

RESPONSE TO 360-DEGREE FEEDBACK AS A MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT
INTERVENTION: DEFLECTION, CHANGE, AND TRANSFORMATION

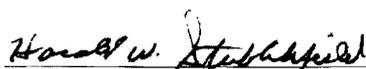
by

Stephen McLean Callender

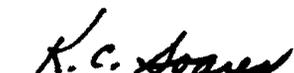
Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
in
Adult and Continuing Education

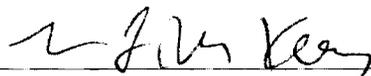
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Key Words: 360-Degree Feedback, Management Development, Transformation

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by

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(ABSTRACT)

This study examined how managers develop in response to 360-degree feedback, to discover why some change more deeply than the skills the feedback addresses. The study describes influences that lead some to develop a new perspective on their work, even on themselves, while others change only skill.

The purpose was to deeply examine, using qualitative research methods, the experience of 360-degree feedback in a management development program. While other studies have approached isolating variables under experimental conditions or quantifying incremental changes, this one directly examines the experience of a few managers in order to describe and connect certain processes. This study describes how the processes work as the managers change over time to greater and lesser degrees.

The study gathered in-depth interview data from 15 participants in a management development program, in a design that captured the experience of ten at 3 and 8 months after Profilor feedback, and five others at 22 months after feedback. Of these, five were selected as exemplary cases, and their data were examined using a constant comparative method to develop process descriptions across cases over 10,000 lines of text. These

process descriptions answered the research questions “what influences lead to acceptance or deflection of feedback?” “what influences the change decision process, especially for deep versus superficial change?” and “what influences deep and lasting change?” Additionally, other organizational, relationship, and individual variables emerged and are described.

Within the bounds of this study, those who started a developmental dialog with direct reports or peers experienced the deepest and most resilient change. Source credibility in feedback givers was essential for acceptance of the feedback, and, when missing, led to both deflection of the feedback and a worsening relationship. Organizational turmoil minimized the effect of the feedback. While this study did not measure adult cognitive development stage, some who engaged in developmental dialog broadened their perspective beyond dualism and came to challenge their assumptions, suggesting that 360-degree feedback can go beyond skill-building and be effective as a means to establish a developmental dialog.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my great appreciation to the faculty of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University for guiding my development as a learner, especially to Harold Stubblefield, who taught me to write and think critically, to Jerry Cline, who taught me research, to KC Soares and Ron McKeen who helped me think through this complex process, and to Bert Wiswell, my frequent instructor, mentor, and patient partner as chair of my committee.

The participants in the management development program on which this study is based will always have my gratitude for letting me learn from helping them. They have taught me what I know of management, and have also been a source of enduring friendships. My particular appreciation goes to the fifteen who trusted me with the special relationship that this research fostered.

And finally, I must acknowledge and express my infinite gratitude to my wife, Donna, and to my sons, Michael and Tommy, for their loving and patient support through these years of study. This is truly our effort, not mine only.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Managers in the late 1990s operate in a difficult and challenging world, which requires more from them than the traditional skills of planning, controlling, leading, organizing, and motivating. Those skills served an earlier era, where presumably closed organizational systems had clear roles, boundaries, and structures (Byrd, 1987). In rapidly changing environments, managers are increasingly required to both improve management skills and to develop leadership; the general requirements for leading in such times include inspiring a shared vision, enabling others, modeling value-congruence, demonstrating empathy, and knowing oneself (Broschew & Kleiner, 1991; Burke, 1994; Byrd, 1987; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Nadler & Tushman, 1990).

Management development programs can help managers go beyond learning rote skills to develop new attitudes and perspectives that might include increased flexibility, leadership, empathy, respect for diversity, and reflection on their roles as managers. These perspectives, in turn, may promote greater integration of management skills into a congruent whole and may encourage more competent thinking as a manager (Argyris, 1977; Brookfield, 1987; Edelstein & Armstrong, 1993).

Management development programs may seek the same perspective changes that adult development literature describes in terms of transitions and transformations.

Developmental changes that affect management development include:

- critical thinking and a greater tolerance for ambiguity and change
(Brookfield, 1987),

- moving from dualistic to contextual thinking (Daloz, 1986),
- greater inclusiveness of alternative perspectives, greater differentiation between meanings, greater permeability, and greater integration of even contradictory perspectives (Mezirow, 1991),
- attaining and keeping a dynamic balance of coping resources and liabilities in transition states (McClusky, 1970; Schlossberg, 1984, 1989),
- moving from mutuality and interpersonalism (third-order consciousness) to self-regulation and autonomy (fourth-order consciousness) or beyond (Kegan, 1986; 1994).

Management development programs employ various approaches to foster an environment for participants to experience developmental change as well as skill enhancement (Burke & Day, 1986). One tool to influence a manager's development at the skill level is 360-degree feedback, which provides information on her behavior from the viewpoint of bosses, peers, direct reports, and self; the feedback can be a major source of motivation for change in management development programs (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Tornow, 1993). A growing number of such instruments are available, and their use in corporations is increasing (Budman & Rice, 1994; Corporate Leadership Council, 1995; O'Reilly, 1994; Van Velsor & Leslie, 1991). Receiving this feedback can be a crucial moment in a manager's development, and the days or weeks afterward represent an

opportunity to fundamentally change her relationship toward greater interdependency with those who provided the feedback for her development.

This research examined the role of such feedback, and the process of its interaction with other environmental and individual influences, among participants in a middle-level management development program. The processes and influences that led to different response types and levels to this opportunity for change were explored and described.

Background

The focus and practice of management development programs are evolving to reflect changing assumptions about both management and development. The practice of management has moved beyond the traditional control skills toward leadership practices that include continually re-examining current practices and beliefs, developing common vision, and remaining open to ambiguity and contradiction (Burke, 1994; Byrd, 1987; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Rhinesmith, 1993). The practice of adult development has evolved from a behavioral paradigm toward a constructivist approach that "holds that the way learners interpret and reinterpret their sense experience is central to making meaning and hence learning" (Mezirow, 1994, p. 222).

Feedback Theme. Feedback is a common, enduring theme of both management and adult development. Management research and Industrial Organizational Psychology have explored feedback from a quantitative perspective, while adult education has explored and applied feedback principally in the context of sensitivity training, or the "T-Group."

Rensis Likert founded the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan in 1946, and the following year surveys were being used to assess employee morale and attitudes. He and his associates developed the survey feedback approach to organizational development, which uses a paper instrument (with a Likert scale) to collect opinion and reaction data, summarize it, and report back the findings as a means of promoting organizational change - unfreezing, in Kurt Lewin's terms (Burke, 1992). From the first project, at Detroit Edison, Floyd Mann discovered that the face-to-face discussion of the results, not the data itself, led to greater degrees of change (Weisbord, 1987); however, using surveys to collect information became a standard in several fields.

From the behavioral focus on training, instruments were developed to measure specific skills. These instruments offer items that describe a specific, observable behavior, then offer a Likert scale for an observer to rate how often (or how quickly, or to what extent) that behavior occurs. These Behavioral Observation Scale (BOS) instruments have been used to evaluate training and performance. Classic examples from the military include gun maintenance and physical training, where well-defined, readily observable, sequential processes fit such scales well.

Similar behaviorally-oriented scales are found in management areas, where a subtle and complex behavior may be represented as sequential, allegedly observable steps. One example, in Latham & Wexley (1981), reduces "overcoming resistance to change" to six large steps ("Describes the details of the change to subordinates," "Explains why the change is necessary," "Discusses how the change will affect the employee," etc.), assesses each on a Likert scale from "Almost Never" to "Almost Always," and sums the results to a

range of scores from "Below Adequate" to "Superior." As the behaviors rated become more cognitively and interactionally complex and criteria for success become more subjective, the BOS may have less value; the example on overcoming resistance to change does not measure whether the steps had their intended effect on the recipients of the communication, or if they were appropriately executed, or even if their mechanical execution harmed the overall goal.

360-Degree Feedback Instruments on Management Behavior. Some instruments are based on a well-researched description of management behaviors linked to success, have good internal consistency and interrater reliability, and may be validated across organizations (Van Velsor & Leslie, 1991). Examples of such instruments are the Profilor, by Personnel Decisions, Inc.; BENCHMARKS, by Center for Creative Leadership (Clark & Clark, 1990); and Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 1987). These instruments build from rating scales on specific behaviors to clusters of behaviors (e.g., communications, enabling others) and to overarching constructs (e.g., empowerment, career potential).

Such instruments are so powerful in management development programs -- in such organizations as Massachusetts Mutual, AT&T, DEC, and many others -- because the same instrument is filled out by the manager herself and by others who know her work (boss, peers, direct reports, even customers) (Romano, 1993). The instruments provide guiding feedback, very specific to the behavior in the model, from multiple sources (increasing reliability), about skills that managers may not explicitly discuss. Using such

instruments widely in an organization may at least provide a common framework to help managers communicate with others about specific behaviors.

T-Group Feedback. From its early perspective of group process orientation, National Training Laboratories' T-Group approach to feedback has greatly influenced adult education (Benne, 1964). Since the early 1950s, this approach has brought groups together in isolation for periods of several days to explore group dynamics and individual behaviors within that special setting. W. W. Burke (1994) reflects on his years of involvement with T-Groups: "The primary modus operandi was, and still is, feedback. One learns, especially about oneself, from feedback" (p. 17). M. J. Burke and R. R. Day's (1986) meta-analysis of the effectiveness of managerial training found that "self-awareness training, which typically uses some form of laboratory education/sensitivity training, was also shown to be fairly effective, on the average, in changing managerial behavior" (p. 241). The study also expresses reservations about the criterion measures used, which were apparently self-report behavioral observation scales.

Feedback and Derailment. A literature exists on executive derailment that describes how the absence of honest, developmental feedback can lead to inadequate adaptations in new management roles (Kaplan, Drath, & Kofodimos, 1987; Kets de Vries, 1989; McCall & Lombardo, 1988). Implementation of 360-degree feedback may help provide the accuracy and developmental focus that is otherwise missing, and seems to reduce derailment (Corporate Leadership Council, 1995).

360-Degree Feedback and Development. 360-degree feedback has had a significant effect on skill improvement and development efforts, according to a

quantitative study by Hazucha, Hezlett, & Schneider (1993). Others recommend enhancing the effect of the feedback by combining it with such other sources as third-party interviews and reports (Edelstein & Armstrong, 1993) or validating its results from such other sources as the recipient's own family, previous co-workers, and an employment history retrospective (Kaplan, 1993). Collecting the feedback and presenting it in a coaching session is only an early step in a longer, larger development process, and feedback alone is unlikely to produce change (Edelstein & Armstrong, 1993; Kaplan, 1993).

Literature on adult development describes how self-knowledge and self-awareness can develop (Brookfield, 1987; Daloz, 1986; Kegan, 1994; Mezirow, 1990). A separate literature on "Action Learning" explains how using small, long-term groups to reflect on both problem and process may lead its members toward greater self-knowledge and even habits of critical reflectivity (Dixon, 1990; Marsick, 1987, 1990; Revans, 1983). Largely unknown is whether, and how, a 360-degree feedback process can precipitate changes in perspective and a critical review of one's role and behaviors.

Literature from organizational development and management deals with the importance of creating a shared reality with mutual responsibility and accountability between leaders and employees (Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Weisbord, 1986). The nature and extent to which the group dynamics change between the receiver and raters following the 360-degree feedback process, how it might help create a shared reality and responsibility for development, and the conditions under which this enriches the manager's new role, are largely unknown or undescribed, and are explored in this research.

A subtle but important shift occurs with BOS instruments when they are filled out by multiple raters from different perspectives, and these ratings are then aggregated into a feedback report: the shift is from behaviorist to constructivist, and can become more pronounced when the recipient of the feedback then enters a dialog with the raters about the meaning of the feedback. Specifically, when one rater fills in BOS and gives a score, there may be an implication of judgment and an apparent objectivity, as if it were interval data. When several raters offer their consolidated perceptions in scalar terms, it may be understood differently, as a communication of the group's view, and an opening for a dialogue. This shift from pseudo-objective judgment to dialog may change the nature of the experience, and this research will explore how such feedback dialogs develop and what their impact may be on the recipient's development as a manager and as an adult. This research explores the shift by examining the experience of managers who have experienced it.

Statement of the Problem

Research has established instrument reliability and suggested some influences that affect whether a 360-degree feedback process will result in developmental change. The literature investigates quantifiable phenomena, and has left several important and complex problems unaddressed: why some learn from such feedback while others ignore or deny it, how development decisions occur in response to the feedback and other factors, or what drives some to continue their development over time.

While corollary survey instruments have suggested some factors, there has been little deep research to discover why or how the process works from the recipient's perspective, nor what perspective changes this process initiates or supports.

Purpose of the Study

The research focus on the 360-degree feedback process has been on incremental change: changes in skills ratings on test-retest designs, and longitudinal research on whether development plans led to lasting change in certain skills (Hazucha et al., 1993). Little research has been conducted at a deeper level, on transformational change such feedback may precipitate, or at a contextual level to explore the intervening variables.

If influences that combine with the 360-degree feedback process can be identified and related to each other, and if any are within the influence or control of the organization that seeks to guide the manager's development, the process may reach a deeper level more quickly, and may lead to the benefits of developmental change mentioned earlier.

Patterns exist among recipients' experience with the feedback, with the development attempt itself, and with the larger contexts of their lives. The development process for managers is extremely complex, possibly affected by a host of variables. Some work variables might include support for training and change, job redesign, reassignment, relevance of the development effort to the job, workload in a chaotic environment, and possibly several more that are important but unknown. Some personal variables might include maturation, educational background, family and social support structures, locus of control, and, again, possibly several more that are important but unknown.

If patterns of variables in this environment that affect development can be identified and built into a theory, it may be possible to influence the environments as experienced by participants in future management development programs, or to select those most able to develop, or both. Such a theory could help more managers gain a new perspective on their role, which in turn could help the organizational culture to adapt and change over time.

Beyond the research and conclusions of this dissertation, a grounded theory of how, from the participants' perspective, the feedback and development process leads to transformational change could point an interesting direction for future research in other environments.

Research Questions

This study used the following research questions in the context of a management development program for middle managers at a large research and development corporation:

1. What processes influence recipients' initial acceptance or deflection of 360-feedback?
 - 1.1 How does the content of the feedback (negative, positive, surprising) affect its acceptance or deflection?
 - 1.2 How does the source of the feedback affect the process?
 - 1.3 How do any discrepancies in the feedback affect the process?

2. After the feedback, what influences the development decisions about the content of any change and the commitment to that change?
 - 2.1 How does a recipient decide what to change?
 - 2.2 What cues a recipient to change superficially or deeply?
 - 2.2 How does initial acceptance influence commitment to change?
3. As a change effort is attempted, what influences participants' continuation of the change?
 - 3.1 What influences the incorporation of deep and lasting change?
 - 3.2 How do participants view themselves and their environment in terms of the change?
 - 3.3 What influences retrogression to previous attitudes, beliefs, behaviors?

Definition of Terms

Several terms are needed in this study and, although they have already been used in this section, may require further definition.

Manager - For purposes of this study, one who accomplishes work through others. The managers in this study are middle level and have subordinate managers whose efforts they generally direct or influence.

Management Development - Organizational and/or individual efforts to increase the response capabilities of managers via a program to provide some combination of skills

training, experiential exercises, readings, projects and special assignments, feedback, development planning, and mentoring.

360-Degree Feedback - A process that collects scaled ratings on important observed behaviors of an individual (the "recipient") from small groups of peers, direct reports, boss(es), and sometimes customers. These ratings are collected by some trusted third party and compiled into a feedback report about the recipient that represents the anonymous, aggregated feedback in charts or graphs. A coach or counselor, typically from Human Resources, gives the feedback report to the recipient and helps interpret the results.

Deflection - A process by which a recipient of 360-degree feedback rejects, denies, or ignores the message the feedback contains, and generally decides to do nothing.

Adult Development - The continuing process of emotional and intellectual growth into progressively more advanced stages that occurs between adolescence and death; such growth can be incremental (adjusting to circumstances) or transformational (changing meaning perspectives, the basic understanding of reality and one's role in it).

