that these narratives demonstrate a greater risk and a greater presence of tensions due to the intimate nature of the disclosures. These two themes found in the narratives support the existence of the concept of post-disclosure dialectics. According to a study conducted by Vogel and Wester (2003),

An interesting finding of this research was the role of anticipated risk and anticipated utility in the prediction of help-seeking attitudes. Our examination of these two concepts determined that a potential client's perceptions of the anticipated risk of self-disclosing to a counselor as well as their anticipated utility of self-disclosing to a counselor provided independent predictions of attitudes toward seeking help. It seems as if individuals who are sensitive to the anticipated outcomes associated with the counseling process may need

additional information, support, or awareness of what counseling is like before they will attempt such an endeavor. (p.1)

Although Vogel and Wester (2003) are discussing potential clients thoughts, their findings are an interesting and are applicable for several reasons. First, their findings support the concept that self-disclosures are purposeful, meaning potential clients thoroughly process the reasons why they would self-disclose and they if they do decide to, they are doing so for a specific purpose. Secondly, they intrapersonally weigh the risks/fears of self-disclosing with the relief of receiving help from a professional. The major difference in this study was that the potential clients experience these intrapersonal tensions in the pre-disclosure time period. Although this study focused particularly on the post-disclosure time period it is possible that participants would be experiencing these same tensions in a pre-disclosure time period. Through the research in this study it is apparent that the interpersonal relationships are filled with dialectical tensions, and these are likely found in the beginning of a self-disclosure act as well as in the post-disclosure time period.

Vogel and Wester (2003) continue to say that because of these intrapersonal tensions, potential clients need to be given additional information about the counseling process and need to be supported and encouraged to engage in that process. How then, does this relate to non-counseling situations where individuals engage in self-disclosure and immediately following the disclosure experience these same tensions? How does the recipient of the disclosure put the discloser at ease? Is this their responsibility? Through encouraging words and reciprocal disclosers would it be possible to eliminate

the intrapersonal tensions that the discloser experiences? This is another area worthy of additional research.

Fear/Anticipation of Relational Growth

The next dialectic that was studied was that of fear and anticipation of relational growth. Of the responses, a total of 12 responses showed signs of tensions between fear and relational growth. This amounts to a total of 19 percent of participants, some examples are stated below:

“After I told this to my friend, I was worried...but I also felt much more comfortable to spend time with my friend.”

“After telling her this I felt silly...I was also thinking about how much easier it would be to talk to her now because we had been so honest with each other.”

“I remember thinking, I can’t believe I just told her that...and from that point on my heart was given to her for the rest of our relationship.”

“I felt like it made us better friends...I did think to myself what an idiot I am upon realizing that we would eventually split up.”

“At first I felt uneasy...then I felt more able to express my feelings and had more trust in that person. I felt liberated afterwards.”

"I wondered if they would still want to be my friend, but all in all they understood me better...telling them proved whether they truly cared for me."

"I have often felt remorseful, but also...I know it will open the door to a become closer as friends."

According to Hugenberg and Schaefermeyer (1983), disclosures are purposeful, that is, the communicator views disclosures as having some resultant benefit to be gained. This view of self-disclosure has been addressed through many different approaches, many of which have described in the above literature review; these include the Social Exchange theory, The Social Penetration Theory, and concepts such as gender, social norms as well as disclosure reciprocity. According to Rubin (1975,) in his discussion of disclosure reciprocity, in some situations a person's self-disclosure may go too far, and in response illicit retreat rather than reciprocity. This may play into the present study and the participant's fear regarding their self-disclosure. Although the discloser seeks to self-disclose for the purposes of relationship growth, their disclosure may be socially inappropriate, or may break expectations of the receiver and therefor cause the receiver to retreat rather than reciprocate. The intrapersonal communication of the discloser may be affecting their fear level and adding negatively to the overall self-disclosure experience.

The Hugenberg and Schaefermeyer (1983) idea that disclosures are purposeful does play into these two tensions. As discussed in the above discussion of the fear and relief tensions, the idea of purposeful disclosures would indicate that participants were purposefully pursuing a desired goal and in these cases, relational growth was a possible

goal in the narratives. Yet, as discussed above relational growth requires individuals to act risky in their self-disclosures, which would explain the existence of fear coupled with the anticipation of relational growth. In this study in a pursuit of an intimate friendship the participants expressed the fear that accompanies the vulnerability of self-disclosure.

According to Gonzalez's (1985) study, when interacting with a romantic partner, participants chose to self-disclose for specific reasons. The study also found that the function of self-disclosure varies depending upon the type of relationship between the discloser and the recipient. The study revealed, however, that the primary reason for self-disclosure to a close friend was for relational development, and for expression, also called emotional release (Gonzales, 1985).

The tensions in this section may be apparent in most interpersonal relationships in the early developmental stages of the relationship, due to the risks involved with exposing intimate subjects are coupled with the anticipation of relationship growth. The finding of a fear and anticipation of relational growth dialectic is an important finding in the field of interpersonal relationship growth.

Judgment/Relief

A total of 15 responses, or 24 percent of the total responses showed evidence of tensions in the areas of judgment/relief. Several are listed below:

“...Worried about what the person might think about me...but then I felt at ease and a relaxing feeling came over me.”

“ I felt like I had changed our whole relationship and that they would view me differently...I was glad I had shared my thoughts.”

“After I thought to myself, what did this person think after I told them this about myself...would they tell anyone else? I soon told myself not to worry about it.”

“How will this person view me? You feel relief that some else knows.”

In these first several narratives one can easily notice the clear presence of both concern of judgment and relief. The equivalent reasons listed above apply here as to why the discloser would experience the feelings of relief. More examples are listed below:

“Are they going to think differently about me now? Are they going to tell someone? All these questions were answered when she smiled and said I could trust her.”

“I was trying to think what would happen if this personal information I had shared leaked, yet I felt happy and relieved.”

“Will they judge me wrongly, they could think I was a strange person. maybe my group would go off and tell other girls in the hall, but they were understanding.”