Limitations and Delimitations. This study is a grounded study of several managers who have received 360-degree feedback as part of a management development program in a large research and development corporation, and how they see the changes they have undertaken after the feedback. The study is qualitative, working with interview data to understand the factors that influence them to adopt and maintain varying degrees of change. It is a descriptive study, with a goal of discovering and describing what influences

exist in this process and how they relate to each other (see Chapter 3 for a fuller description of the methodology).

Summary of Findings

Within its limitations, the research found evidence of important processes at work that describe how those who changed the most had and understood very different experiences from those who changed the least.

Those who started a developmental dialog with direct reports or peers experienced the deepest and most resilient change. Establishing open communication, exposing themselves to criticism, and creating a trusted partnership with direct reports and peers led some in this study to change profoundly.

Source credibility in feedback givers was essential for accepting the feedback, and, when missing, led to both deflection of the feedback and a worsening relationship. When present, source credibility was enhanced by the dynamic process of receiving the feedback, acting on it, and seeking more feedback; this interdependence and enacted trust led to better relationships.

Organizational turmoil minimized the effect of the feedback in some cases. Where the level of threat to survival and uncertainty were experienced as very high, the changes seemed to be limited to discrete, observable skills; however, some who changed profoundly also lived in a turbulent organizational environment.

Some who engaged in developmental dialog broadened their perspective beyond dualism and came to challenge their assumptions. These cases changed their view of themselves and of their role as managers.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 2 reviews and relates the literature surrounding the research areas: acceptance or deflection of feedback, developmental change and the decisions surrounding it, and influences that foster or impede managers' development in an organizational setting.

Chapter 3 describes the research design and methods used, including the strategy for selection of interviewees, the schedule, the structure of the interviews including questions asked, risks from the researcher's own potential bias and how it was managed, and the explicit procedures for analyzing the data and reaching conclusions..

Chapter 4 describes the cases used, including approximately parallel histories of their experience with 360-degree feedback and subsequent change. Chapter 4 provides insights into the individual cases.

Chapter 5 is the cross-case analysis, which examines the research questions and emergent phenomena across all cases and interviews, and describes the processes as experienced by the cases.

Chapter 6 contains the findings and recommendations, and a brief review of the purpose, relevance to the literature, methods. It concludes with recommendations for practice and research that the findings imply.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

The present research sought to explore the processes of acceptance or deflection of 360-degree feedback, the decision process for initiating developmental change, and the influences that affect its continuation. While this research was qualitative and sought to build a grounded theory from the recipients' perspective within a management development program, a brief review of literature related to those three key areas lends context to the study.

Feedback

Empirical Studies. The concept of feedback originated with cybernetics in 1948 as "the report aspect of output energy that was returned to a system as input" (Cusella, 1987), and later extended in the 1970s to human behavior systems within the same paradigm, with a sensor function, a reference signal to define the goal state, a system comparator to emit an error signal on discrepancy, an effector function to respond to the signal, and finally the output change, which in turn becomes input that feeds back to the system (Cusella, 1987, p. 626).

To better describe feedback in human and organizational systems, these elements are reframed, elaborated, and developed by many others. Ilgen, Fischer, & Taylor (1979) provide a thorough literature review and develop a detailed model of how a dyadic feedback process influences individual behavior in organizations. Their work offers this definition of feedback:

a special case of the general communications process in which some sender (hereafter referred to as a *source*) conveys a *message* to a *recipient*.... The recipient's perception of the feedback and response to it depends upon his or her personal characteristics, the nature of the message, and the characteristics of the source of the feedback" (p. 350).

Ilgen et al. (1979) reviewed the literature for other concepts related to the present study, including proximity and power of feedback source, sign (+/-) of message, recipient frame of reference, self-esteem, and social anxiety. Influences on the acceptance process include credibility of source, especially in terms of expertise, trust, and reliability.

Some research examines sources of feedback: formal rewards, informal assignments, communication from supervisor, communications from co-workers, self-comparison of own and others' work, and feedback information from the work itself (Greller & Herold, 1975; Greller, 1980). Greller (1980) found that transit supervisors underestimated the importance of co-workers' comments and overestimated the importance of their own comments; this study, although in a very different context, generally extends both concepts. Co-workers' comments, when extended to become a developmental dialog, are more important for development, and cases where the boss feedback was rated as most important showed the least profound change.

In a substantial literature review, Ashford & Cummings (1983) specify two types of Feedback Seeking Behavior (FSB) -- monitoring and inquiry -- with costs and benefits for the seeker from each type. Ashford & Cummings (1983) also begin to shift the focus

of feedback research from an organizational resource to improve performance to the experience of individuals involved, and mention:

Symbolic interactionists have long considered feedback essential in the production of an individual's self-concept... This viewpoint argues that individuals imagine how they are perceived by others and use this attributed perception in developing a self-concept... Individuals are thought to develop a self-concept through their interactions with others based on a constant stream of feedback (p. 372).

The empirical research literature on feedback is extensive, but somewhat different in focus from the present research. Empirical studies attempt to isolate and test variables; many constructed artificial situations, often using college psychology students, and tested hypotheses through self-report and observational instruments within the experimental context. The present research approached its questions differently, exploring how adults experience and view the influences that lead them to change; rather than isolating variables to test a hypothesis, this research develop theory about how all the influences interact from the recipient's perspective. One purpose of the present research was to begin to balance the empirical studies with rich description of how and why the processes work.

T-Group as Feedback. Individuals experienced how they were perceived by others quite directly as adult education used the T-Group to provide unstructured but powerful insights into individual behavior in groups. T-Group feedback attempts to reduce the

"blind spots" that emerge in the group experience to improve human relations (Lufts, 1982), and specifically trains participants on feedback skills (Bunker, 1982; Porter, 1982).

The nature of this feedback was experiential, rather than experimental, and management training and development programs that included sensitivity training had some (self-reported) success in bringing about change (Burke & Day, 1986). The testimonial literature on laboratory training is mixed: facilitators and participants (the researcher included) acknowledge the intensity of the feedback, but there have been concerns about its lasting worth or transferability outside the special setting (Campbell, 1971; French, 1982; Odiorne, 1970).

360-Degree Feedback. 360-degree feedback on manager behavior is a special feedback case, and it is more structured and less intensive and intimidating than a T-Group (Burke, 1994). The instrument used with participants in this study was the Profilor, by Personnel Decisions, Inc. (PDI), and the purpose for using it was stated to all in an orientation briefing and in a letter, quoting from PDI's training material:

The Profiles are designed specifically for developmental purposes. Based in research, the Profile covers a full spectrum of management skills and behavior. The Profile feedback will assist managers in gaining a clearer sense of their strengths and development needs, provide a process for gather more specific feedback on their skills, and contain suggestions on how to improve and become more effective managers by both capitalizing

on strengths and addressing development needs (Personnel Decisions, Inc, 1992).

The management development program in which this study is based pointedly separated the 360-degree feedback process from any linkage with performance appraisal to focus attention on its development aspects.

However, like other feedback, 360-degree feedback can have powerful effects on the recipient and can do harm if done badly. Addressing feedback more generally, Baron (1988) suggested that feedback should be specific, considerate, and not attribute poor performance to internal causes; if these conditions are violated, feedback can lead to conflict, negative emotions, avoidance of the source of the feedback, undermined confidence, and reduced performance. Huntsberry (1994) cautions that 360-degree feedback can be abused, leading to self-doubt and mistrust of colleagues. As Dewey (1938) said, "For some experiences are mis-educative. Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience" (p. 25). This research sought to discover whether, how, and why the experience of 360-feedback was "mis-educative."

Acceptance/Rejection of Feedback. Few authors have described the process of acceptance or rejection of 360-degree feedback. Antonioni & Keenan (1992) proposed a four-cell matrix to describe responses, with possible feedback messages of 1) an Expected Strength, 2) an Unexpected Strength, 3) an Expected Weakness, and 4) an Unexpected Weakness. They found, as did the feedback literature partially cited above, that

differences in feedback source credibility led to different reactions to negative feedback. In their review of the status of 360-feedback in organizations, London & Beatty (1993) propose a research agenda that suggests "the effects of varying interpersonal relationships and characteristics on rater agreement and manager acceptance of feedback should be studied. Research is needed on image formation and acceptance processes" (p. 370). The present research did investigate that, and found that relationships of trust led to feedback acceptance, and that the converse was also true.

360-Degree Feedback Uses. Organizations use 360-degree feedback in several primary ways: as a means to enhance development by increasing awareness, as a means to organizational change or performance improvement, or as part of performance appraisal (Tornow, 1993).

This research focuses almost entirely on the first use. O'Reilly (1994) writes in *Forbes* that 360-degree feedback can "change your life" and chronicles several cases of managers who have been helped by it. Literature on executive derailment (Corporate Leadership Council, 1994; Ramos, 1994) cites self-awareness through feedback as reducing the likelihood of derailment. London & Beatty (1993) write that "the 360-degree approach recognizes that little change can be expected without feedback, and that different constituencies are a source of rich and useful information to help managers guide their behavior" (p. 354).

360-degree feedback is also used in efforts to achieve organizational change or increase performance. Fruge & Rollins (1993) describe how a locally developed 360-feedback instrument helped measure and achieve progress toward corporate goals at

ARCO transportation, and Edwards (1990, 1992) describes how 360-degree feedback can be used to affect cultural change and leadership practices in an organization. Romano (1993) asserts that upward appraisal systems fit the character of work in the 1990s, because relationships between boss and subordinate have changed. The focus of this study did not address the organizational impact of 360-feedback, but only began to explore the organization's impact on the individual's development.

The use of 360-degree feedback in the performance appraisal process is also addressed in the literature, although it will not be addressed in this research. Budman & Rice (1994) describe its use for performance appraisal as a growing trend, and Edwards (1990) reports that multi-rater assessments for performance appraisals are perceived as less biased against women and minorities than appraisals by supervisors only. Reports by the Corporate Leadership Council (1994, 1995) indicate that companies are moving cautiously toward incorporating such feedback as an element of performance appraisal, finding that three of seven companies studied use it for development only and that the others use it incrementally from contributing one rating factor to serving as the basis for bonus allocation. London & Beatty (1993) contrast 360-feedback and performance appraisal in some detail, and report that how the feedback is used will affect the attitudes toward it; they cite one study where 34% of respondents said they would have rated the boss differently if the purpose had been performance appraisal.

The focus of this study is not on how 360-degree feedback may be used in organizations, but on its power to effect changes in individual recipients; several authors have suggested ways to make it more powerful for development. Kaplan (1993) enhances

the impact by supplementing it with written feedback from the raters and with data from the recipient's work history. Carton (1994) describes "executive coaching" as using 360-degree feedback as one component of what the recipient hears, along with data from focus groups and written communications. Edelstein & Armstrong (1993) take this further by supplementing 360-degree feedback with face-to-face sessions to confirm the message from subordinates, peers, bosses, and even customers. The importance of face-to-face confirmation of feedback message is corroborated by this study.

Development Decisions

The second area of interest to the present research is in the decision to undertake development, first inquiring about why some choose to heed feedback and develop, then considering what management development includes, and finally, by extension, what adult development includes.

Deciding to Develop. The empirical research on feedback and development provides some guidance on why decisions to develop are made, and the literature from adult education and adult development also speaks to decisions to develop oneself.

Ilgen et al. (1979) describe feedback in terms that may lead to its acceptance as a motivator to change in terms of the source, the message, and the recipient. Source factors include expertise, reliability, intention toward the recipient, dynamism, and personal attraction. Message characteristics include whether it is positive or negative, its consistency, and its support from other sources. Recipient characteristics include locus of control and age, tenure, or experience.

Noe (1986) builds on the work of Ilgen et al. in describing how "Positive or negative reactions to the information individuals receive regarding their strengths and weaknesses are likely determinants of motivation to improve skills in a training program" (p. 742). Noe applies Vroom's expectancy theory to training, in that beliefs about the relation of effort-to-performance and performance-to-outcome may influence decisions about the environment's favorability to learning, and this will influence commitment to development. This study had one case in which the subject spent great effort convincing feedback givers of these ratios, and after months of effort this led to a improved relationship between them.

Change Frameworks. Hellervik, Hazucha, & Schneider (1992) provide a meta-analysis of behavioral change from the organizational psychology perspective. They develop an Integrated Behavior Change Framework and map major models, change methods, and theories (such as organizational behavior modification, behavior modeling, control theory) against it in a thorough review of current thinking in their field. Their framework examines others' work in terms of 1) Assessment/Needs Analysis, 2) Assignment of Behavioral Standards, 3) Intention Formulation and Protection, 4) Behavioral Expression in Change Environment, and 5) Generalization and Maintenance of New/Changed Behaviors. Hazucha et al. (1993) apply this same framework to research by Sevy, Olsen, McGuire, Fraser, & Paanjanen on the use of an earlier 360-degree feedback instrument by PDI; they find that the process supports the first three elements, and "Because behavior change takes place on the job, the final stage in the behavior change process -- transferring the new behaviors from the change environment to the

everyday environment -- is not an issue" (p. 327). The present research explored that issue and fifth step from the recipients' perspective because substantial differences in how the feedback is received, how the feedback was incorporated into behavior change, and how changes endure were of primary interest.

Hellervik et al. (1992) cite a model by Heckhausen & Kuhl that relates to this part of the present research -- Intention Formulation and Protection Model, which suggests that development decisions pass through a relevancy filter termed "OTIUM" - for Opportunity, Time, Importance, Urgency, and Means. Hellervik et al. (1992) also review the field on social-cognitive work on the self, such as occurs in management development and psychotherapy. They list several forces that work against change, including cognitive conservatism (to keep existing knowledge structure intact), confirmation bias (selective attention to whatever confirms expectations), and social self-verification strategies (the tendency to socialize with those who confirm the self-view).

Constructivist Parallels. Several parallels between the empiricist and constructivist approaches are of direct relevance to the topic of this study. The conditions of change readiness (OTIUM) and the conservative forces referenced by Hellervik et al. (1992) above are also expressed in cognitive or constructivist psychology and adult development. Mezirow (1991) describes the same phenomena as the first two conservative forces above as he describes meaning schemes and meaning perspectives as:

... our 'boundary structures' for perceiving and comprehending new data.

Experience strengthens our personal meaning system by refocusing or

extending our expectations about how things are supposed to be. We allow our meaning system to diminish our awareness of how things really are in order to avoid anxiety, creating a zone of blocked attention and self deception (pp. 4-5)

Mezirow (1991) posits that overcoming limited, distorted perception and cognition is central to development in adulthood. Elsewhere, Mezirow (1994) is more direct: "We resist learning anything that does not comfortably fit our meaning structures, but we have a strong urgent need to understand the meaning of our experience so that, given the limitations of our meaning structures, we strive toward viewpoints which are more functional: more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative of our experience" (p. 223). The current research explored qualitatively how 360-degree feedback was, for some, what Mezirow (1990) calls a "disorienting dilemma" -- an event that challenges one's presuppositions: "Anomalies and dilemmas of which old ways of knowing cannot make sense become catalysts or 'trigger events' that precipitate critical reflection and transformations" (p. 14).

Jarvis (1987) also describes the dynamic of conservative perception and the potential for some events to act as trigger events to force construction of new meaning, although he suggests a disabling threshold of "anomie" when the gulf between actual experience and the store of experience against which to compare it is too great. Wiswell (1989) addresses a similar phenomenon in his Model of Experience-based Incidental

Learning, in which errors can be quickly learned and tenaciously held if substantial conscious effort is not spent in hypothesis testing.

Daloz (1988) supports the third force, social self-verification strategies, in his description of "Gladys" who refused to grow: "Most adults are richly enmeshed in a fabric of relationships which hold them as they are, and many of their friends and relations do not wish to see them change" (p. 7).

Change Readiness. The readiness-for-change filters of the OTIUM model describe familiar ground from the contexts of learning and adult development. Tough (1982) describes how adults in non-formal settings decide to undertake learning projects, and their self-initiation speaks to several factors in a non-organizational setting. When adults feel sufficient need (importance, urgency, opportunity), they will seek the means and make the time for whatever learning will meet their felt need.

McClusky (1970) proposed a model of adult learning that posits a felt learning need: when individuals' perceived Load (work, social, and emotional demands) exceeds their Capacity (knowledge, skills, emotional reserves to deal with Load), it leads them to seek to reduce Load or increase Capacity through seeking learning. McClusky suggested that when load greatly exceeds capacity, it leads to hopelessness, while when capacity exceeds load, it leads to positive feelings of autonomy.

Mezirow (1990) indirectly addresses Importance and Urgency in his descriptions of disorienting dilemma, described above, and Clark (1992) describes the impact of context immediacy on transformative learning, which relates to the Importance and Urgency filters.

Opportunity, Time, and Means are addressed in the literature of action learning, which Marsick (1991) describes as an instantiation of Mezirow's perspective transformation and Dixon (1990) describes as a means to identify what work-context learnings are necessary in terms of overcoming unquestioned assumptions that result in counter-productive and dysfunctional behavior.

Management Development

The learnings for management today may require a change in beliefs and assumptions about work, management, and the individual. Marsick (1987) describes as a "paradigm shift" the changing focus from a "machine bureaucracy" approach to learning, toward a new paradigm that allows flexibility, reflection, and critical reflection on the premises of decisions.

Akin (1987) describes the need for personal growth in management development, using slightly different terms yet describing transformative learning as essential for managers' full development, saying: "In management development workshops, participants who learn through personal growth like to explore the implications of ideas and practices for the kind of world we are constructing and their place in it. They search for insight." Akin (1987) also quotes a participant saying "If you are going to be a growing person, you have to build on those core abilities -- be willing to analyze yourself, find out where your deficiencies are, and then try to overcome those deficiencies and build your strengths" (p. 43). Although Akin does not specifically mention 360-degree

feedback, his description fits the overall process of feedback and development planning very well.

Argyris (1991) describes the need to overcome "defensive reasoning" by critical examination and also describes how common communication patterns in organizations tend to effectively block learning (Argyris 1994); he suggests examining the underlying assumptions, the undiscussable rules, as the means to overcome these. Argyris & Schon (1974) described two general models of behavior in organizations, based on contrasting belief sets: their "Model I" behavior contrasts with "Model II" behavior as a "before-and-after" description of management development goals.

McCall & Lombardo (1988) describe the developmental experiences of successful executives and find that training is a small part of how they learn, over a career, to deal with others in new ways, to recognize their own limitations, and to develop different strengths. They offer a framework for development experiences that includes seeking self-knowledge and choosing what to do about shortcomings. The approach to deal with shortcomings most relevant to this study, "change self," is not explicitly described, but only presented as a list of "intensive counseling, coaching," "personal change effort," and "change just enough to get by" (pp. 137-146).

Rhinesmith (1993) describes the need for managers to develop a new mindset, which he defines as "a predisposition to see the world in a particular way that sets boundaries and provides explanations for why things are the way they are, while at the same time establishing guidance for ways in which we should behave. In other words, a mindset is a filter through which we look at the world" (p. 2).

Ulmer (1994) relates the need for self-awareness as the critical skill of management, saying

There is also a key role that self-awareness plays in adult learning.

Individuals who are capable of 'getting up on the balcony' and watching themselves from a distance are more likely to overcome barriers to learning and growth. ... Also, feedback about how leaders are seen by others that modifies their self-view may stimulate changes that lead to more effective behavior (p. 10).

Kuhnert & Lewis (1987) describe transformational versus transactional leadership in terms of Kegan's cognitive developmental stages (described below), proposing that leaders who are limited to Kegan's third-level consciousness may be unable to go beyond transactional leadership, while leaders who have developed fourth-level consciousness can be transformational leaders. Industrial College of the Armed Forces (1994) implements the application of Kegan's levels of consciousness in a 360-degree feedback instrument to assess level as a pre-requisite for suitability for strategic levels of military leadership.

Adult Development

Adult development literature has described stages of post-formal cognitive development that relate to the current study in terms of how perspective changes may relate to what is known about development.

Critical Reflection and Development. Mezirow (1994) sees the key task of adult development and learning as overcoming distorted and limiting perspectives, usually through critical reflection on the underlying premises. Jarvis (1987) also reflects on the essential nature of reflection and critical review of new experience compared with prior experience as fundamental to making meaning. Brookfield (1987) carries the same theme of critical reflectivity as a defining characteristic of developed, mature adults.

Cognitive Levels and Stages. Recent work on cognitive development shed light on the present study as it evolved; there is a rich and growing literature on how adults grow to think differently during adulthood. Sinnott (1994) outlines several developmental stages during a lifespan, from early childhood's tasks of learning to coordinate one's body (Piaget's pre-operational stage), to learning to coordinate facts (concrete operations), to learning to coordinate the relations among those facts within a formal, logical system (formal operations), and finally learning to coordinate multiple systems at an emotional and interpersonal level (relativistic). Kegan (1994) specifies levels of consciousness in adults that affect our experience with the world and each other at emotional, cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal levels; he distinguishes how a "level three" versus a "level four" might approach and experience work situations; these levels correspond with the latter two stages in Sinnott (1994). Labouvie-Vief (1990) writes of adult development and describes a limited cognitive development stage with:

the restriction to single abstract system thinking. Although the individual is able to unify parts of single abstract systems and function systematically

and coherently within them, he or she cannot as yet construct a metalanguage to compare systems and coordinate them. As a result, thinking remains dominated by static categories and dualistic constructions of reality. Eventually, many adults transcend these constructions and move on to more transformational, dynamic, and dialectical thought. (pp. 67-68).

Daloz (1986) describes the journey of cognitive development through which he tries to guide and mentor his clients, particularly within a framework of moving from dualism toward a more open, dynamic, dialectic understanding of truth; this is similar to Mezirow's (1991) definition of greater development: "overcoming limited, distorted, and arbitrarily selective modes of perception and cognition through reflection on assumptions that formerly have been accepted uncritically is central to development in adulthood" (p. 5). Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde (1990) summarize the traits of "post-formal" thought as recognizing the *relativity* of various formal systems (as opposed to treating one as unique and absolutely valid), understanding the *interrelatedness* of all experience and the inevitability of change and transformation, adopting a *meta-systemic* or reflective and integrative approach to thinking, and linking choices to *commitments* to action (pp. 30-31). An intriguing finding of this study is that several of the cases seemed to move from one level of cognitive development to the next.

Reflectivity at Work. Several authors (Dixon, 1990, 1992; Marsick, 1987, 1988, 1990; Senge, 1991;) specifically bring reflectivity into the workplace as a means of understanding new paradigms of work as they may interact with new understandings of

self and belief structures. Watkins & Marsick (1993) describe models for continuous work and learning that take standard problem-solving approaches beyond a traditional Analyze-Plan-Do-Evaluate model to include interpreting context, reflecting in action, examining all consequences, and framing experience; together, these implement the "double-loop" learning that Argyris (1977) suggested.

Brooks (1992) describes the interaction of organizational and individual learning and bridges the literatures from organizational learning to perspective transformation. She describes a change effort where some organizational members:

described themselves as having shifted the way they viewed the world as a result of some of the experiences they described. They reordered what they saw to be important in life and struggled to change dysfunctional attitudes, behaviors, policies, and practices. At the heart of this shift was their coming to understand the existence of more than one reality. Losing their belief in the universality of their own culturally-based and personally constructed view of the world, many of these managers granted that alternative realities, interpretations, and perspectives are not necessarily wrong and acknowledged that their own world view was arbitrary (p. 331).

Drath (1990) applies Kegan's levels of development to management development practice and finds a theoretical explanation for the link between organizational behavior and derailment: "In short, many of today's managers are in a bind: They are being asked to behave toward subordinates in ways that run counter to what has made them

successful. To escape this bind, managers must engage in development at a personal level, and organizations must evolve into institutions that can support such development." (p. 484)

Perseverance of Change

The final area of interest for the present research is about perseverance of development and change. This will not address issues of transfer of training, but will focus on the limited area of skill retention and development over time.

Hazucha et al. (1993), in one of the only studies of its kind, studied a group of 46 managers who had gone through a 360-degree feedback and development planning process 2 years before. They found that changes occurred in broad, complex skills and were noticed by others, and that there was greater agreement between self- and other-ratings on the second use of the feedback instrument . They also found certain activities related to skill development, particularly reviewing plans and progress at least quarterly, getting input from co-workers, and getting coaching and feedback. In their recommendations for future research, they suggest two further studies: how changes in management skills happen, and how managers, supervisors, and organizations can support development.

Noe & Wilk (1993) studied employees participating in development programs in three industries (health care, banking, and engineering), and found that "motivation to learn was the only attitudinal variable to have a consistent, significant, positive influence on different outcomes related to development activity" and that "employees' perceptions of

the work environment -- specifically social support from managers and peers for development activity and the type of working conditions that employees believe they face in their work -- influenced development activity" (p. 301). They suggest that organizations should try to ensure that managers and peer are supportive and "alleviate working conditions that inadvertently punish employees who attend development activities" (p. 301). Their measure of development activity was limited to the formal and self-reported and does not address the informal learning and reflection that the literature of management development and adult development describe.

Hellervik et al. (1992) address the continuation of change as one aspect of their model, referenced above. They describe the "Generalizability and Maintenance of New/Changed Behaviors" as embedded in the coaching phase and supported through coaching as the client re-enters. Separate studies by Hazucha in 1990, by Thompson in 1986, and by Marsh in 1990 showed that coaching clients who completed the program showed encouraging results: of clients who had finished the coaching program one year earlier, 80% of survey respondents perceived no loss or decay; half the supervisors and two-thirds of the participants believed that skills improved after the end of the program (p. 883). Hellervik et al. end their meta-analysis of behavior change with some relevant research directions that this study may begin to address: What environmental variables affect change, particularly "how can people be inoculated against environmental factors that inhibit change?" (p. 886), and how do people judge whether change has occurred?

Conclusion.

The literatures reviewed here seem to converge on a few common themes, which the present study investigates. Empirical feedback research suggests variables which were found in this study, but misses the richness of their relationship with each other and their relative importance. The literature on 360-degree feedback enhancement through direct contact and dialog, the management literature on the need to develop a different perspective in order to meet new demands, and the literature on cognitive stages all come together around the topics of this study, which supports and extends much of what has been published. The relation of major findings to literature is found in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 3

Method

The purpose for this research was to discover the influences that lead to greater (or lesser) change in practice and perspective in response to 360-degree feedback in a management development program. The process of deep and lasting change was of special interest and was investigated in its full or partial presence (and in its absence) among individuals in such a program. This chapter describes the design, addresses the threats to the credibility of the research, and describe the procedures actually used to analyze the data.

Design

To explore the process of deep and lasting change, recipients of 360-degree feedback as part of a management development program were interviewed about their experience in a modified time series design, and the data collected were analyzed qualitatively following the general procedures recommended in Strauss & Corbin (1990) and Miles & Huberman (1994). This section describes the organizational and programmatic context of the feedback recipients, the purposeful selection of a set of interviewees that potentially represented the processes of interest, and the interview process and schedule.

Context. This research was conducted within a large, non-profit research and development organization that, during the research period, was experiencing great uncertainty and change from economic and regulatory changes that threatened its long

pattern of stability and growth. The research was conducted within the specific context of a management development program that was in its second program year during the period of this research. In the first management development program year (1993-1994), there were 225 participants at the supervisory, middle, and senior management levels in two locations; 50 were middle managers whom the researcher coached through a 9-month program of instructional modules (1-day to 3-day events on leadership, diversity, and teamwork), learning team activities (similar to action learning sets), and development including 360-degree feedback with development planning. In the second program year (1994-1995), there were fewer participants, with 34 eventually completing the middle manager program with the researcher as coach; the program again consisted of instructional modules, learning team activities, and 360-degree feedback with development planning.

The 360-degree feedback instrument was the Profilor, by Personnel Decisions, Inc.(PDI), and the feedback and development planning was the second module of the program, occurring in late Fall or early Winter. In both program years, the feedback was consistently delivered by Dr. Herdie Baisden, a psychologist from PDI, in 6-hour group workshops (18-25 participants) where he explained the underlying model of management behavior, gave the Profilor reports to the recipients, answered their questions, and trained them to thank raters and to clarify non-defensively any ambiguities or surprises in the feedback. Approximately 2 weeks later, the researcher coached them in smaller groups through a development planning session, where they reflected on their feedback and wrote

out a detailed plan for changing one or two behaviors. The researcher, in the role of “Program Leader,” met occasionally with the learning teams and individual participants to monitor and encourage progress toward the goals in the development plans.

Selection of Interviewees. From knowledge as Program Leader, the researcher was able to select interviewees who seemed likely to exemplify the presence or absence of change in practices and perspective. The selection criteria were that the interviewees be honest (even blunt) communicators about their experiences, that they had received feedback and development coaching within the same context as others (as opposed to individual coaching), that they represented a variety of sub-organizations and roles, and, most importantly, that their responses to the feedback and development process indicated some possibility of change. Based on their reactions to the feedback and apparent commitment to development plans, some were expected to change more than others, but there were surprises as the research progressed. One seemed stunned by the feedback and zealous to change quickly, but found disconfirming evidence from other sources and eventually changed nothing related to the feedback. Another apparently received no news at all in the feedback and showed little commitment to change, but became a clear case of persistent change at the skills level.

For this study, a set of 15 interviewees was selected and interviewed at length (45 minutes to 2 hours). Of the 15, eight were from the second program year and were interviewed twice, at 3 to 4 months after the feedback and again at 8 to 9 months after the feedback. Two others from the first program year were interviewed once, at 6 months

after the feedback, to fill a void that emerged after the initial eight interviews: there was no representation of the absence of change, so these two interviews were selected specifically for their lack of change. The five from the first program year were interviewed once, at approximately 22 months after the feedback.

The interviewees shared some similarity of background: All but one are scientists or engineers by profession, nearly all with advanced degrees in Computer Science or Electrical Engineering. All work for the same large, non-profit research organization. All are middle-level managers, with subordinate supervisors and managers who report to them. All were selected for and participated in the management development program, and with it received 360-degree feedback and development planning sessions as described above. Known differences at the start of the research included the varieties of business environment and stability among different parts of the corporation, stability of assignment, and years of experience at this level of management.

Process and Schedule. In **March/April 1995**, the first eight interviewees, from the second program year, were interviewed, at approximately 3 to 4 months after their development planning. The purpose was to gather initial data from the early stages of integrating of any changes and attribution of the changes, while the 360-degree feedback and development planning were still fresh.

The format of the interviews was open-ended and non-directive generally, conducted in privacy and confidentiality, and, with the interviewees' consent, tape-

recorded for later transcription and analysis. The interviews covered the following questions for this original group at the first interview:

- What previous experience have you had with getting feedback from others?
 - What did you learn from it?
 - What did you do with the feedback? How did you use it?
- Think back to getting your Proflor feedback. How was that experience for you?
 - What surprised you most?
 - How did you feel about getting this feedback?
- What did you do to follow up with your raters?
 - What happened?
 - What else did you learn?
- How did you decide what to work on?
- What supports you in working on this?
 - What inhibits you from working on this?

In **June 1995**, at 6 months after the development planning session, two other interviews from the second program year were conducted, in order to correct for an imbalance. The initial eight interviews all had experienced some change, and so these two were selected on the basis of making no apparent change at all, in order to gather data on the absence of change. These two interviews used the same format and questions as the first eight.

In **August/September 1995**, the original eight interviewees from the second program year were interviewed a second time, at 8 to 9 months after their development planning. The purpose of this interview was to explore the mid-term durability of their change efforts and to discover the dimensions of perseverance in that change. At that interview, in the same general format as the first, a simpler and more open-ended set of questions was asked:

- What has happened with the changes you described when we last talked?
 - How is your approach to your development different from several months ago?
 - Please describe your commitment to these changes. How have you demonstrated it?
- How have the changes affected your life as a manager?

In **September 1995**, to discover the influences and processes of long-term change, five interviewees from the program's first year were interviewed, approximately 22 months after their 360-degree feedback and development planning. These interviewees were also selected for their varied response and included some who had changed little and some who had changed greatly. The format of the interviews was like the others, and the questions for these interviewees were:

- Think back to getting your Profilor feedback. How was that experience for you?
 - What surprised you most?