“I felt relieved. I thought after I told them they might look at me differently...I felt really good after I shared my real true feelings.”

“I remember wondering if that person was going to like me or not. If they were still going to want to be my friend, also wondering if they were going to judge me for what I had done. But I got it off my chest and I was very relieved.”

“My thought was that the person was going to judge me for what I did and that I shouldn't have told her, but I knew that somehow she would help me.”

As for the feelings of intense relief experienced by people in this study, Freud studied this same concept in the realm of psychotherapy. Corcoran and Spencer (2002) discuss his work below,

The therapeutic value of self-disclosure, it is believed, was obtained in the disclosure itself. One simply had to bring to consciousness and actually speak about the material whose repression was causing ‘neurotic’ symptoms. It was the best imaginable application of the injunction that the ‘truth shall set you free.’ However, getting all the truth and enabling the patient to voice it required a complex ‘analytic’ procedure. (p.126)

As described above, Freud worked on this concept of self-disclosure as the “talking cure” as he named it. He found that through the release of self-disclosure regarding a certain topic, patients were then able to heal and move past the symptoms they were suffering from. According to Corcoran and Spencer (2000), the common thread that runs through this research area is the belief that self-understanding offers a path of liberation from the painful and disabling efforts required to keep things hidden from self and others (Corcoran and Spencer, 2000).

Although these feelings of intense catharsis and release are very freeing, in this case they are paired with the concern of judgment. According to Collins and Miller (1994) disclosing intimate information may also elicit objective self-awareness, a state in which people compare their actual self with their ideal self, of which they often fall short. Collins and Miller (1994) also referenced studies of self-disclosure under conditions of heightened self-awareness and found that self-aware subjects enjoyed the interaction less, avoided intimate topics, and felt worse about themselves. Therefore, disclosing to others can elicit negative feelings about self, which may result in less liking for a listener, particularly when one reveals a personal weakness or a failure (Collins and Miller, 1994).

This may be exactly why the present study found the judgment theme prevalent. The exposed self may be fearful that the receiver may sense this and reciprocate with less liking. Additionally, the recipient may change his or her opinion of the discloser and act accordingly. Never the less the discloser experiences the cathartic feelings of releasing information coupled with the quandary of possible judgment being cast upon them for the information shared. These themes are most defiantly contradictory in

nature. The judgment /relief finding has huge implications for interpersonal relationships, and also, specifically for counseling situations and family relationships as well.

Anticipation of Relational Growth/Judgment

In this category of tensions regarding relational growth and judgment, a total 6 responses surfaced; less than 10 percent of the total respondents. Examples of narratives that contained these tensions are listed below:

“I felt like I had changed our whole relationship...it was dangerous, but I felt like they would just have to get use to it so we could both move on. All relationships eventually face this dilemma.”

“How will this person view me? You want them to know and share what they think back, but at the same time you don’t want your image to get ruined.”

“After every time I did this I felt like it made us better friends...She knows stuff about me that no one else knows, she can use this against me.”

These excerpts reveal many participants were experiencing the tensions of relational growth, a positive theme, and judgment, a negative theme. In the narrative excerpt above, one can see the participants closely relates her usage of self-disclosure with her relationship developing, “every time I did this I felt like it made us better

friends.” Yet in same sentence she expresses her fear of judgment, “She can use this against me.” Several more narratives are listed below:

“The other thing I thought was are they going to think about me differently? But what I told them would help them.”

“I wondered what they were thinking about me now that they knew what they did. I wondered if their opinion of me had changed. I wanted to know I could trust them.”

Above is another excellent example of a narrative that illustrates the desire for relational growth, “I wanted to know I could trust them,” coupled with the theme of judgment, “I wondered if their opinion of me had changed.” Quite obviously, the discloser is concerned about how the receiver will view him or her in light of the new information that has been revealed. Many of the responses that held the theme of judgment can also be associated with the receiver using the private self-disclosure to change a third party’s opinion about the discloser. Corcoran and Spencer (2000) discuss how self-disclosures can be used as a weapon against the discloser,

We may reveal to a friend or a lover an embarrassing secret only to have our confidentiality betrayed and find ourselves the brunt of ridicule from a wider community. Like so many other valuable possessions, the gift of intimacy through self-disclosure carries with it the risk of loss, intrusion and exposure by one’s confidants to individuals or groups to who this disclosure was not intended. (p. 6)

Simply put, the discloser does not only open himself or herself up to judgment from the receiver but also from the community that the receiver may release the information to. This is where the dialectic is found, because, although the concern about judgment is present, the narratives listed above also celebrate the presence of relational growth. This concept of relational growth is probably something the discloser was searching to obtain and the feelings of possible judgment accompany the opportunity for relationship development.

CHAPTER V.

Discussion

In regards to **H1**, which stated: Persons will engage in intrapersonal communication regarding the act of disclosure, was proven true in this study. With a total of 62 participants involved, only one participant expressed not thinking or feeling anything in the post-disclosure time period. This shows a total of over 98 percent of participants engaging in intrapersonal communication specifically regarding their self-disclosure. This finding can be attributed to the simple fact that people make sense of their situations by thinking about them and by engaging in intrapersonal communication.

According to Dainton and Zelley (2005), intrapersonal communication is the communication within one's self. It is how individuals analyze others' behaviors, attitudes and messages to assign meaning to a given event. In the post-disclosure time period there is much to be analyzed and much to make sense of in order to assign meaning to the event (the self-disclosure). Disclosers are overwhelmed with thoughts and feelings regarding what they shared and how the receiver responded. Since most all participants expressed engaging in intrapersonal communication, is it not surprising that this study found themes within in the intrapersonal communication narratives. These themes communicate a great deal about the self-disclosure experience and the way in which intrapersonal communication interacts with interpersonal relationships. The confirmation of the above hypothesis leads well into the second hypothesis, which relates to the possibility of tensions existing within the intrapersonal communication.

H2 stated: Persons who engage in self-disclosure will experience some internal tensions regarding the information they shared about themselves. This hypothesis was supported with a total of 42 out of the 62 participants experiencing two of the contradictory themes. This accounts for over 67 percent of the participants having experienced post-disclosure dialectics within their personal narratives.