- How did you feel about getting this feedback?
- What did you do to follow up with your raters?
 - What happened?
 - What else did you learn?
- How did you decide what to work on?
- What supports and constrains you in working on this?
- What progress have you made in this development effort?
- What has kept you going in your development?

The tape recordings of all interviews were completely transcribed to get the most detail possible. There were 24 interviews in all, as one participant from the second program year initiated an interview between the two scheduled interviews. Each interview was analyzed during and after transcription, and a subset of them, based on the clearest examples of the phenomena of interest, were ultimately used as the basis for this research.

Threats to Credibility

The greatest threats to this study's credibility are researcher bias, response bias, and the challenge of substantially verifying the developing description of the process of deep and lasting change.

The researcher was a mentor for the interviewees and coached them through understanding the feedback and creating their development plans; the bias toward finding some effect here is openly admitted, and is addressed directly in both the collection and the analysis of data. Without pretense of objectivity and in the role of coach, the

researcher engaged with the subjects apart from this study to encourage their development. The research had to carefully balance the researcher's role between the implicit advocacy and the substantial theoretical sensitivity to the interviewees' experience.

Response bias could have also threatened the research credibility, in that the researcher's role with the interviewees represented an organizationally-advocated change initiative. Informants might have wanted to give the "right" answer to show compliance with the initiative. The mentoring relationship could also have provoked a response bias, if interviewees tried to give the answer the "coach" expected.

This study attempted to reduce both types of bias by instituting three practices from first contact with the interviewees:

- 1) The interviewees selected for the research were the most bluntly honest individuals in the program. After months of contact, researcher and interviewees selected had long passed any norms of polite conversation and had achieved a very honest level of trusted communication.

- 2) The researcher initially framed and carefully maintained the research as academic, not corporate, deliberately distancing all contacts related to the research from other program contacts, promising confidentiality and separation of the research from corporate review. Confidentiality was maintained to the degree that no interviewees know who the others are, or even how many.

- 3) The interviews themselves were clearly beyond the scope of the program's influence, as they explored outside influences and questions that required deep reflection.

The scope and conduct of the interviews clearly distinguished them from typical interactions between the researcher and interviewees.

Response bias of wanting to give the “right” answers for the organization was greatly reduced in all interviews after June as the researcher decided to resign from the organization and communicated this to the interviewees.

Verification of the work in progress came from two primary sources: from the qualitative research discussion group at Virginia Tech, and from the later discussions with the interviewees themselves. As coding proceeded, the discussion group of peers, under the advice of Dr. M. G. Cline, gave the work a vigorous critical review in the early stages. As phenomena and processes began to emerge, the interviewees themselves gave these a reality check to ensure that they accurately described their experience. The researcher contacted three of those in the study but not within the core group of five cases and discussed the findings in detail. All agreed that the findings made sense in terms of their experience.

Procedures

15 subjects were interviewed, as specified in the research design. These subjects were selected from participants in 2 years of an ongoing management development program, with the five subjects from the first year interviewed once at 22 months after Profilor, eight subjects from the second year interviewed twice, at 3 and 8 months after Profilor, and two subjects from the second year interviewed once, at 6 months.. One subject from the second year initiated a third interview between the two scheduled.

The subjects were not all equally interesting in terms of illuminating the phenomena of interest as reflected in the research questions. Five subjects were of special interest and were analyzed as described below. In Chapter 6, excerpts from other subjects were used where they added insights to what the five core subjects revealed; the core subjects are called "Cases" and are referenced by number from here on.

Case 1 was selected as the clearest example of perspective transformation, and was the source of the phenomena of interest that, balanced with the research questions, led to the selection of the other four Cases. Case 1 describes "the lens opening so fast it scares me" as he/she rapidly gains different perspectives on work, on managing, on relationships, on learning, and even on his/her thinking process itself.

To analyze the data for Case 1, an approach of constant comparative analysis yielded the richest information. The approach became more focused as the phenomena of interest emerged from the data and shed light on the research questions. The approach followed the guidelines in Strauss & Corbin (1990), as follows:

- 1) Open coding started the analysis, which meant reading the first interview many times, very closely, and developing an initial coding scheme to identify what seemed to be there. Whenever an insight-producing statement emerged from the data, any ideas and questions went into memoranda associated with the data and its codes. For example, when the subject in Case 1 described his/her initial experience with 360-degree feedback partly as:

I reflected on it. There were some things that I chose to change. And there were some things that I chose not to change. For instance, a direct report had given me some really negative feedback about my behaviors. And I chose to ignore it. Because there were other performances on that individual's part. Although it was anonymous, so you didn't know who the stuff was coming from, but you could figure out where some of it was coming from.

The general action above received the codes CH-CHOICE (change choice), FB-HIST (feedback history), and FB-SRC-DSC (feedback source discounting). Each of these codes led to speculative elaboration about its properties - for the FB-SRC-DSC, possibly interesting properties included: relative position of FB-SRC (boss, peer, direct report), relationship (adversarial, unknown, familiar), and source credibility (perceived access to performance information, trustworthiness). These properties, in turn, had certain dimensions and locations on those dimensions within the data above, that could be sought for presence, absence, or difference in other Cases or in later data from this same Case: for feedback source discounting, along the relationship dimension, it later emerged that this Case initially discounted (or assigned a relatively lower priority to seeking) feedback from those closest to him/her on the assumption that there would be few surprises.

The open coding process on the first 1-hour interview yielded over 40 codes and 28 memoranda for later reference describing the phenomena, the properties, the dimensions and locations, and questions to ask later data. The open coding continued

through the two other interviews of the Case 1, and then in a more focused manner through the other four Cases that constitute the prime data for this research. In all, 9,979 lines of interview data were coded in this fashion, and the next process winnowed the number of initial codes and enriched them with insights from the other four Cases.

2) Axial coding continued the process, starting with the first interview of the first Case. As variations on earlier themes emerged, this process examined each recurrence or similar phenomenon for differences from earlier instances, using questions such as "Why did X happen here, and not before?" or "How did this subject react to X versus these other subjects?" This process generated insights about earlier instances of similar phenomena, linkages between them, and deeper insights about the Cases. For example, revisiting the phenomena of FB-SRC as it occurred several times for the first Case, it became clear that one important aspect for this subject was his/her relationship with the feedback source. Relationship with feedback source, in turn, had interesting dimensions: relative authority (subordinate, boss, client, peer, external colleague) and relationship-distance (stranger, adversary, ally, friend). These dimensions helped reveal how this subject, and others analyzed later, differently experienced the feedback and differently regarded what they heard in it.

From this integrative analytical process, broader and deeper phenomena emerged. For example, the broad category *Insulation*¹, in which the subject applies various approaches to deflect some feedback, grew from the relationship phenomena, and

¹ From this point on, processes and phenomena are noted by italics and initial capitalization.

eventually included other deflection approaches dealing with the timing of the feedback and the credibility of the instrument.

Corbin & Strauss (1990) distinguish the open and axial coding processes as "Open coding fractures the data and allows one to identify some categories, their properties, and dimensional locations. Axial coding puts those data back together in new ways by making connections between a category and its sub-categories" (p. 97). These processes were applied on a grounded theory basis, to identify what major phenomena and relations existed within and across the three interviews of the first Case.

After initial open and axial coding of the three interviews of Case 1, the emerging phenomena were compared with the research questions to identify any gaps and phenomena of particular interest to seek in the remaining interviews. The method of comparison was a matrix display, as suggested in Patton (1987) or Miles & Huberman (1994) and is detailed in Chapter 5, Cross-Case Analysis.

3) Theoretical Sampling - Continuing the grounded approach of Corbin & Strauss, other Cases were selected for analysis for what they might add, modify, confirm, extend, or disconfirm of the emerging description from Case 1 of how the 360-degree feedback process, among other factors present, led to apparent perspective transformation. The four other Cases selected are more fully described in Chapter 4, Case Summaries, but the general concepts and how they illuminated the data from Case 1 are described below.

Case 2 participated in the earlier program year and was working in an isolated technical environment. Case 2 had to persistently persuade some technical subordinates of his/her sincerity and of the usefulness of the extra effort involved in communicating feedback. Eventually, Case 2 had a perspective transformation about the ambiguities of being a manager, the communications process, and the reasons and means to integrate growth as a way of life. Case 2 shows the central phenomena of Case 1 in a slightly different light and offers greater richness to the description.

Case 3 participated in the second program year, and did not change deeply. Case 3 provides a counterbalance to the first two Cases in several ways: his/her education and experience as a manager working in an isolated technical environment was very similar to that of Case 2, but where Case 2 experienced increased resilience and commitment to growth in the face of skepticism and organizational turmoil, Case 3 withdrew and became somewhat hardened and cynical. Case 3 sheds light on the central phenomena in their absence.

Case 4 participated in the second program year, experienced some change, and demonstrated an openness to change despite getting conflicting feedback from different sources and experiencing a possible career setback between the two interviews. Case 4 offers a counterpoint to the other Cases at two levels: moderate (not transformational) development, and persistent commitment to skill growth despite challenging circumstances.

Finally, Case 5 participated in the first program year and offers insights about the persistence of deep change despite organizational turmoil, despite the need to reconcile feedback from incongruent sources. Case 5 supports the suggestion from Case 1 (and others) that transformational growth is self-perpetuating.

4) Constant Comparison - During the open and axial coding of Cases 2-5, the new facets of the phenomena of interest and the emerging relational webs suggested questions to ask the data from the earlier interviews. This process continued at successively higher levels across Cases.

For example, a subtle distinction emerged from Case 2 that led to a better definition of a phenomenon from Case 1. The phenomenon of "having no time" (an instance of the broader concept of LOAD) was described in Case 1 as having insufficient time to reflect and process events, but Case 2 distinguished a lack of time to reflect (leading to integration of a feedback message) from a lack of time to practice (leading to the abandonment of a new skill).

The category of insulation, in later Cases, evolved to have specific organizational and interpersonal influences; the earlier Cases were revisited using a constant comparative method to search for how those influences were present, absent, or different. The comparisons were internal to Case 1, then between Cases 2 and 1, then between 3, 2, and 1, and so on. In fact, one specific phenomenon, labeled "AHA" to describe sudden insight, emerged in Case 5, was noticed abundantly in Cases 1 and 2, but was conspicuously absent in Cases 3 and 4.

5) Data Queries and Displays - Finally, as the patterns within and between the five Cases became more complex, Ethnograph v4.0 proved invaluable in maintaining the coding schemes. As new concepts emerged in the data of the latter Cases, tracking back to similar codes in earlier Cases was only possible using the search and index capabilities, and the "Codebook" (Appendix 2) became an evolving data dictionary to capture and refine the emerging definitions from the constant comparison approach. In seeking insights across Cases, Ethnograph search capabilities allowed multiple codes to be gathered across all Cases, stored as a word file, and then queried and quoted more easily into the final document. Representing the patterns to make the differences and similarities apparent was assisted by the Miles & Huberman (1994) work, which suggested the various displays in Chapters 4 and 5.

CHAPTER 4

Case Summaries

While 15 participants provided interviews, the research focused on five cases for their value in demonstrating the presence, absence, or relationships of the several phenomena of interest. This chapter describes each case (in Chapter Five, the cross-case analysis and description will be developed.).

The five cases below shared many broad similarities. All worked for the same research corporation and had at least 6 years of tenure in management there. All went through the same management development program, which included participation in a "learning team" and in several modules of instruction. All had the same 360-degree feedback instrument, interpreted by the same psychologist. All received coaching, with their learning teams, to plan their development, from the same facilitator (the researcher).

The differences emerged from the interview data and show several facets of the central phenomena of interest.

In this chapter, each case is reviewed chronologically from before the management development program to Fall 1995. Within the case summary format, the following will be described in the subjects' own words: (a) earlier experience with feedback, (b) their roles as managers, (c) their reactions to the 360-degree feedback and whatever followed, (d) their decisions about change, (e) any differences in how they saw themselves and their roles as managers, and (f) the forces that supported or opposed any change in both the short and long term.

Case 1: Transformational Change

Case 1 had experience with feedback, both face-to-face and instrumented, for several years before this study. He/She describes experience with face-to-face feedback:

One of the things that I do personally, once a year, like clockwork, is I set up meetings with the [senior managers] and a random sampling of department heads. And I go, and I one-on-one ask the question "How am I doing?" And I've done that for the last, ever since I've been here.

The results of these feedback-seeking efforts were mixed, as some would very reluctantly give the constructive feedback he/she sought. Time pressures also led to difficulty with internalizing the feedback messages.

This subject had used a multi-rater feedback instrument (not Proflor) approximately 2 years before. The results were similar to the earlier feedback-seeking efforts, but with one unique outcome: the instrument provided focus and common language to discuss complex and difficult subjects.

This manager leads a staff function group that provides services for the entire organization, and he/she also leads a group that is geographically divided. In changing times, he/she is challenged to re-negotiate expectations at various levels of management:

So I've got this need now to go back and re-negotiate with them. "This is what we think we do. Will that meet your expectations, or is there

something else that you've got bubbling out there, some other expectation that you want us to meet?"

His/her reaction to the Profilor 360-degree feedback experience varied by the rater categories. One peer rater was deliberately selected because this subject wanted to improve their relationship and saw the Profilor as an opportunity to establish a dialog; in fact, he/she did establish a mentoring relationship with that peer. The boss category was barely mentioned, as this subject has a close relationship with the boss and neither expected nor received any surprising feedback. The direct reports' feedback held some valued (though difficult) surprises:

Having taken the profilor provided the opportunity to get in tune with my subordinates, which, as I said, in my scheme of things was very high. I value their judgment, I value their input, and I wanted to know from them how I could help them do a better job. Because I knew that they respected me for what I contributed, even when I didn't respect myself! So that was important to me..

. Oh, they told me some things that I didn't want to hear, Steve! [where I said] "I thought I was doing a pretty good job of that!" But it was the opportunity to get the reality check.

Through the feedback, this subject established dialogs about his/her behaviors as manager with both a peer and the group of direct reports. He/she created an environment

characterized by candid feedback, advice, and support for changing behaviors and perspectives.

This subject changed more profoundly than any other in the study, coming to critically examine his/her organizational behaviors, managerial behaviors and role, and even his/her own thinking process. The most specific and notable behavior change was in decision-making: before the study, this manager was quickly reactive and prone to snap judgments; now, he/she uses a more reflective, participatory style of decisions. This change is supported, even pushed, by the subject's direct reports:

Now they are more reflective when we get something. And I've been impressed that sometimes I find myself falling back into the old trap of saying "oh this is stupid" [laughs] and my staff or somebody on my staff will step up and say "Well I think maybe this is the reason this is a good idea, and perhaps we ought to try this way to see if it works or doesn't work" It's been interesting.

Just as this subject sought feedback for years before the management development program, he/she also sought outside experiences to accelerate the changing process toward reflective thinking. This subject found an outside course closely related to developing critical thinking, sought out workshops such as a Covey Institute "7 Habits" seminar, initiated feedback-seeking from external social and professional resources, and generally focused his/her attention on the change process itself.

This subject, over the course of the study, was becoming notably different in approach to learning, and seeking an accelerating rate of change through reflective thinking. He/she initiated an interview at about 6 months after the Proflor feedback, and said:

I wanted to be the first to let you know that the lens is opening so fast that it's scary.

(the lens?)

My lens. And all of it, I think.. I mean, it has to do with a lot of things coming together, but MDP has been one of the catalysts for me. And I thought that I was pretty good at what I did, before. And now that the lens is finally opening up wider, the learning is just, its' almost scary. Because I'm unraveling ME so that I can take in and digest, process what I'm learning. Therefore the quest for what I'm learning is like all-consuming, 24 hours a day, I wanna be involved in gathering as much data as I can gather. And it hurts me, it pains me to have to go to sleep at night, because I'm not learning any more, for that down period. But the next day, is an adventure.

In the final interview, at 8 months after the Proflor, the subject elaborated on the nature of the change, which affects the subject profoundly:

... it's just getting information from a variety of sources and being able to boil it down so that it makes sense for me. And right now, it makes sense for me, if I'm working with stimuli, and looking at how to value a stimulus. And how does my behavior react to that stimulus.

... before now, I've not ever stepped outside of myself. it's always been.. that's the "I" coming out. "What's wrong with ME, what am I contributing to this?" And it's not that stepping outside of it doesn't have me doing the same thing, I just do it from a different lens. I'm able now to look a little broader, a little more globally, at the entire situation...

So I feel.. Like this is exponential growth for me. Because all of this is in less than a year.

So now, at every opportunity, the situations are the stimulus, and I'm outside here, and "Okay, I'm dissecting - how did I contribute? But what are the forces that the other players brought to this particular situation in order for it to resolve itself in this way?"

Other people may have gotten there in different ways. But it's the first time that I am paying particular attention to it.

In the same final interview, this subject also reflects on the causes of this change that has occurred.

Now, for what set of reasons? Am I now just old enough? Has my career taken a turn where I now understand for me to reach through to the next step, the next level? Is it because my children are now at an age where I am no longer focused on them, they can now begin to look a little more externally? I don't know. But it's happening to me now.

...Well, for me right now what's been happening, it's almost bizarre. And I'm just rolling with it, because I can't articulate it and I haven't read anything yet to help me focus it better. But I wake up in the middle of the night, and the light bulb goes off, and it's like, "THAT'S what that meant!" So then I spend the next couple of days, stepping outside, and I'm now beginning to permit that, to concentrate. And I find that I'm carving out a lot more "me" time to digest and dissect what's going on.

The overall organizational environment for all the subjects in this study was rapidly changing, with substantial outside threats to the organization's existence, forced downsizing, top management changes, and restructuring the organization into segments to break with its long non-profit history. For this subject, the uncertainty seemed to push initiative and commitment to change, as he/she describes the attitude for a changing environment:

...as a manager you have to carve out a niche for yourself, and make sure that people understand that you are still contributing. So I've spent the last

year trying to do that. And with [new Vice President] coming in, it's giving me another opportunity to refine that and have it ready for the next person on the block. So I'm using [name]'s departure as an opportunity for further professional growth for me. But I don't have to-- I could just sit here and twiddle my thumbs and wait for the new person to show up, and ask "Okay, how do you want me to act tomorrow?" And I'm choosing, consciously, not to do that. So no matter what else is going on around me. So I think these revelations have made me a better manager, but I've had to learn how to do some things differently. But that was a conscious decision.

This subject found change support from internal and external sources, both primarily at his/her own initiative. Within the organization, support came from direct reports, who developed a joint vested interest in this manager's development, and also from peer mentors whose advice and observations were directly sought. Externally, this subject used community institutions to exercise new skills and try new roles, and also used professional networks to seek feedback and insight.

Case 2: Perspective Change

Case 2 had substantially less experience with feedback seeking, and had never experienced a 360-degree instrument. He/She was in the first program year of the management development program and was interviewed once, extensively, at 22 months after the Profilor. He/She had been highly successful in managing technical work, and had

received direct feedback from bosses and clients about the execution of that work but had never had a systematic means to collect and receive feedback about growth needs or strengths. His/her enthusiasm for the instrument shows:

...the Profilor, the initial Profilor report, was extremely valuable, I thought. The only.. There's no other tool, no other way that I know of to accurately gauge how I'm really doing. It's the only real reality check I can imagine receiving. So I think the original profile was fantastic.

The enthusiasm was tempered by the need to overcome the skepticism of some respondents, who saw the process of management development, and this feedback in particular, as a waste of time and counter to their expectations:

Some of these raters come from a very technical background, and they have a deep mistrust for anything like this. As far as they're concerned, management is "Tell me what to do, objectively, to get the job done. Just tell me what to do and I'll do it. Why do we need to go through this communication touchy feely? If I don't understand what you're asking me to do I'll tell you. If I do understand it, nothing more needs to be done; I'll go out and do it. What's the problem?"

They come from that mentality. The technical people really suffer from that.

..But some of the respondents come from that background, the technical

background, and it was very hard to convince them that it's useful. Not only did I have to convince them that I'm serious about it - that's the first hurdle, that I think everyone has to get through - but the second hurdle was to convince them that it's USEFUL. Not only am I serious about it, but it is also a useful thing to do. Because, as I said, some of these people think this is just a distraction away from their mainstream work, and they're not sure that it will really lead to any improvement.

The technical people whom the subject manages are computer scientists who work in an isolated environment, with little contact with the rest of the organization and apparently little interest or faith that management development could make a difference in their lives.

This subject got a novel surprise in the feedback. Many who get feedback find that raters scored them higher than expected on strengths and lower than expected on development needs, but this subject found the opposite:

...it was surprising in that what I thought were my weaknesses weren't really picked up by people as weaknesses, and what I thought were my strengths also weren't picked up. And I was thinking about the weaknesses part, and I realized that perceiving them as weaknesses made me kind of compensate for them, to the degree that that didn't affect or hamper my performance, and that's why people didn't pick them up. But the fact that

my strengths weren't picked up, some of them, by the respondents, that was more troubling.

From the technical people's disbelief and the surprising feedback came a situation in which the subject had to "constantly communicate" to make the raters believe that he/she really wanted to know the feedback and that it would make a difference. This act of persuading the raters may have strengthened the subject's belief in the process, and it eventually led to more open communication about other matters as well as feedback:

... it's made other kinds of communication with them easier. This is a topic, this is something that's not that easy to talk about, because it's your own performance and effectiveness. And you're in a supervisory in some cases supervisory capacity, at least. In other cases there's been before a strictly professional relationship and now you're talking about very.. topics that can be very sensitive. And so, the ability to get through that, makes all sorts of other communication much easier. So just improves communication in general with these people.

This subject's decision of what to change was partly based on the Profilor feedback. One skill emerged as needing attention, but a harder development goal was already in this subject's plan and was more meaningful. The skill task to which the Profilor directed this subject's attention was planning and communicating expectations:

I thought at the outset that I was very organized, had good time management skills, that I was very clear in, not so much in giving feedback but in initially defining exactly what I wanted, what the job was, when it needed to be done. The Profilor showed that I wasn't as good in those respects, as good as I thought I was. So I took steps to correct that. That's been a complete success. I mean, I think everyone has had an experience, or had friends who have gotten a day planner, a Franklin planner, and it changes their lives. And they LIVE by that day planner. And I think it's helped me a lot, too. But that's just one small part of what I just emphasized, not only with the planning and time management aspects, but also being much more clear at the outset of exactly what I expected, and what the task was. That's something that I got out of the Profilor.

The more important change, in the subject's view, had to do with more of a change of perspective. At the start of the program, this subject had a focused view of management skills and believed them to be a finite set that could be mastered in the same way the rules of a new software environment could be mastered. He/she describes:

The individual skills are important, time management, giving feedback, all that kind of thing, the skills are important. But no set of skills will be enough to guide you through changing conditions, tumultuous conditions.

No set of skills alone is important enough, is going to be sufficient, rather. So it's a matter of having the attitude, the attitude of constantly challenging yourself, of constantly assessing your environment, assessing how you're doing, asking difficult questions of yourself, never becoming comfortable or complacent. That's the attitude.

The forces opposing change (both long term and short term) that this subject experienced were fairly universal among all subjects in this study, and centered around a lack of time and energy to attempt the change process:

Well, the obvious thing that constrains it is that it takes work. It takes time. And you have only so much energy and time during the day. And if you're in a job that already stresses you to the limit, it's very hard to find any additional energy, any additional emotional energy to put into this. This kind of thing adds stress, especially when it involves dealing with people in a way that you're not comfortable with, at first. To try to break down barriers, apply feedback, there's some personal awkwardness there, that adds a lot of stress. Something that's not easy to do.

The forces favoring change for this subject were support from a peer group at a critical point approximately 8 weeks after the Profilor, the subject's enthusiasm for the feedback that eventually turned the skeptics into supporters, and the subject's changed

frame of reference about management work. The very expectation that development would be difficult made it possible.

Case 3: Transient Change at the Skill Level

The subject of **Case 3** was from the second program year of the management development program and was interviewed for this study at 3 months and 8 months after the Profilor. Like the subject of Case 2, the subject of Case 3 was a recently promoted, technically valued middle manager who led projects that were isolated from the mainstream of the organization for security reasons. However, the organizational uncertainty and turmoil, present in all cases, had a very negative effect on this subject's change initiative.

This subject had never sought feedback on his/her performance as a manager from peers or direct reports, but only from "on high" and only in terms of crisis management, rather than development of new behaviors or perspectives:

most of the feedback that I received was from "on high", that would be [name], the department head. I kept in pretty close contact with him, and used him as a sounding board for most of the things I was doing. Along with a couple of other folks, throughout the company. Not too many,

because most of the work was SCIF¹ oriented and that sort of thing, you know, so that when you tried to bounce ideas off people, it tended to be a fairly small set of people.

In terms of management problems, probably never interacted with anyone other than the next person up the chain of command.

There was one prior experience with a multi-rater feedback instrument, approximately 3 years before the Proflor, and that experience was strongly negative. The subject's situation with his/her raters could not have been much worse:

[when that instrument] came along, I didn't know anybody in that department. I had been thrown into a crisis, I was taking over for a Group Leader who was everybody's friend. And he was moved off to another assignment and I got all these people who were not exactly top of the barrel.

And so there was a lot of resentment and contention with the folks in there. It was extreme, I mean there were people where I'd walk into the room and they wouldn't turn to face me. So it was a pretty tough situation, so when

¹SCIF means "Special Compartmented Information Facility" and is used for highly classified government work. This subject was forbidden to discuss any work that occurred there, which he/she generalized to be a prohibition against discussing management or relationship issues.

I asked these people what they thought of me I wasn't surprised that I came off pretty poorly.

This subject's role also affected his/her view of what managers do, and the low priority of focused development. He/She had earned a special niche within the organization, as a manager who could salvage crisis situations:

Development was pretty much just a matter of dealing with one crisis as it came up. And that's historically that seems to be the way I come to be assigned to things -- usually there's something wrong to start with. So fore planning is not something that always a factor, though I try to do more of that now.

(so when a crisis happened, sometimes they called you in..)

Yes, at least that's the way [name] used to use me quite a bit -- it was in pinches. So there was always something to fix when you got there. It wasn't any matter of "what could you have done to prevent it ahead of time?" That wasn't usually an option. So it was more reaction.

(tough way to work...)

Yeah, but I didn't mind it, so it wasn't a problem.

Understandably, this subject approached the Profilor warily. Following the directions for all participants, he/she selected as raters those who knew his/her work well, and braced for their feedback.

The feedback received was not surprising, except for the boss inputs on importance of the various skill areas. Generally, the subject expected, and heard, that in the new role of middle manager, more knowledge of the larger organization was needed. On specific areas, the subject experienced the association of question to construct in the Profilor as "red herrings" and distrusted the reliability of the ratings. However, with the boss, the subject sought to develop a common understanding of what the importance ratings meant:

Basically, I picked the ones where we were 180 degrees out of phase, and I asked him for his definition. His definition was much more like the definition that you folks provided in the class, which was not what I had thought of at first. Bottom line that I got out of that was, probably my definitions were a little too narrow.

... sometimes the definitions that I used were not quite broad enough for the position. It needs a different way of thinking, sort of proactive.

This subject sought to extend the discussion to the peers and direct reports, as suggested by the management development program. Like other subjects, he/she found at least initial difficulty in drawing out further response:

I asked a lot of open -- and I prepared open ended questions in advance, but they just went right into dead space. Which I'm not really surprised by.

I think it's very difficult to draw that kind of information. I think that's why they had the Profilor in the first place.

After the initial meeting with raters, no further feedback clarification or discussion was directly attempted, in contrast to the other cases.

This subject sought to actively change one particular skill, and he/she showed some progress. It is the same particular skill, time and project organization through the use of a planner, that the subject of Case 2 developed. But the more general focus, attention, and approach to change has slipped for this subject:

... there are so many other things up now that it just sort of works its way down the chain. And the impact is that it sort of goes down a notch.

Given that the instability moves up pretty near the top.

The feedback from the Profilor and the meeting with the boss led to an unusual opportunity: a formal job tasking that matched the development needs of broadening the subject's knowledge of the organization. The tasking involved setting up a conference and demonstration of the various projects for the organization's government sponsor, and would have required substantial contact and coordination with the whole organization.

Before that opportunity could be realized, however, the forces of organizational uncertainty derailed it: the subject had to deal with a Reduction In Force and uncertainty about what products and services the organization would provide for the next year.

This crisis confirmed the managerial role that this subject had understood, and continuing crises clearly affected his/her motivation to change:

The impact on development? Seriously because all of this instability leads to less efficiency and more things to do, more hand-holding, more going-away lunches to orchestrate and attend, development slips. You still have to get the job done, and to do all the hand-holding, and the personal part of the equation, that's where the slack tends to get taken out of it. I can say that I have not done much recently. As a matter of fact, I've done a pretty damn good job of putting the entire MDP project out of my mind to the extent that if I had to brief that today I'd be in big trouble...

I have not thought a whole lot about.. I guess sometimes I just grit my teeth and gone and done what I needed to do...

Case 4: Persistent Skill Change

The subject in **Case 4** had had a fairly positive experience with Proflor, as part of a different management development program 2 years previously. This subject's experience of the organizational uncertainty led to a sense of threat and seemed to focus him/her at the skill level rather than at a level of perspective change.

The subject's prior experience with feedback, within that part of the organization, was not extensive or direct. Performance appraisals were rarely done for managers on

time, if at all, and there was little direct performance feedback. The earlier Proflor was fairly positive, and "eye-opening" in that:

from the standpoint of the feedback from the bosses, I think that was also some of the better feedback I had gotten. And I think that the reason was that the process causes it to be kind of specific. You can really kind of home in on some specific areas that the boss perhaps otherwise isn't even aware of, or else has a hard time putting it into words.

This prior good feedback experience fizzled when the subject wanted to pursue clarification for development planning from bosses who

have a difficult time articulating negative feedback. And they want to offer feedback for development, but the idea of talking about it... [I might ask] "If there is a problem, what do I need to correct it," they say "Well, it isn't really that bad" It's hard to engage in those kinds of discussions.

This subject was an experienced middle manager, on the job for 4 or more years. His/her role was highly integrated across several projects for a primary customer of the organization. Stability was low in that part of the organization, which had recently suffered a 25% Reduction In Force, and uncertainty was high about the future.

The feedback this subject received dismayed him/her, as there was high discrepancy between two boss ratings, with the immediate boss ratings rather low. The

initial reaction was "Oh boy, this is real trouble here." There was high motivation to clarify what needed changing and to dedicate energy to the change, because "To be honest, I think that the primary reason is survival."

The subject had a very direct conversations with the boss who gave him/her low ratings, understood that the core issue was effective communication between them, and began a determined campaign to improve that. He/She also showed the managerial courage to be open to feedback from peers and direct reports

Well, I basically took the approach of trying to go through all the feedback and summarize at the end to 3 or 4 categories. That is, here are the common themes I heard, here are a couple of items I specifically heard from [boss 1], and a couple from [boss 2], and others. I had that pretty much on one page of major items, and I shared everything with everybody.. ...And I also asked them for any suggestions for items to include in my individual action plan. And I think that was about the extent of the discussion

... The other question that I asked them, especially with regard to some of the [boss 1] items and [boss 2] items, I asked them if they observed any of this and had it affected them. And I got out of that a couple of extra insights, also.

The communication process with the low-rating boss was the focus of this subject's change efforts, and he/she pursued it diligently. He/She sought advice from peers who communicated more effectively with this person, changed processes, and even wrote and followed an action plan:

I kind of struggled with an action plan, because the real how to do an action plan is to say "I'm gonna have this done by this date and this done by this date" basically, the action plan I did had some dates on it, but the basic action plan I came up with was to change my basic method of interaction with [boss 1]. And just try to work on being sure there is no miscommunication, non-communication, stuff like that. As an example, I have, as I think quite a few of us have done, have depended on e-mail to communicate up. Turns out that's probably not the best thing with [boss 1]. So I oftentimes now, if it's something I'm having him really interested in, I grab him in the hallway, or I send him an e-mail but also print out a copy, take it up to his secretary, and say "I want [boss 1] to see this."

Support for this change effort from the organization was ultimately less than zero: between the first and second interviews, the organization restructured itself to have fewer managers at this subject's level. The subject found a different role at a different level, no longer reporting to the low-rating boss.