Throughout this research of establishing the themes, the most concrete finding in this study was the presence of post-disclosure dialectics in the area of fear and relief. Although there were several other themes established, including, anticipation of relational development and judgment, the prevalence of the fear and relief dialectic was by far the most common dialectic found. A total of 30 of the 62 participants expressed tensions in these narratives, accounting for over 48 percent of participants experiencing these tensions.

According to Reis and Shaver (1988), the purpose of self-disclosure in personal relationships is often to receive confirmation, not to identify similarities (Reis and Shaver, 1988). While this search for confirmation may bring about a great deal of relief, if obtained, it also can bring with it much added stress or fear that confirmation will not be received. Additionally, Reis and Shaver (1988) conclude that people's interpersonal motives influence their communication, specifically their self-disclosure, which has influence on their communication satisfaction. Additionally, Buhrmester and Prager (1995) propose that disclosure is not haphazard or arbitrary, but rather, is always functional. Self-disclosure serves a function, the authors explain, "To the extent that it accrues some benefit to, or addresses some basic concern of, the discloser." (p. 30)

Interestingly enough, according to Derlega and Grzelak (1979), the value of the disclosure to the discloser depends on: 1.) On how the disclosure satisfies his or her need for expression, self-clarification, social validation and how strong these needs are, and 2.) how effective self-disclosure is in developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships that vary in their structure of interdependence and how strong the discloser's need for developing these relationships are (Derlega and Grzelak, 1979). Regarding the satisfaction of the recipient, this depends on, 1.) How well the disclosure reduces the recipient's uncertainty about the reason for the discloser's behavior, 2.) How important this reduction of uncertainty is for the recipient's needs and 3.) The availability of this information (Derlega and Grzelak, 1979). (p. 175)

From the positive findings of **H1** and **H2** one can assume that persons not only engage in intrapersonal communication in the post-disclosure time period about the disclosure, but the discloser also experiences tensions regarding self-disclosure. The tensions of judgment, fear, relief and anticipation of relational growth are all prevalent themes that surfaced through the analysis of 62 personal narratives. These narratives were written in a retrospective manner regarding participants' past self-disclosure experiences. These findings have implications beyond the current study and validate further research into this particular area of self-disclosure process. The next question to be addressed is how the findings of the current study relate to the existing work in the area of relational dialectics and self-disclosure practices.

In a very broad sense, these findings fit well into the existing research. They validate the existence of relational dialectics, the ongoing tensions of openness and closedness experienced in choosing to reveal or conceal personal information about

themselves. The current findings also could be coupled with the Social Penetration theory in order to investigate how the tensions in relationships are different in the various breadth and depth categories of topics. The findings also validate the function of self-disclosure in the relationship development process as the narratives evidenced participants experiencing deepened relationships on account of their self-disclosure experiences. According to Duck (1985), thinking about relationships affects their trajectory at early formative stages and when the relationship runs into problems, relationship thoughts are dialectical rather than in simple unidirectional influence pattern (Duck, 1985).

These dialectical tensions are very apparent in the post-disclosure time period. The presence of these tensions validates the existence of post-disclosure dialectics and indicates the need to further study the interpersonal relationships and the intrapersonal communication that accompanies them.

CHAPTER VI.

Future Research

The concept of post-disclosure dialectics needs to be studied from many different perspectives in order to truly validate its existence on a wider scale. In a study done by Taylor (1979), it was found that persons living together in socially isolated and confined situations exchange more personal information compared to “those not so totally involved with one another.” This study looked at the use of self-disclosure in isolated situations. By isolated situations this study focused on a specific trip where a set amount of people spent a set amount of time together. This study found that the participants covered topics in more depth than the participants would in normal social settings.

Another approach to the existing topic of self-disclosure within isolated situations could be applied to the dormitory situation. This would be a less isolated situation, but one in which hundreds of thousands of students across the world are living. It would be interesting to apply the concept of post-disclosure dialectics to the isolated situation of a dormitory environment to see how the levels of post-disclosure dialectics may be influenced by the isolated situation. The dormitory situation naturally offers a semi-isolated situation, but is different in that students live there for an entire school year as well as because dorm life creates a unique culture. This may or may not have the same outcome as Taylor’s (1979) study, but would provide an interesting and fresh approach to an existing study.

More emphasis on the concept of post-disclosure dialectics should be coupled with the dynamics of different cultures. This would offer insight into different cultures appropriate levels for engaging in self-disclosure as well. According to Duck (1991)

Naturally there are cultural differences here, and in some countries (e.g. the Unites States) an open style of self-disclosure about one's personal feelings is expected and encouraged. In others, (e.g. Japan) self-disclosure of feelings is thought to be inappropriate and self-indulgent, but information about family, status and social position is entirely suitable for disclosure." In all cultures, however normal people open themselves up in the appropriate ways more and more as their relationships grow, and they are increasingly prepared- at the right sorts of moment, and in the right circumstances- to reveal these personal thoughts." (p.79)

Utilizing a study like the present one, coupled with the same study administered in another country, would add another dimension to the overall understanding of how self-disclosure is used and how it is perceived in various countries. This would be beneficial because the concept, post-disclosure dialectics, may have no relevance in other cultures. However, the comparison of themes that may emerge in another culture would communicate a great deal about self-disclosure within that particular culture.

As for approaching this same study from a different angle, it would be beneficial to utilize interviews as a follow up measure after the initial narrative analysis. This would allow the participants to further describe their responses and allow the administers of the study to probe further into the dialectics as established through the narratives. The interviews could be very unstructured and simply follow the flow of

conversation regarding the intrapersonal communication of the discloser. This would allow the researcher to identify the intensity of the dialectics. Additionally, interviews would allow participants to describe the self-disclosure itself, which would aid the research in presenting the privacy level of the disclosure. In this case, the question of message privacy and a possible correlation with increased post-disclosure dialectics could be addressed. This would further validate the existence of the dialectics established in this study.

Additionally, if this study were to be taken into a laboratory format, participants could be coupled with "friends" and instructed to self-disclose on risky topics. Soon after, the participants could be interviewed to get a more true understanding of the time period directly after the self-disclosure has taken place. Although this would create a slightly artificial communication context, this would assist in insuring that the post-disclosure dialectics could be established in the truest since of the term post-disclosure. This may change the results of this study as well, or take the study in a new direction all together.

Another approach would be to do an identical format on a larger scale. In the same way that this study allowed the reoccurring themes to surface, a study could be done in another area of the country in another country or with a different age group. If this study were administered with a different age group, the findings would provide an interesting glimpse into how age affects self-disclosure practices. The current study was administered to college age students, but if this were replicated with middle-aged participants, the dialectics would probably exist but look differently. According to Buhrmester and Prager (1995), teens frequently become preoccupied with particular

issues and concerns that are shaped by their culture, personal experiences, biological development, and cognitive maturity. Depending on what these concerns are, teens often need more information and/or feedback to assist in dealing with information. They subsequently may disclose information to others as a means to gain information, feedback, or to participate in an interactive forum to address their concerns (Buhrmester and Prager, 1995). Interestingly enough, in a study conducted by Tardy et al (1981), they found that students' disclosures to friends of the same sex may be more negative, honest, intimate and frequent than disclosures to parents. From this finding they postulated that communication with friends must have been fulfilling different functions than communication with parents. In this same way older people have different needs and different life experiences that may lead them to utilize self-disclosure in different ways than other ages.

Another evolving area within the study of interpersonal relationships is relationship formation on the World Wide Web. In a world that is ever becoming more of a web-based world, it is important to see how the relationships that exist within that world are changing in light of the transition. According to Bargh and McKenna (2004), "The relative anonymity of the Internet can also contribute to close relationship formation through reducing the risks inherent in self-disclosure. Because self-disclosure contributes to a sense of intimacy, making self-disclosure easier should facilitate relationship formation." (p.1)

This is a very new area of study and one that warrants study in the area of interpersonal relationships. Specifically, the study of post-disclosure dialectics in regard to online self-disclosures would be fascinating. The absence or presence of the

dialectics would indicate a great deal about the experiences of online self-disclosure. This study could be replicated with the use of online disclosures being studied in place of face-to-face encounters.

Another newly emerging field of research is in the area of social cognition. This concept is very closely associated with intrapersonal communication about an interpersonal communication act. According to Fiske (1992),

People make meaning and think about each other in the service of interaction; their interactions depend on their goals, which in turn depend on their immediate roles and the larger culture. People's interpersonal thinking is embedded in a practical context, which implies that it is best understood...by its observable and desired consequences for social behavior. (p. 878)

With Fiske's (1992) perspective in mind, it is important to understand how Berscheid (1994) views this taking place as well,

As a result, further advances in social cognition may depend on gaining an understanding of cognitive processes as they occur in ongoing association with others with whom the individual is interdependent for the achievement of his or her goals and where the actions that result from those processes have potent consequences for the individual's well-being. Without such knowledge, an understanding of social cognition will be incomplete and it also may be inaccurate. (p.82)

Berscheid (1994) may have a concept for another direction in which this research could be headed. If post-disclosure dialectics do occur, then a study regarding the contrasting between the dialectics experienced by the discloser and

the receiver would be a fascinating area of work. According to Berscheid (1994) the most accurate place to test how individuals are thinking about their social interaction has to be within that interaction and obtaining information from both sender and receiver would be allow for this. Specifically in the area of post-disclosure dialectics this would open up the research to include the dialectics a receiver may be experiencing as to the appropriate feedback to give, his or her changing feelings about the discloser as well as possible relief from being "chosen" as the recipient of the disclosure.

The movement toward an examination of cognitive processes as they occur in the context of actual ongoing social relationships is the most recent illustration of the mutual dependence between basic theory and research in psychology and theory and research in interpersonal relationships (Berscheid, 1994). (p. 95)

As evidenced in the above discussion, there are many directions in which the current research could be utilized beyond the currently used research method. Self-disclosure is a common phenomenon in peoples' day-to-day lives. It does, however, play a role in how people think about the relationships in which they are involved. The study of the intrapersonal communication involved in the interpersonal communication process is one that is deserving of more research, specifically in the time period directly following a self-disclosure act.

This study is merely a starting point for the research into post-disclosure dialectics, and as expressed above there are a plethora of ways to approach this same topic. However, the next step for the future of this current work must be to further establish the existence of post-disclosure dialectics, and further apply the

importance of its existence to the most current work on self-disclosure.

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APPENDIX

Entry 1

Female

The first night I arrived at Liberty, Me and my roommate were walking around campus because we were wasting time because we were waiting for a late night activity to start. She was asking me tons of questions about myself, a lot of them were personal and about my past. I wasn't really cautious or really thinking, so I answered her questions. Then later on during the movie (late night activity) I was like, "I can't believe I told her that! What if she thinks I'm a freak?" I was upset that I went into as much detail with the answers to her questions because I usually don't when I don't know someone.

Entry 2

Female

I had many different interpersonal thoughts when I told a friend about a certain occurrence of mine. I started to think how would she react to this? Will she look at me in a different light? I was thinking can I trust her – will she tell anybody else about this personal information? Basically it was a lot of second guessing myself. When quickly decided to tell my friend this then I started thinking about what could happen if I misplaced my trust. Would I regret it later? Questions of that nature ran through my head.

Entry 3

Male

I was on the phone with a girl not too long ago, and an opportunity came up for some self-disclosure. In my head, there was a tug-of-war between whether I should tell her and make her laugh/appear to be sensitive, or not tell her and not take the risk of embarrassment. Eventually, I did tell her, and I got made fun of a bit, so my intrapersonal communication failed me.

Entry 4

Male

A few weeks ago I had an embarrassing thing happen to me. Only one person on my hall saw it happen and he was the only one that knew. Later that day I was talking with some friends and I told them the embarrassing thing. Mind you this was really embarrassing. The entire time I am thinking why are you telling them this. They will make fun of you. They might use it against you sometime down the road. Basically I was thinking, that although I told them this for a good laugh, they might tell others, and then the incident will come back to haunt me somewhere down the road.