In the later interview with this subject, it became clear that there had been a different understanding between this subject and his/her low-rating boss about what needed changing:

I in fact as you know came up with an action plan, and actually felt like I executed on that plan pretty well. I think there was a dramatic increase in the amount of interaction I had with [boss 1], and I felt we got to a common understanding - and I'm emphasizing understanding, not agreement - as to the situation, the areas he felt I was weak. And I am not clear at this time, however, whether he viewed I addressed the issue adequately. I can surmise the answer is no.

The difference was that while this subject specifically focused on a concrete change, the boss expected broader, less defined change: optimal project closure after good beginnings and "thinking out of the box."

The changes in this subject's view of the organization's real values were revealing in the wake of this change and reflect a role conflict between this subject's view of managerial work and his/her view of the organization's criteria for success as a manager:

my approach has always been more an orchestra leader than an instrument soloist. In that I do believe in trying to put a team together, keep track of what they're doing, and if they're kind of wandering off the track, try to keep them focused. But the outcome of it is more a team product. And

I'm kind of invisible to that process. And I'm not sure that is what they want here. They SAY they want that, but in effect if you are specifically associated as the leader of that effort, it is asked "what role did YOU play?" or that stuff. So the primary change I have made is to try to make myself much more - in most situations - try to make myself much more visible and be sure I am offering inputs at the right times, maybe directing the team toward a conclusion a little bit more than I used to, and DAMN well I'm letting my management know a lot more of what I'm doing. So it's a subtle change but it is a change.

In this second interview, the subject's view of his/her commitment to develop and change is undiminished:

I don't think it's had any effect. If it's had any effect, it's strengthened it. I mean, I am now feeling first-hand the articles we have read about how middle management is shrinking and it's being squeezed. And it was always to me kind of theoretical, but now I really feel it. And so if anything it is saying to me, this isn't the time to get complacent. You've got to take action, you've got to continue to be valuable.

Case 5: Durable Perspective Change

The subject of **Case 5** was a department manager at a field office. He/she participated in the first year of the management development program, and was interviewed at length 22 months after the Profilor. He/She had extensive experience with seeking feedback, often with multi-rater instruments. He/she took initiative to change the feedback environment in the organization he/she managed and for which he/she was well regarded. Environmental and organizational changes, however, led to a business operation closure, and during the period when colleagues in the program were more or less focused on development planning, he/she was dedicated to helping his/her staff find new positions. This subject is included in the study because he/she came from a strict, intolerant, technical perfectionist background, endured more organizational stress than any other, had more experience with feedback and change, and sheds light on the durability of perspective change in response to feedback.

The early background of this subject was much like the background of most managers in this technical organization: technical excellence leads to management assignment, for which the individual may be badly suited. In this subject's words,

And like a lot of companies, [name] had the misfortune to take the best technical people and promote them into management, and we made terrible managers if we're not in that bent, and they made me a manager and I was very bad at it because of this intolerance and this strictness in some sense, you know, a perfectionist, "a right way, a wrong way, and MY way" I just

didn't do well at all, looking back at it, although at the time I thought it was really hot potatoes. Because the work that came out of my group - I was a first level supervisor - if it ever GOT out, it was perfect. We were thoroughly confident that it was going to run, that it was going to be documented.

This subject realized that technical perfection was not a sufficient management approach, and found management author Tom Peters' work led to insights about how to manage, which led to "a transformation for me." Along the lines recommended by Peters, the subject decided to seek the inputs of the managed and gauge success from their perspective.

The subject had extensive experience with seeking feedback both through multi-rater instruments and face-to-face meetings for feedback and performance discussion. On promotion to Department Head, the subject created and instituted a multi-rater assessment instrument on organizational climate and management performance. The results of that initial effort revealed that there was frustration among the subordinates at never having been asked for their view of how the department was run:

But the thing that surprised me the most out of the first one was that they took the opportunity to dump. It's like somebody finally asked "Is anything wrong?" and "Wham!" Boy, I got a lot of answers!.

The message was clearly there in my mind that nobody had ever asked

them before, and that therefore the perception is, if I was on the inside of the group, then "nobody above me thinks they NEED improvement. They had made it. They're the managers. They don't have to improve. They're always rating me, and telling me what to do, but I never get a chance to tell them." That's an open loop. And that's not good.

This subject used that initial round of instrumented feedback to establish a different relationship with the department than any peers or predecessors had achieved:

So we synopsised it, and I made a briefing out of it, and went back and stood up and called the department in, all these people, and did the briefing. I said "This is what you guys said, and this is what I think I can work on and do something about, and don't think I need or don't want to do it this way, I'm gonna do it like this because I think that's right, and this is what I can't do anything about."

The process became an annual event, as the subject used the same instrument to assess the organizational climate and management performance for 3 years in a row.

This subject also used another multi-rater feedback instrument twice, at 6 months apart, as part of a management development course at the site, and had used the Profilor previously in a management simulation program, "Looking Glass." The Profilor used in the context of this management development program was the sixth multi-rater instrument for this subject in 4 years.

There were few surprises from within the department in this Profilor feedback, but there was one disturbing confirmation about the discrepancy between the bosses' view and others' view:

..if upper management tracked almost an inch away from it, and in fact crossed where a high rating was good or bad, the lines crossed. Surely there was a different perception between the people who worked for me and the people I worked for. They saw me in an entirely different light. Entirely different. Not 0 to 7 or whatever the scale was, but enough off that they ran almost like railroad tracks down the page. And that was shocking, amusing, interesting, I didn't know what to make of it, what to do about it.

The feedback gave some indication of what upper management wanted and expected, and it was different from the expectations that had been formed, and met, between the subject and his/her direct reports. How the subject handled the discrepancy reveals the subject's dilemma and priorities:

I dismissed part of it because I knew the personality and I knew the background of the site leader at the time. And I knew [boss 2] enough, and I knew how much interaction I had with him over a period of time to know how much data he had to work with. Whereas [boss 1] had a whole lot more data to work with but I also knew the kind of person he was, and

in my mind, put that kind of approach on it. But over here, on the direct reports, I also knew that I had given it to a broad spectrum of people - not only in terms of responsibility and role, but people who, in my mind I knew liked me a lot, didn't really care for me, and some in the middle. And I tended to rely much more on that rail as an indicator of good performance or weaknesses or things like that than the management rail although at the same time that's the one I had to deal with, because those are the people who wrote my reviews and those are the people who would give me a raise or didn't give me a raise and things like that.

(So the rail that you trusted was from the direct reports and peers

And peers, right.

(...so, the boss data you perceived that it was what? inaccurate, invalid, biased..?)

No, it's not that I discounted it. Well I just knew the kinds of things from him.. All I got out of looking at those was a confirmation of his set or values. So I said, Well, in dealing with him, I need to understand that he has this set of values. This is what he values, and what he doesn't value.

And these over here tell me how I need to treat people, because this is what THEY value. And so, in some sense, I knew I had to be 2 kinds of people, depending on who I was in front of, because to me, the difference was enough that I couldn't be one person, I had to be 2 kinds of people.

(That must have been tough)

It IS tough. Damn tough. Because I'm much more the person that my peers and direct reports said I was, than what [boss 1) perceived me to be. But I had to deal with that.

Within the context of the business closing, this subject did not seek further feedback around the Profilor feedback as fully as he had other experiences of feedback. This time, only a few raters were sought out for follow-up, rather than all in a group meeting. Not all raters were asked for further feedback:

You gotta take time out up there, you gotta track somebody down, you gotta get them to spend an hour talking about it, and after they beat you up, it takes you 3 or 4 days to want to go do that again sometimes. So yeah, you get tired of it. And as you say, this all came right in the middle of shutting the site down, getting ready to do that. So this was not the hottest topic on my list.

Short-term organizational supports for changed behavior were totally gone in this case, and there were no short-term, skills-oriented change plans. The subject relocated and assumed a staff role, rather than a management one.

In the longer term, after the cumulative effect of many multi-rater assessments and years of seeking to change, the subject had internalized a list of principles that he/she sought to follow:

And some of the old stuff I know still works. I can revel in the fact that I have some rules now that I know are reliable, and I can use that.

(which you can take with you wherever you go?)

Absolutely. They're almost physical, almost laws of physics. They just work every time. Every time.

Everybody is a person. Everybody has wants and needs and desires.

Everybody wants to have somebody else think that they're worth something. They want to have a sense of self-worth. If they don't have a sense of self worth, and they're not worth much to themselves, they're not going to be worth much to anybody else. So one of the first things you need to do is to make sure that everybody a sense of self-worth. And you do that. You make sure that they are challenged. That they have something that is not demeaning to do. And you see that they do the best they can on it, and then you tell them that. Make sure you tell them about it. It WORKS EVERY TIME.

Summary - Five cases describe a range of experience before, during, and after the 360-degree feedback and development planning. The antecedent experience for these cases ranged from none to extensive, with positive and negative prior experience also represented. The experiences around acceptance and rejection varied within these five cases from aggressive pursuit of further information to discounting and denial. The post-feedback experiences within these five cases went from organizational support and mutual

commitment to change to insurmountable obstacles. These five cases represent perspective changes, from dramatic to absent, and are summarized in Table 1.

Chapter 5, Cross-Case Analysis, will examine these phenomena in greater detail and suggest linkages between them.

Table 1 Summary of Case Histories

	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5
Role	Corporate function for internal clients	New middle manager, isolated technical group	New middle manager, isolated technical group	4 years + as middle manager in mainstream group.	3 years + as middle manager at site; led. shut-down
Prior FB Experience.	Sought personal feedback regularly; 1 prior 360	Feedback limited to boss inputs; no prior 360	Feedback limited to boss inputs; 1 prior 360 (bad experience)	Little feedback from bosses; 1 prior Profilor	Extensive: 3 Profilers, 3 times w/ own instrument, 2 times w/ other
Reaction to FB	Surprise at DR feedback; sought to correct	Surprise that weaknesses & strengths missed; sought further dialog	"180 degrees out of phase" with boss on importance; discussed to agreement.	Dismay at discrepancy between 2 bosses, low ratings from one; resolved to fix.	"Shocking" discrepancy between boss & DR expectations; chose not to change during crisis
Change Decision	Change decision-making process; high initiative in seeking perspective changes	Change planning techniques as part of broader honing; pursued development dialog with DRs	Change information organizing approach; stretch job assignment was delayed for organizational reasons.	Change approach to communicating with low-rating boss.	No change: Stay with priority behaviors and values developed with DRs through prior feedback experiences
Perspective Difference	Dramatic change in view of self as person, manager; critical examination of own thinking.	Major change in view of manager role, in attitude toward challenges, and about ambiguity	No notable change	Persistent perspective of self as innately good manager	Quest to maintain principles
Short-Term Supporting/ Opposing Factors	Support: DRs, Peers, External sources Opposition: time-pressures, load.	Support: new communicative relation with DRs Opposition: time-pressures, load.	Support: job task (delayed) Opposition: organizational uncertainty, RIFs, perceived culture shift away: "people skills"	Support: DRs and peers. Opposition: re-organization, perceived culture shift away: valuing leadership	Support: DRs and peers Opposition: site shut-down (stress, load, morale factors)
Long-term Supporting/ Opposing Forces	Support: initiative and momentum of seeking insight Opposition: organizational expectations & uncertainty	Support: new relationships, view of role. Opposition: continually increasing workload	Support: task performance with new system Opposition: continuing organizational instability, conflicting messages, changing organizational values.	Support: peers, new bosses Opposition: continuing organizational instability, conflicting messages	Support: confirmation of principles in new context Opposition: new roles and rules .

CHAPTER 5

Cross-Case Analysis

In this chapter, the research questions are explored in terms of variables revealed in the data and the beginnings of a theory are set out in a process model. Each research question is examined in turn, with a view of how the related phenomena and processes operate across cases. The process model was constructed from the primary phenomena and processes and suggests how the processes work together to describe the variety of experience and response in the 360-degree feedback process.

Processes That Influence Initial Response

The first general research question was framed to look for initial deflection or acceptance of the feedback message and to look more specifically at anticipated variables of content, source, and discrepancies. Although they proved important, the experience described in the cases was much richer than these few variables. The approach to the first research question will be to work from the expected variables of content, source, and discrepancies to describe the other pertinent variables that the data revealed in the initial response phase, and to suggest a general process.

Question 1.1: How does the content of the feedback (negative, positive, surprising) affect its acceptance or deflection? A summarized form of the answers is in Table 2 to facilitate cross-referencing the variables and components of the research questions. The data from the five Cases showed some contrasts and parallels.

Table 2 Summary of Research on Processes that Influence Initial Response

	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5
Nature of Feedback Message	Not delegating, Not "walking the talk"	Strengths, Weaknesses unnoticed; Need to clarify tasks, manage time.	Need better organizational knowledge, Need broader leadership perspective	Need better communication w/ Boss, better closure, more "out-of-box" thinking	Style aligned with Direct Reports, not Boss.
Degree of Surprise	Very high	High	None	Very High	High
Response to Message	Changed behavior	Changed behavior, increased communication	Specific behavior change, no changed view	Specific behavior change, no changed view	Decision not to change
Trust in Source	Very High Variable High High	Very High Very High High	High	Low High High	Very High High Low
Priority of Feedback Sources (descending)	Direct Reports Peers External (Boss) ¹	Direct Reports Peers (Boss)	Boss	Boss Direct Reports Peers	Direct Reports Peers Boss

¹ Feedback from Boss was barely mentioned in the data, other than brief references of general trust and support.

Message content was surprising, but understood and generally accepted. The nature of 360-degree feedback is to shine a light in hidden places through anonymous multiple raters; these five cases generally experienced their surprises as bad news. There were skill deficits to fix in Cases 1, 2, 3, and 4. All these heard a specific skill development need, among other messages, and all proceeded to try to develop the target skill.

Cases 2 and 3 are in some ways similar, but had different responses to the feedback messages they received. Case 2 responded to the skill need (bought and used a planner), but regarded that as a small piece of a bigger picture of changing the communications and feedback norms. Case 3 also bought and used a planner, but stopped short of the bigger picture. After organizational issues stopped a developmental assignment that would have increased Case 3's organizational knowledge, and after certain organizational changes indicated profound culture changes, his/her morale and organizational trust were low in the second interview.

Cases 4 and 5 had expectations beyond a skill level as part of the feedback message, and both deflected that part. Case 4 addressed the skill component of the message with immediate, unambiguous behavior change, but never quite agreed with the broader part of the feedback, that there were leadership issues of closure and "thinking out of the box." Case 5 deflected the surprising negative feedback, which suggested a change in management style to approximate the boss' behavior, by consciously discounting the

source in favor of the confirming messages from the Direct Reports. There was an established relationship between Case 5 and his/her staff that had been shaping managerial behavior for at least 3 years, and the subject of Case 5 felt that he/she could operate authentically only within that style.

One common organizational variable between Cases 4 and 5 is degree of organizational uncertainty. Case 4's organizational environment added a context to the feedback message that changed the nature of the motivation:

To be honest, I think that the primary reason is survival.

(in other words, the environment's threatening enough..

Yes. We just took a 25% cut, and we don't have guarantees that there won't be other intrusions in the future. All staffing levels are vulnerable, so I'm trying. I view this not only as personal development, but as survival.

And that's a big motivation.

Similarly, with Case 5, the organizational climate was chaotic, as a business shut-down occurred, with all employees (including the subject) shifted to other locations and assignments.

Research Question 1.1 is too narrow in its expectations of both the inputs and the outcomes of the feedback message. All feedback messages were more complex than can be described as "positive, negative, or surprising." Case 5's feedback message is all three at once: positive in the support for managerial style from Peers and Direct Reports,

negative in the suggestion of changing essential management style, and surprising in the size of the gap between raters. The outcomes are more varied than acceptance or deflection, as well: only Case 1 (in an earlier experience of 360-degree feedback) and Case 5 had clear examples of complete deflection. Case 2 accepted the skill need and dealt with it, but refused to let the communication process go silent; he/she spent considerable effort trying to convince raters of sincerity and utility of the process, and established a new relationship with them. Case 3 accepted the skill need and dealt with it, but the need to broaden management perspective was swept away by tides of crises. Case 4 tested the skill need against Peer and Direct Report inputs, then worked on it; the broader needs were never addressed to the boss' satisfaction.