Entry 5

Female

I remember the time I self-disclosed for one of the first times on a date. I was so nervous beforehand, but I knew it had to be said. I clumsily fumbled my way into the self-disclosure and put out what I had to, worried about the reaction he'd give. I tried making it sound less harsh than it was, still jittery. I felt much better afterwards, not expecting him to return self-disclosure. It was not easy or smooth, but it got the word out.

Entry 6

Male

There was a time when I gave a little self-disclosure statement to someone I didn't really know at the time. Afterwards I thought to myself is this a person that I can trust. As it turned out, this person was a person that I could trust, however; my reaction was that I felt like slapping myself for saying something that I thought was dumb.

Entry 7

Female

The first night I arrived at Liberty, my roommate and me were walking around campus because we were wasting time because we were waiting for a late night activity to start. She was asking me tons of questions about myself, a lot of them were personal and about my past. I wasn't really cautious or really thinking, so I answered her questions. Then later on during the movie (late night activity) I was like, "I can't believe I told her that! What if she thinks I'm a freak?" I was upset that I went into as much detail with the answers to her questions because I usually don't when I don't know someone.

Entry 8

Female

A most recent time that I told someone something personal about myself, I felt relieved because it was a very close friend and I felt that after telling them, it would open the door to become closer as friends. Most or many times I have shared personal things with someone, I have often felt remorseful and wondered who they would share it with or whether they would value the information. However, when you have found a close Christian friend that you feel is trustworthy, sharing information (self-disclosure) is an excellent way of becoming more intimate friends, and can bring great joy to your friendship.

Entry 9

Male

After I told my funny stories in front of COMS class, I thought to myself, "I hope they laugh and don't think I'm retarded." I was anxious, hoping they would think I was funny.

Entry 10

Female

After sharing with my friend I wondered why I had told them what I did... but I also knew I told them because I trusted them and knew they wouldn't think I was weird..or would they? I wondered if they would still want to be my friend anymore, or if they would think or feel odd around me. There were times I wondered if I was happy I told them or not, but all in all I knew it was worth it because they understood me better, and could better make sense of what I was going through. Telling them also proved whether they truly cared and wanted to listen to me.

Entry 11

Female

I felt nervous and scared. I wondered what they were thinking of me now that they knew what they did. I wondered if their opinion of me had changed and if they were act differently towards me. I felt open for ridicule or embarrassment. If they responded negatively, I knew I would never tell anyone again. I wanted to know I could trust them.

Entry 12

Male

After I disclosed myself to someone I began to wonder whether or not this person would tell the same about me and would they want to continue a friendly relationship with me. I did I felt strange because I did not know what to expect.

Entry 13

Female

The other day I told my boyfriend something pretty personal that I don't really like talking about. I knew the day was coming when we would have to talk about it though. As soon as I told him I was happy I did (and because of his verbal and nonverbal reactions) I knew it was the right thing to do. But as I was telling him I was filled with anxiety and fear, wondering if I had made the right choice.

Entry 14

Female

In prayer group we give our highs and lows of the week. We go around in a circle telling our peers what were the good and bad points of the week we just had. One day I told the group something kind of personal, something that I would probably usually tell my best friend back at home. After I had told them I was thinking that I shouldn't have told what I said. Maybe they would judge me wrongly. They could think I was a strange person. Maybe my group would go off and tell all the other girls in the hall. Maybe they would take me too seriously. In the end they were very understanding and didn't judge me wrongly.

Entry 15

Female

I was scared that I had said too much. I wondered if I had disclosed too much of my heart. I wondered what the other person was thinking, and feeling. I thought about all I had shared with this person in the past, and worried that I had thrown away hope for more in the future. I wondered what this person now thought of me, and I hoped things could remain the same.

Entry 16

Female

Will he ever want to talk to me again? Does he think I'm weird? Why do I do this to myself? I could never tell him how horrible I really am! I wish I knew what was going through his head right now! I just wish I knew if he feels the way I do! Does his pulse race when he thinks of me? Why is he interested in me anyway? What keeps bringing him back to me? Can I be the girl who needs? Am I really good enough for him? I love that he challenges me to be Godly! Do I challenge him to be Godly? I need to go talk to God about this!

Entry 17

Female

I was scared that I had said something to that person that could get out to other people. I was afraid that I had made a not so good decision to tell this information that was important to me to this person. I was scared that this person may tell someone else by accident and then my information would be known by tons and tons of people!

Entry 18

Female

My stomach clenched and turned as I guiltily confined the secret I was supposed to keep about my best friend and her drinking problem. I told myself that the time had come: it was no longer a small recreational activity. But on the other hand, how could I do this to her? Wasn't I supposed to be the eternal secret-keeper to her? And especially about this subject, which could get her kicked out of school. I felt horrible and righteous all at the same time. It wasn't that I thought drinking was wrong, but the way she was doing it was detrimental to her health. Should've I just let her receive the penalty of her actions alone, or taken actions like I did?

Entry 19

Male

The other day I told a girl how I felt about her. I had liked her for nine months and I thought our friendship had grown to a point that I could tell her about my feelings for her. Well she didn't feel the same way about me but she was very nice about it and still wanted to be my friend. After telling her I thought about how silly it was for me to have liked her for such a long time and not realized that she only wanted to be my friend. I also was thinking about how much easier it would be to talk to her now because we had both been very honest with each other. I also thought of the freedom that I now had in my singleness.

Entry 20

Male

After I told this to my friend I was like so worried that it would meak our friendship forever. But the thing was I just had to get it off my chest. I felt that this was a thing I could not hide from my friend. Well he was shocked at first but and even angry with me. But I was glad that he understood what I went through. After this incident I felt much more comfortable to spend time with my friend. Well not for the first couple of month but later on. This was because the matter was very serious.

Entry 21

Female

When you enter college and live in a dorm with 65 other girls, a lot of self-disclosure goes on. In order to really get to know someone and form meaningful relationships with them, you have to give up some personal information. I'm a very shy person, so the transition from my hometown to living with two strangers on a hall of girls I don't know was hard to say the least. But over the past three months, my roommate, April, and I have become really close friends. We talk about basically everything, even the most personal topics. I think the hardest thing for me to open up about is my relationship with my mom. Our relationship is pretty bad, and we don't really talk. When I first talked with April about my mom, I was really nervous and hesitant to say much. But because of her loving nature and sweet personality, the situation was less uncomfortable. Self-disclosure is hard, but if you are talking to a good listener, it makes it a lot easier!!

Entry 22

Female

After engaging in self-disclosure, I feel more at ease. First, I felt uneasy, wondering whether or not the person would understand or acknowledge the way I felt and what I did. Then I felt a bit of resentment towards the person thinking they couldn't understand. Then as the person responded to my self-disclosure and then added onto my experiences with their experiences and advice I felt more at ease. I was grateful that I had said something to them. I felt more able to express my feelings and had more trust in that person. I felt liberated afterwards.

Entry 23

Female

When I self-disclosed this thing, it was the 3rd person I had ever told, and it was to my B/F and it was going deeply impact our relationship. I was very nervous and almost felt my mind disconnected from what I was actually saying. I remember thinking as I was telling him, "What am I saying, why am I saying this?" I felt very vulnerable at the moment, which for me made me feel very small. I don't like people knowing deep things about my life, but at the same time I felt it was appropriate not saying I felt comfortable, but I felt like I was opening up and that it was a moving on experience.

Entry 24

Female

When I last self disclosed it was very relieving yet also, it made me nervous. It felt good to tell someone else instead of keeping it in. To be able to discuss it with another person and hear their opinion greatly relieved me. But, it also made me nervous because I told them something that I would tell just anyone. I didn't want other people knowing so it took a great amount of trust to self disclose. However, in the end, I was glad that I told someone else.

Entry 25

Female

After I self disclosed to someone I had a few mixed feelings. This person was someone that I knew, but not very close to. It felt good to say it out loud. Like a weight was lifted off of my shoulders. But after I said it out loud I kind of had second thoughts about who I told it to. I was thinking, what if she tells my parents. So, instead of keeping these thoughts inside, I later went to her, and she said she hadn't even thought about it since then. So, that is what I felt after telling her.

Entry 26

Female

When I was younger, I self disclosed to my best friend so it wasn't all that bad because we could talk to each other about pretty much anything. But of course when you're first telling them you're nervous about how they will react or what they will say about what you've told them. You wonder what their response will be or even if they will be able to relate to your situation in their own way. It also makes you feel good though knowing you've shared a part of you to someone knowing that you can trust them and they will keep this between you both.

Entry 27

Female

Last year, at this time, I found someone whom I disclosed a lot of vital information. I thought that I would feel really guilty and ashamed, but I realized that it was one of the greatest things I did. We now have such a trust and such a bond that cannot be broken. I felt more willing to open to others after I broke the lee and opened up to this girl. To my surprise she felt the same way!!

Entry 28

Female

I felt that I was being shot or that I was kind naked in front of the person, because I was telling something really important that I always kept to myself. It hurts because I always thought that I would tell no one. My thought was that the person would judge me for what I did and that I shouldn't tell her this private things o/me. I was uncomfortable because I left my comfort zone, I was afraid, I almost froze out of fear. I was shaking but I knew that some how she would help me.

Entry 29

Female

I have made some not so great decisions in my past. I ended up meeting this guy who became a very close friend. We grew up very differently so what I was about to tell him about the past worried me a bit because I wondered if it would change his opinion of me. The bad decisions that I had made weren't really, really serious, it wasn't like I had lost my virginity but they were still bad decisions. When I told him, I was nervous but afterwards I felt better because he assured me that his opinion of me had not changed. He was and still is one of the closest friends I have.

Entry 30

Female

After I engaged in a self-disclosure moment, my mind went crazy. All kinds of thoughts came up to me thinking whether or not the person understood what I really wanted to mean from what I said. I also had a feeling of insecurity as to whether or not she would tell somebody else what I told her. Finally, I kept on thinking on the faces she did and her reactions to what I said, whether she was enjoying listening to my self-disclosure or not.

Entry 31

Female

After I disclosed to a very close friend about something, I felt very nervous and uncomfortable. I remember wondering if that person was still going to like me or not, if they were still going to want to be my friend. I also remember wondering if they were going to judge me for what I had done. The situation over all just made me very anxious and extremely uncomfortable and even after they told me that it was ok I still worried about it and kept asking them questions about what they thought. However, once the discussion was over and I got that off my chest I was very relieved that we had talked about it and then I calmed down.

Entry 32

Male

One time that I was involved in self-disclosure I was telling someone about how I felt about my parents separation and soon to be divorce, and how it has affected my family. After self-disclosing this it made me feel good. It almost makes you feel a sort of release when you tell someone something personal that's on your heart. I think self disclosure is good because it allows you to share something with someone that you might have just kept all bottled up inside, and It allows you to get it out in the open and it allows a sort of release.

Entry 33

Female

The last time I self-disclosed I was a little scared about how they would take it. I wasn't sure if it would have a positive or negative effect on our relationship. I hoped that by telling them what I did that I would improve the relationship and increase the depth of it and the trust level. I also hoped that they would reciprocate. I gained the first

but not the second. The person I think appreciated the fact that I opened up to them but they in return did not open up to me, so there was a slight bit of disappointment after but sometimes that's too much to ask of some people and you have to be patient. No regrets however.

Entry 34

Female

I am a very private person and I have trouble sharing anything really deep or personal about myself with others. I do remember one time in particular when I shared something sooner than I usually would. I felt vulnerable and had doubts as to whether I could really trust the person. I felt myself being more sensitive toward that person's actions and overanalyzing things they did. Unfortunately, this experience caused me to put bigger walls up concerning self-disclosure.

Entry 35

Female

I felt relieved. I thought that after I told them that they might look at me differently, but they related well to everything that I had said. I felt really good after I shared my real, true feelings.