Several other variables emerged from the data related to Research Question 1.1 and how they affected the experience and actions of the cases:

Feedback Norms are the pre-Profilor standards for communicating about performance; there were several at work for the various cases. For Case 2, the expectation was that management would tell the staff what to do, and that was the end of it; if anyone actually asked, the response would be complimentary -- Case 2 spent months of effort changing these. Case 4 had rarely experienced performance appraisals, much less feedback:

...a real benefit of the profilor or any of these instruments is that frankly, one of the really lousy things that [the organization] does is give feedback to the department level management. I mean, most of us haven't had an

appraisal in years, and if we've had one, it's been a couple of years old, and the feedback process... has been universally bad.

But a concentrated hour of answering questions, thinking about the individual, probably is one of the more useful aspects of it.

The feedback norms that Case 5 established were unique and included at least annual reviews of Case 5's performance with a locally-constructed multi-rater assessment instrument for peers and direct reports. One effect of this norm for Case 5 was a high degree of rapport with Direct Reports, very high trust in their feedback, and a growing difference between his/her style and that of the other local managers.

Feedback Credibility had a lot to do with how seriously the feedback message was taken. For Case 3, there were doubts about how the Profilor rolled up the ratings from items to constructs, with a resulting lowered acceptance of the validity and priority of the feedback. A related variable that will be treated below is *Source Credibility*, which deals more with trust in the individual who offers feedback, rather than the instrument.

Feedback Meetings affected whether the feedback message was believed. Where face-to-face confirmation was sought, and was useful, the belief in the importance and relevance of the feedback increased; the converse was also true. Case 1 met regularly with direct reports who had given low ratings on delegation and discussed the issue openly; the accuracy of the feedback and its importance became compellingly clear. Case 2 had to constantly communicate his/her sincerity and the usefulness of wanting feedback; this process eventually led to better communication. Case 3 got nothing at all from the

feedback meetings with peers or direct reports: "I prepared open-ended questions in advance, but they just went right into dead space." Case 4 openly shared the feedback with all raters, and asked them to confirm, extend, or make suggestions; the raters may have helped lead him/her to believe that the skillful improvement of his/her communication with the boss (which would affect their promotion potential) was the primary issue, rather than the broader ones the boss suggested. And Case 5, during the shut-down, gave less formal attention to directly soliciting feedback than in years past:

I didn't do it as formally as I did with our own self-generated instrument, in every case with the little internal thing that we did. It would take about a month, we'd do it, and give [statistician] a week or so to get the stuff back in, and we'd always have a little pizza party, and I'd set it up and do a little briefing. We didn't do that. I didn't call the whole department in and say "I've been through this instrument" and this kind of thing. And I didn't go back to every one of the people who had given me feedback, who had participated. But I did call on a couple of them.

Question 1.2: How does the source of the feedback affect its acceptance or deflection? Referring to Table 2, the questions about trust in source and priority of feedback sources address this research point. This point proved to be an essential discriminator among the Cases in this study.

Trust in the feedback providers seems intuitively important for anyone to undertake a change effort. In most cases in this study, the trust levels are high, but not all, and where they are different is revealing in terms of the acceptance or deflection of the feedback message.

As shown in Table 2, Cases 1 and 2, who showed the greatest change during this study, trust the feedback of their direct reports. They both see their direct reports as the ones who can make them shine or fail. As Case 1 said,

And maybe not for everybody, maybe from the subordinates isn't the place you want to get it. Maybe they want to get it from the top. That wasn't as important to me because I just felt that the subordinates were the ones who could catapult me into being better. Because if I could meet their vision of what a good manager was, then I thought I'd be pretty good. And from the feedback and now from some of the kinds of interactions we're having are different from interactions we had a year ago.

Second priority for feedback sources for Cases 1 and 2 are peers. Case 2 used a special set of peers, a learning team through the management development program, for support which he/she credits as essential for the change in view. Case 1 used a learning team less and had variable trust in most peers, but actually instigated one peer-level organizational alliance through the Profilor feedback and development planning process

that provided him/her with a new and trusted mentor who was instrumental in his/her development of the habit of a reflective, critical approach.

Cases 1 and 2 barely mention their bosses at all as a feedback resource, yet Cases 3 and 4 barely mention any other. Case 3 did not get Peer or Direct Report raters to provide any new information in group sessions and sought no further direct performance-related feedback from them; at the 8-month interview, he/she said of the feedback meetings "You have to search to remember those meetings, to tell the truth. I think that it's probably pretty well forgotten." Case 4 sought confirmation about one aspect of the Boss feedback from the Peers and Direct Reports, and got it:

Because the primary "tall pole" from both the peers and direct reports was that they were concerned that the issue of building effective relationships upward was an issue. And it translated to them as they were kind of afraid that the relationship wasn't strong, that it was hurting the division's view of our work program and that kind of stuff and obviously it translates to worrying about how they individually would be viewed by the tech director.

Case 5 was more similar in this respect to Cases 1 and 2, valuing and trusting the feedback of Direct Reports over others. In fact, he/she discounted the surprising feedback from the Boss in favor of the consistent message from Direct Reports, on the grounds that:

I knew what he would say. I knew him well enough that I knew exactly what he was gonna say. And remember, he was an inch away from the other layer. His response was far enough away, and by that time he'd been down there three and a half years, and I knew him very well.

The passage above hints at another phenomenon, *Source Credibility*, which was not mentioned directly in the research questions. Where the subject has a strong belief in the wisdom, good intentions, insights of the feedback source, *Source Credibility* can have a positive effect on the acceptance of feedback. Where the subject believes the source has some negative intentions, hidden agenda, or little knowledge of the subject's performance, the reverse is true.

Case 1 gives examples of both phenomena: the subject readily believes feedback from the Direct Reports, regarding the feedback interaction as:

...the opportunity to get in tune with my subordinates, which, as I said, in my scheme of things was very high. I value their judgment, I value their input, and I wanted to know from them how I could help them do a better job. Because I knew that they respected me for what I contributed, even when I didn't respect myself! So that was important to me.

And on another occasion, Case 1 dismisses feedback from peers:

So basically the peers that I gave it to didn't know me well enough to do much more than middle of the road, and I knew that one of them was a hard grader, you know, scorer.

Another phenomenon relates to *Source Credibility* and is its frequent application: *Feedback Source Discounting* is the process in which feedback is ignored or minimized because of some attributed ignorance, bad intent, bias, personality clash, etc. It is the most common means to deflect feedback found in this study and was present in some smaller or greater degree in all cases. Case 2 was surprised that both strengths and weaknesses were missed in the feedback, and later surmised that the raters did not know him/her well enough, after only two years' acquaintance. Case 3, in an experience with instrumented feedback 3 years before the Profilor, reasonably discounted feedback from a new work group he led, describing the dynamics as

And so there was a lot of resentment and contention with the folks in there.

It was extreme, I mean there were people where I'd walk into the room and they wouldn't turn to face me.

So it was a pretty tough situation, so when I asked these people what they thought of me I wasn't surprised that I came off pretty poorly.

Case 4 later came to wonder about the intentions of the low-rating boss, ascribe that feedback to perhaps "a clash of wills or a clash of personalities," and looked forward to

feedback from other sources. Case 5 offers a double example of *Feedback Source Discounting* in the same passage:

I dismissed part of it because I knew the personality and I knew the background of the site leader at the time. And I knew [boss 2] enough, and I knew how much interaction I had with him over a period of time to know how much data he had to work with. Whereas [boss 1] had a whole lot more data to work with but I also knew the kind of person he was, and in my mind, put that kind of approach on it.

Figure 1 depicts this reciprocal process of expectations. Where *Source Credibility* was high, as in Case 1 with Direct Reports, the relationships were strengthened as the feedback was accepted and future credibility of that source was enhanced. Conversely, where *Source Credibility* was low, the feedback was deflected through *Feedback Source Discounting*, as in Case 5 with Boss feedback, and the negative expectations about the source were confirmed, which reduced the future credibility of feedback from that source.

Research Question 1.3: How do any discrepancies in the feedback affect the process? The data revealed that this question turns out to be entirely a subset of the Question 1.1 about surprises and Question 1.2 about sources, and has already been covered above.

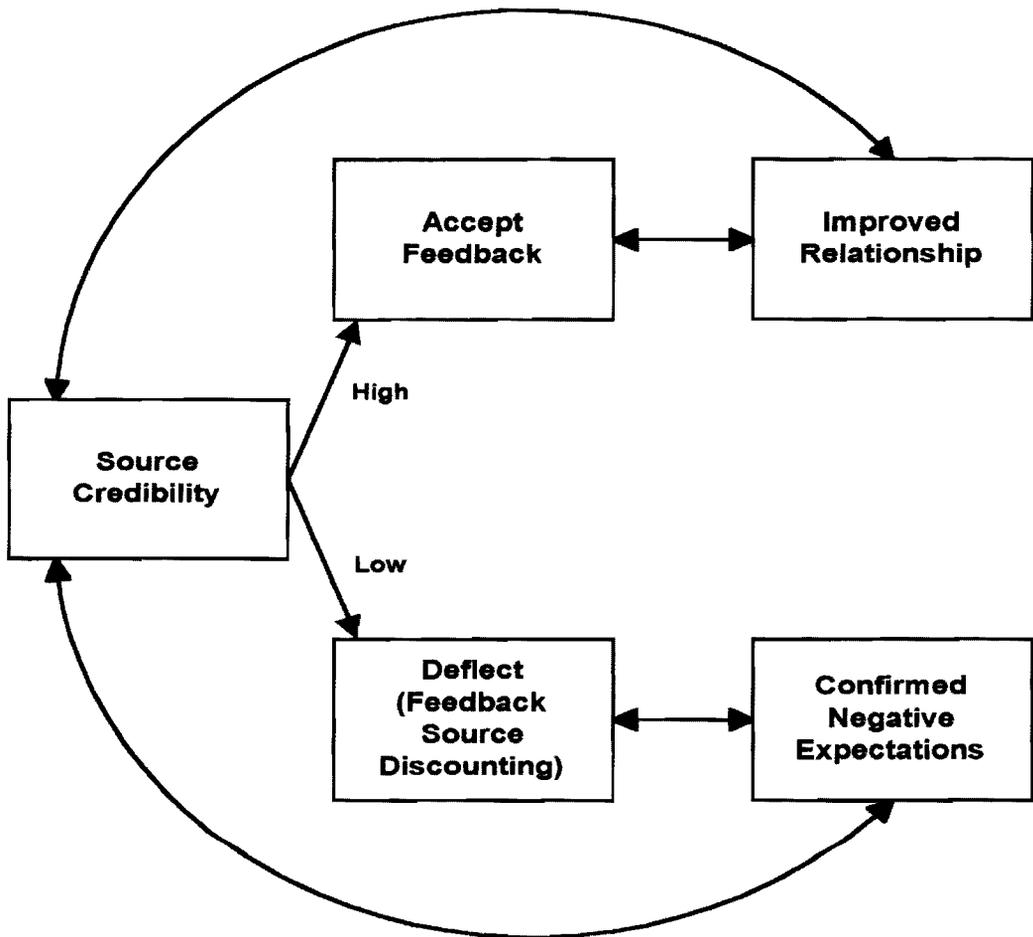


Figure 1. The Source Credibility Process.

General Research Question 1: What processes influence recipients' initial

acceptance or deflection of 360-degree feedback? The data revealed some general and specific phenomena and other processes suggested by the data. Several of these merge to relevance in the next research question about content and commitment to change. Figure 2 summarizes the general processes that influence initial acceptance or deflection of 360-degree feedback.

From the phenomenon of *Source Credibility*, with its common instantiation of *Feedback Source Discounting*, come two related concepts. First, interacting with *Source Credibility* is the category of phenomena called *Relationships*; where *Source Credibility* is high, *Relationships* seem to become established or be strengthened. The relational aspect of support for change will be addressed more thoroughly in discussion of the other two research questions. Second, interacting at the negative side of *Source Credibility*, *Source Discounting* seems to interact with other phenomena to strengthen the resistance to feedback messages. Instances of *Source Discounting* combine with each other, with *Feedback Credibility*, and sometimes with *Time Pressure* and/or *Load* to lead to a process of *Insulation* from feedback. *Insulation* can create a strong shield to protect the person from change.

Another influence that affects initial feedback acceptance is *Feedback History*. Where prior experience with feedback was recalled as useful or neutral, as in Cases 1, 4, and 5, the subjects approached the feedback experience with curiosity. Where prior

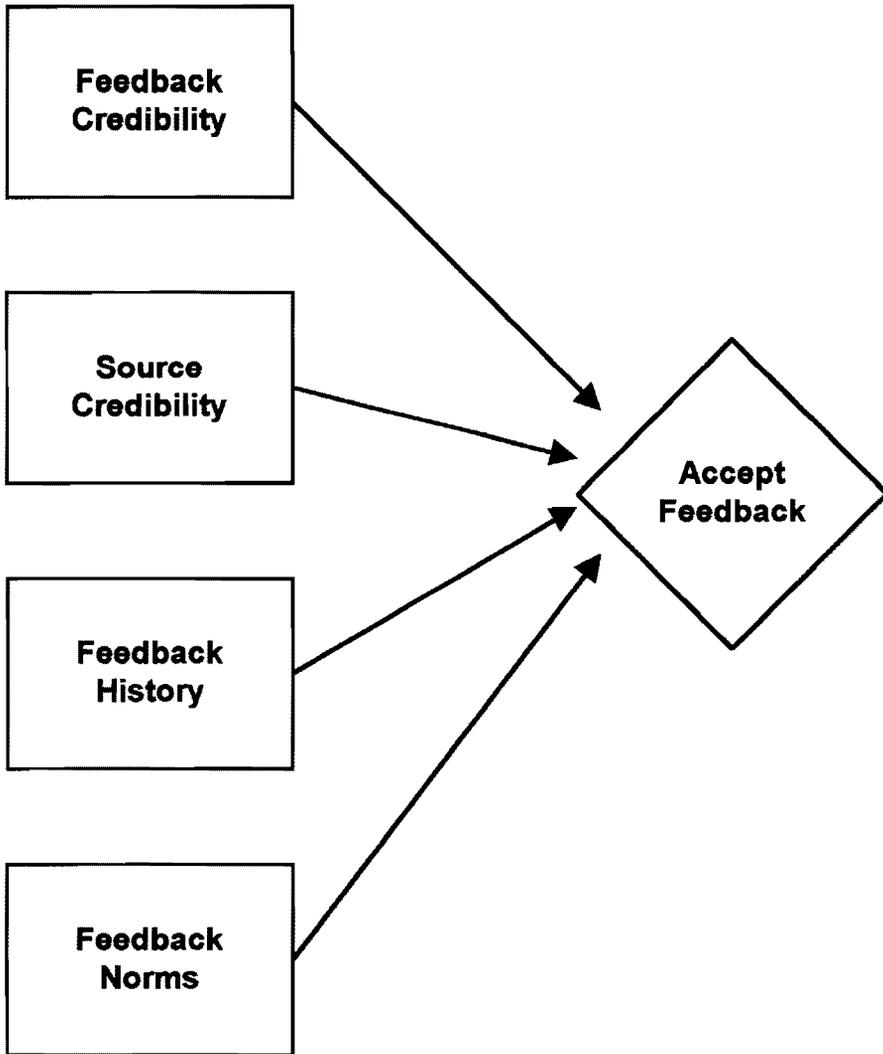


Figure 2. Influences on the Decision to Accept Feedback.

experience was negative, as in Case 3, the negative expectation led to a cautious approach. Case 3's actions within this cautious approach were challenging the feedback credibility and assuming a narrow definition of the tasks. The undermining of the change commitment in Case 3 will contrast with the determined perspective shifting of Cases 1 and 2 in the examination of the other research questions.

Processes That Influence Change Selection and Commitment

The second general research question deals with the influences on deciding what to change, at what level of commitment. Initial variables that the researcher expected to find were cues for change target selection, appropriate depth of change, and the effect of initial acceptance of the feedback message on commitment to change. Again, the data proved richer than expectations, and the interplay of these and other variables revealed a number of other factors, primarily interpersonal and organizational, that seemed to drive change choices for these cases. As with the previous question, the specific sub-questions will be examined first, and then the general question will be reviewed. Table 3 contrasts and highlights what the data showed about key variables and will be referenced in the discussion of the sub-questions.