Entry 36

Female

I felt a lot better but at the same time I was kind of scared because I didn't know whether they would tell others or not. But more than being scared thought I was relieved. It really helped to open up and get advice that would help me in the end.

Entry 37

Female

I self disclosed something to my boyfriend about something I had accidentally done. As I told him what had happened, I felt nervous that he wouldn't understand. Yet, after I told him and heard his response, my feelings changed. I was relieved to not feel guilty anymore and relieved that he understood and we no longer had a hint of something between us.

Entry 38

Female

After I self-disclosed to someone I felt very relieved. I felt better about the situation after I told the person how I felt. I felt that I wasn't hiding anything anymore to the person. I felt that our relationship was a lot better after I told them things. Now that they knew how I felt, they understood why I was the way I was.

Entry 39

Male

I felt it was a large mistake because it gave them the upper hand. It may be due to the fact that I gave away information too soon, but regardless I felt it was a mistake. I wish now that I would have guarded my feelings as they have been brought back to

haunt me time and time again. I feel about more uncomfortable now giving away personal information and will never again give so much away. Personally if you don't HAVE to say it don't is my regard towards this subject!!!

Entry 40

Male

After I got done talking to them in a way I felt scared because I wasn't sure if I could honestly trust them yet at the same time I felt better cause they let me get this issue or part of my life off my chest.

Entry 41

Male

To myself, I really didn't feel too nervous. We've been friends for awhile, but there's always that nervousness gnawing in the back of one's head. I then thought of ways to recover, "It was a joke.", or "That's what I heard." I didn't believe this would hurt our relationship, but I don't really like to rock the boat, so I was nervous. Everything turned out ok in the long run, and life went on, so now I won't be nervous next time.

Entry 42

Male

Well, I told a girl that I liked her one time. The thing was that she was a really good friend and there was tension when I told it. I kept thinking what she might be thinking. If she hated me for ruining a good friendship or if maybe even that I regret doing this because of all the negative consequences that could arise from this. The big thing was I was trying to get in her mind so then I could help solve problems and easy tensions in our relationship and in my own mind. Just a side note, I extended on this and I didn't worry very much.

Entry 43

Male

About a year ago I was in a conversation with my girlfriend and we decided that we were going to get to know each other better. So we were going to share a secret, thoughts, or experiences that we had came across or had. This was the first time I got this close to anyone, because to this day I really don't trust people (their motives) that much. I allowed her to break the wall of protection that I had put up and we began to have a deep emotional conversation. We got on the issue of sex, and I told her about how many partner and that's something I was ashamed to talk about with a girl that could be my wife one day. I didn't really want to tell her, but I did, and I could remember thinking "I can't believe I just told her that" and from then point on my heart was given to her for the rest of our relationship that didn't even work out.

Entry 44

Male

When my relationship with my now girlfriend was progressing, we decided to self disclose about our previous relationships. I decided that she should go first and she did. Her self-disclosure went on for a while. As we talked, we decided to walk around then track. Her self-disclosure went on for five laps. Then it was my turn and I had to tell her that I had never had a girlfriend. Her five laps to my 1/10 of a lap. It felt good to let her know but a bit embarrassing and I think she felt cheated. Kind of ironic but ultimately good.

Entry 45

Male

I told someone about a previous relationship I had. This person was the girl in the previous relationship. I told her I still had feelings for her and things I had been thinking about. I felt a weight off my shoulders but she has not talked to me since. She avoids me and now I know how much of a gamble it really was. But through that I have learned about myself and how to deal with people.

Entry 46

Male

The things that I remember thinking and feeling were of greater trust, a valid and secure strand of support. Like someone who know my weaknesses that would be able to help strengthen me as a person and as a Christian. I also felt relieved that I was able to disclose more of who I was to this person. It provided me with someone I could bring my trials and failures to without worrying about rejection, yet assuming acceptance and godly advice. Therefore, accomplishing the goal of making myself a better person and/or Christian.

Entry 47

Male

- YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT.
- YOU MESSED UP.
- WHY ARE YOU TELLING HIM THAT?
- WHAT IN THE WORLD DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
- IS THERE ANYWAY TO TAKE THAT BACK?
- WHAT IF HE TELLS SOMEONE?
- WHAT WILL HE THINK?
- YOU'RE ONE WEIRD GUY.
- YOU BLEW IT.

Entry 48

Male

While I was speaking something really personal that it was a secret for me, my mind was going crazy. I was thinking- "how can I say that without sounding weird? How can I say that in a way that the person won't keep thinking on that the rest of the day or remember that every time he/she sees me? At the same time I was thinking if I should be really telling that, or if he/she was going to say something (self-disclosure_ back to me. I was confused, insecure, and afraid.

Entry 49

Male

This one time at camp there was this girl that I thought was really pretty was swimming at the same time as me. It just so happened that there was a formal dinner coming up that I needed a date to. So seeing the same girl later I went up and talked to her. I asked her how much a polar bear weighs, she didn't know so I said enough to break the ice. What's up she laughed and asked me my name? I thought of myself now as if that worked. Then I told her I liked her... I was so scared, but relieved when she said she like me too.

Entry 50

At first I felt uncomfortable and worried what the person I told might think about me. Disclosing something that is personal causes self-conscious feelings to come about. But as I quickly got over my doubt, I realized I told the person I meant because I trusted they could handle the information I released. After feeling confident in who I had talked with, I felt an ease and a relaxing feeling came over me. I knew I had done the right thing and was able to not worry of feel uncomfortable about my situation.

Entry 51

Male

I felt like I had changed our whole relationship. They would view me differently now. Change is hard especially when you viewed each other in the same way for a long time. It was dangerous but it was necessary. I felt like they would just have to get used to it, and we both have to move on. It needed to be told somehow. All relationships eventually face this dilemma. In the end, I was glad that I had shared my thoughts. They appreciated it also.

Entry 52

Male

Over one holiday break I shared with a friend of mine something I had only shared with my family. After this event I wondered how this would affect our relationship in ways such as trust, would they not want to be around me anymore? There was just a great amount of uncertainty and anxiety of how they would view me the next time they saw me. I was worried if they wanted to be around me anymore. I also wondered if I could have said it in a better way.

Entry 53

Male

After exposing my very personal information to a very close and trusted friend, I felt a sense of fear. Not as much as pure fear, but the fear of further exposure from the told source. It was almost a haunting sense. I lay awake a night thinking about how horrible it would be if the information would have been "leaked" It would be "self disclosure devastation." So the fear would have been my primary factor. Thanks for everything Mrs. Mrs. Corther. It was fun, amazing, and crazy. You're a great teacher.

Entry 54

Male

I remember once, after I told someone very close to me. Something very personal. After that I thought to myself what did the person think after I told them about myself. I wondered if they would tell anyone else what I had told them. To me, what I said was supposed to be kept to themselves. As soon as I had the slightest doubt about them keeping it to themselves I immediately regretted telling them. Knowing that I couldn't take what I said back I soon told myself not to worry about it, so I really didn't care anymore.

Entry 55

Male

Immediately after I self – disclosed I had many questions running through my head. The first question to cycle in my brain is "how will this person view me since I just revealed something very personal? You want them to know and share what they think back but of the same time you don't want your image to get ruined. Then you contemplate whether or not this person is trustworthy enough not to go back and tell anyone else. Sometimes, you have regret and other times you feel relieved because someone knows. The best feeling is to know that they respect what you just shared.

Entry 56

Male

Well, I was dating this girl for a while and we would talk a lot. On more than one occasion I would tell her stuff about me that no one else knew. After every time that I did this I felt like it made us better friends. But upon realizing that we would eventually split up, I thought to myself what an idiot I am. She knows stuff about me that no one else knows, she can use this against me. It made me feel really dumb, just because she was a girl and I was trying to become "closer" with her. Guys will do or tell anything to girls.

Entry 57

Male

After I self disclosed, I felt a little closer to the person I self-disclosed to. The thing I shared was on kind of a personal level, and when I told the person that, I felt more in touch with that person. When I tell people things that no one else really knows, I like to know and trust the person. Thanks, your class was fun. Merry Christmas.

Entry 58

Male

I felt regretful, because I had told them something I wish I would have left private. Because now I don't talk to them and who knows how many people they have told what I told them. If I would have kept it to myself no one would know and many people probably know now and feel as if it is no big deal and tell everyone they know. So I wish I would not have said anything and kept it to myself and left it in my past.

Entry 59

Male

After I told this person the thing that I told them, I wasn't really embarrassed because what I told them could help them in the long run. The other thing that I thought was "are they going to think differently about me now? Because what I told them would help them I wasn't worried about it.

Entry 60

Male

I felt a little embarrassed that I had just revealed that to that person, but I also thought that it was fine because of the nonverbals the person I told gave me after I told them. The feeling was a little awkward, but it was all right because we both shared some self-disclosure so the feeling was mutual.

Entry 61

Male

After I told something to this person that nobody else would know unless I told them, I was thinking and asking myself these questions, can I trust them? Did I do the right thing? Are they going to look at me differently? Are they going to tell anyone? And all these questions were answered when she smiled and said, "you can trust me."

Entry 62

Male

After disclosing this personal information, I felt nothing different really. It was a personal fact that by looking at me you wouldn't know if I didn't tell you. I didn't feel anything horrible or any form of relief it was just like telling someone something they already knew. I am a very outgoing person and generally do not have a problem sharing personal information.

Entry 63

Male

I felt I was doing or did something wrong. Yet I felt happy and relieved to get it off my chest. I was trying to think of what was going to happen if the person I shared personal information about leaked.

Entry 64

Male

I felt nervous because I thought that the person would say something to someone else and embarrass me. I was real uncomfortable because it was the first time I had ever told anyone about that situation. Later on she made me feel more comfortable and relaxed about it because of what she said.

Entry 65

Female

A most recent time that I told someone something personal about myself I felt relieved because it was a very close friend and I felt that after telling him or her, it would open the door to become closer as friend. Most or many times I have shared personal things with someone, I have often felt remorseful and wondered whom they would share it with or whether they would value the information. However, when you have found a close Christian friend that you feel is trustworthy, sharing information (*self-disclosure) is an excellent way of becoming more intimate friends, and can bring great joy to your friendship.

Entry 66

Female

I had many different innerpersonal thoughts when I told a friend about a certain occurrence of mine. I started to think how will she react to this? Will she look at me in a different light? I was thinking "can I trust her – will she tell anybody else about this personal information? Basically, it was a lot of second guessing myself. When quickly decided to tell my friend this then I started thinking about what could happen if I misplaced my trust. Would I regret it later? Questions of that nature ran through my head.

Entry 67

Male

I was on the phone with a girl not too long ago, and an opportunity came up for some self-disclosure. In my head, there was a tug-of-war between whether I should tell her and make her laugh/appear to be sensitive, or not tell her and not take the risk of embarrassment. Eventually, I did tell her and I got made fun of a bit, so my intrapersonal communication failed me.

Entry 68

Male

A few weeks ago I had an embarrassing thing happen to me. Only one person on my hall saw it happen and he was the only one that knew. Later that day I was talking with some friends and I told them the embarrassing thing. Mind you, this was really embarrassing. The entire time I am thinking why are you telling them this? They will make fun of you. They might use it against you sometime down the road. Basically I was thinking, that although I told them this for a good laugh, they might tell others, and then the incident will come back to haunt me down the road.

Entry 69

Female

I remember the time I self-disclosed for one of the first times on a date. I was so nervous beforehand, but I knew it had to be said. I clumsily fumbled my way into the self-disclosure and put out what I had to. Worried about the reaction he'd give. I tried making sound less harsh than it was, still jittery. I felt much better afterwards, not expecting him to return self-disclosure. It was not easy or smooth, but it got the word out.

Entry 70

There was a time when I gave a little self-disclosure statement to someone I didn't really know at the time. Afterwards, I thought to myself is this a person that I can trust/ as it turned out, this person was a person I could trust, however; my reaction was that I felt like slapping myself for saying something that I thought