Research Question 2.1: How does a recipient decide what to change? Table 3's first three rows highlight what the data showed in regard to this first subquestion.

Table 3 shows that the two Cases that showed the greatest change also had both specific skill-oriented change targets and deeper ones. Their top level changes, like the change targets of Cases 3 and 4, were achieved at a purely behavioral level; they used a

Table 3 Summary of Research on Processes that Influence Change Selection and Commitment

	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5
Change Target	1) Delegate; 2) Reflect	1) Organize; 2) Give Feedback	Gain Organizational Knowledge	Communicate Better w/ Boss	None (keep prior changes)
Source of Need Awareness	1) DR Profilor feedback; 2) Fascination, Momentum	1) Profilor 2) Self-knowledge	Profilor, also Role Expectation for Middle Mgr	Profilor	DR & Peer Feedback, Profilor and before
Decision Criteria	1) DR Need 2) Personal Journey	1) Easy Target, Met DR Needs 2) Challenge	DR Needs from Role	Survival and Direct Report Expressed Needs	Maintain Integrity, Commitment
Level of Change	Transform Perspective	Transform RoleView	Skill	Skill	Durable Perspective
Motive for Level of Change	Readiness from Multiple Criteria	Load-based Expectations Shift	Time Pressure	Survival	Load

checklist approach to achieving the target skills. This matched the level of questions and the advice generally provided by the Profilor and its accompanying guidebook, *Successful Manager's Handbook* (PDI, 1992). Their approach to the deeper change targets will be addressed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

The source of their awareness of the need to change was common at the surface level and was extended and confirmed (or was not, in Case 3) by personal contact with the feedback givers. The personal contact took the form of Feedback Meetings with the feedback givers, and these meetings made the need to change more personal, more intense, and usually more specific. Case 3 got little back from Peer and Direct Report raters in the face-to-face meeting when he/she conducted it exactly as the management development program recommended:

Well, it started off with... because, again, most of the people in that room had not filled out the form, of course. I didn't have that many instruments, nor did I want to anyhow. But I gave them an idea of the background, and thanked them, as a group, for participating, or for both -- either in terms of what they *had* done, so it would be anonymous, or *would* do as part of this in a continuing process.

And then I said, What I'm going to do is share with you sort of the results, that I've taken from it so far, and then I want to open it up with some open-ended questions about what exactly might be meant by some of these indicators that I'm not sure of. And I'll kind of walk down what I think is a

textbook approach. And they just absorbed it all in. Nothing much came the other way.

The experience above matched Case 3's earlier experience with Peers, where "I prepared open-ended questions in advance, but they just went right into dead space." Without elaboration or emotional support for the change, Case 3 proceeded to base the change target on generic role expectations for middle managers and rare one-on-one questions from Direct Reports.

In the decision criteria, the Cases are essentially similar: all based their decision of what to develop on what their Direct Reports recommended. Cases 1 and 2 heard clearly through the Proflor feedback report and also through clarifying conversations that their behaviors frustrated their Direct Reports. Case 1 heard that he/she must "quit doing their jobs" and Case 2 heard a need to set up task expectations earlier and more clearly. Case 4 decided to seek better communication with the boss at least partly on the basis of expressed needs of direct reports, who were concerned that they would not be well-represented in the competitive ratings system for performance appraisal. Case 5 is again a little different, but the same at a deeper level: Case 5 decided not to change any skills at all, but did so to stay within the framework of expectations he/she had established in previous years of dialog with these Direct Reports, even going against the expressed desire of one boss to change style to match other managers in the organization. Figure 3

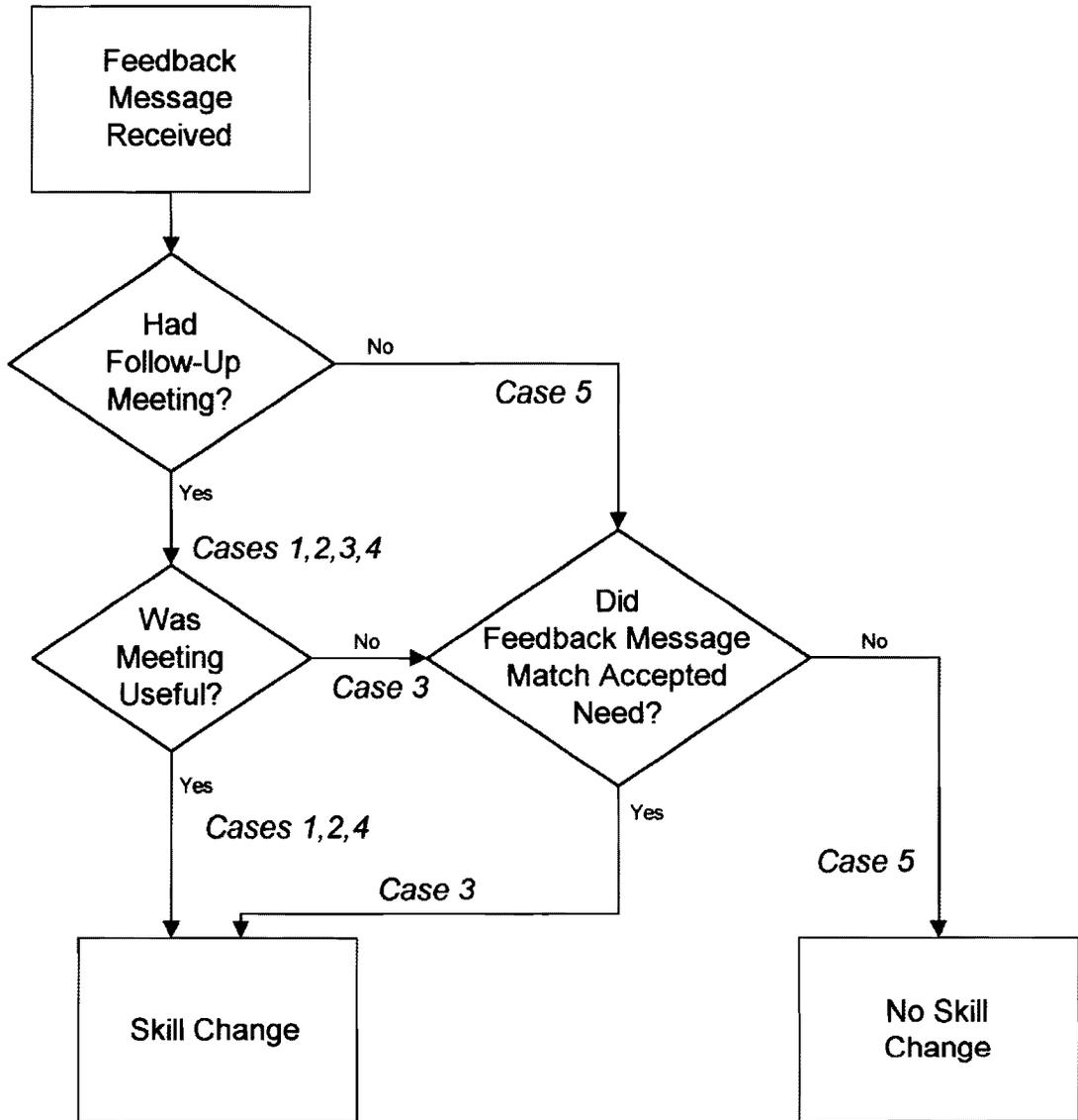


Figure 3. Follow-up meetings and decisions to change at skill level.

summarizes the process of decision to change at the skill level with a flowchart showing the decision process that led all but Case 5 to undertake a specific change.

Research Question 2.2: What cues a recipient to change superficially or deeply?

Table 3's last rows summarize what the data showed about deep change, first by roughly categorizing the level of change for each case, and then by summarizing the motives for change at that level.

The cases in this study experienced various depths of change, and for various reasons, as the table indicates. There are, however, some patterns: where there is a perspective change, there is also an enabling sense of freedom and capability; where the perspective change did not occur, there is a sense of burden only. These differences are examined in individual cases and then across all.

Case 1 attributed various reasons for the transformative experiences:

So I feel.. Like this is exponential growth for me. Because all of this is in less than a year...

Now, for what set of reasons? Am I now just old enough? Has my career taken a turn where I now understand for me to reach through to the next step, the next level? Is it because my children are now at an age where I am no longer focused on them, they can now begin to look a little more externally? I don't know. But it's happening to me now.

Case 1 had earlier direct and instrumented *Feedback History*; but before the management development program had not received much useful "constructive criticism" from it. An early experience is described where Case 1 does not allocate reflection time to feedback received:

It was a factor of time, and you just kind of considered it for the moment, let it settle wherever it settled, and then you're off [gesture of hand moving outward, quickly]

Case 1 also contrasts earlier feedback experiences with the one in this study and finds the difference between prior and current was *Readiness*:

... it wasn't, still, what I consider to be the kind of constructive criticism that I was looking for, that would help me develop as a manager.

(What was lacking in what you got?)

Me! I think it was me. I was not prepared two years ago, as I have been two years hence because of all these other changes, to receive and respond to the information that I was getting. That's the way I view it.

Case 1 experienced an increasing momentum of change during the study and over a short period went from fear to eagerness about what would come. Near the beginning of the process, at about 4 months after Profilor experience, he/she described it:

I wanted to be the first to let you know that the lens is opening so fast that it's scary.

(the lens?)

My lens. And all of it, I think.. I mean, it has to do with a lot of things coming together, but MDP has been one of the catalysts for me. and I thought that I was pretty good at what I did before. And now that the lens is finally opening up wider, the learning is just, its' almost scary. Because I'm unraveling ME so that I can take in and digest process what I'm learning. Therefore the quest for what I'm learning is like all-consuming, 24 hours a day, I wanna be involved in gathering as much data as I can gather. And it hurts me, it pains me to have to go to sleep at night, because I'm not learning any more, for that down period. But the next day, is an adventure.

In the final interview at 8 months after Profilor, Case 1's sense of control about the change process had changed:

Well I guess I was more afraid of it initially, because of the uncertainty. And the more I got wrapped up in the adventure and the journey, my perspective changed, from one of being frightened to one of embracing it, saying "Well okay, we'll just have to see what happens." I don't know how it's going to turn out in the end. We'll just continue to consciously

manipulate some things. And if I learned anything in the MDP, that was one of the things I learned. That there are choices, and you make conscious choices.

One theme for Case 1 seems to be the assumption of control over the discovery process, as it turns from an "almost scary" experience to one of "conscious choices" and attention to the process.

Case 2 had a similar realization that the scope and nature of the issues were different than expected. He/she went through a period of high workload, stress, and even a limiting athletic injury in the period within two months of the Profilor, and realized that a fundamentally different approach was needed:

(I remember one gray winter day when you looked so overloaded that it was just amazing.)

That was at a learning team meeting?

(Yeah, you looked like you were carrying about a thousand pounds)

Felt like that, too. But it's not as bad. The work has been even tougher, piled on even higher since then, but it doesn't feel as bad. I can't say it's all because of time management. Might just be getting used to the stress.

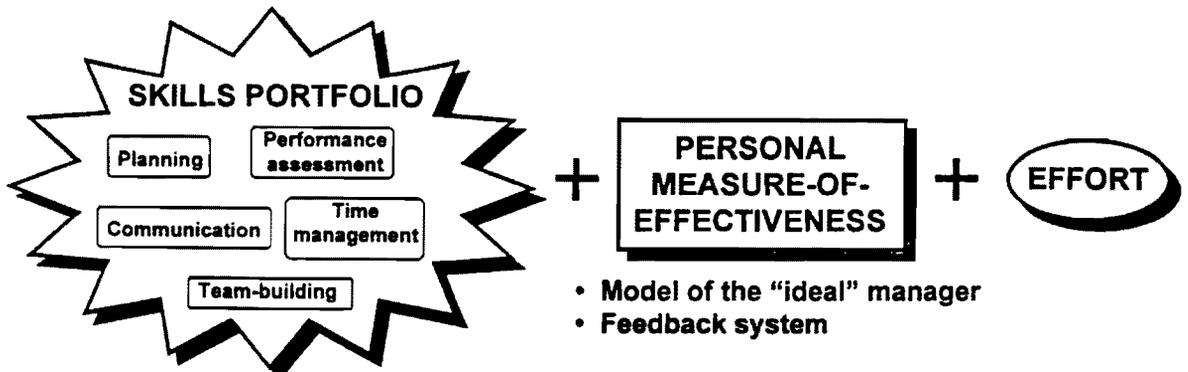
... it's not that you start out being a manager who needs improvement in some ways, and you go through a process and become a good manager and that's it. It's not like that at all!

It's continuous, and it's never supposed to get easier. It doesn't get easier and it's not supposed to. It's very much a matter of attitude, and attitude is the key thing.

The individual skills are important, time management, giving feedback, all that kind of thing, the skills are important. But no set of skills will be enough to guide you through changing conditions, tumultuous conditions. No set of skills alone is important enough, is going to be sufficient, rather. So it's a matter of having the attitude, the attitude of constantly challenging yourself, of constantly assessing your environment, assessing how you're doing, asking difficult questions of yourself, never becoming comfortable or complacent. That's the attitude.

Case 2 prepared a pair of graphics to explain the change, and they are reproduced here as Figure 4. They show Case 2's changed view, with the reduced importance of skills compared to the changed attitude and the greater level of effort. The mention of a feedback system seems notably absent from the "Post MDP" graphic, replaced with "Learning Team" (a support group of Peers similar to an action learning group). Case 3 found the Profilor feedback "extremely valuable" but principally for its role in establishing new communication with Direct Reports. It is not the instrumented, specific feedback on skills that drives the deep change for Case 2, but the dialog that the instrument helps establish. Key support driving Case 2 toward a Management "State of Mind" comes from

MY PRE-MDP VISION: WHAT IT TAKES TO BE AN EFFECTIVE MANAGER



MY POST-MDP VISION: WHAT IT TAKES TO BE AN EFFECTIVE MANAGER

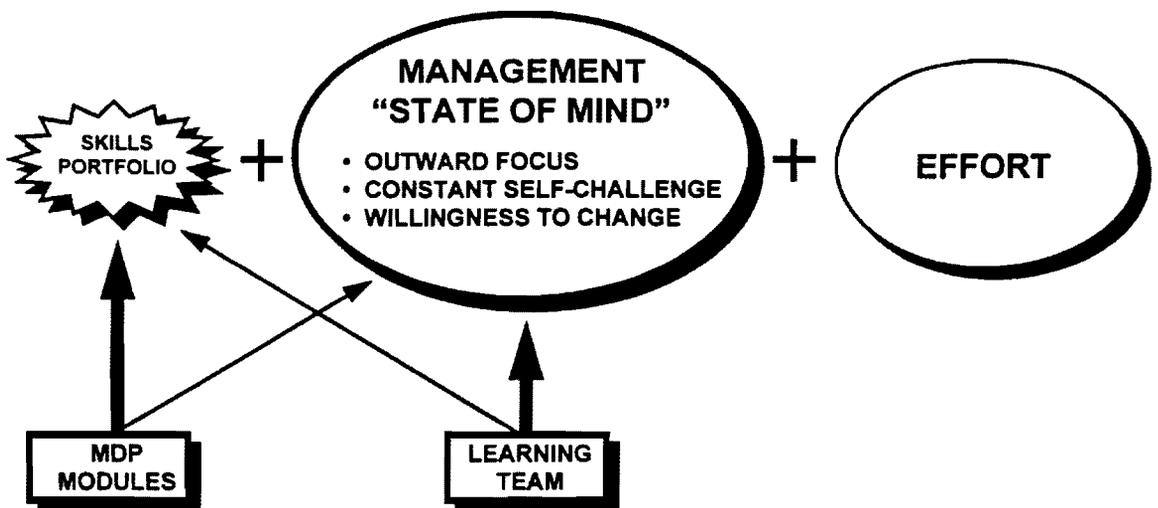


Figure 4. Case 2's Graphic of "Pre" and "Post" Vision.

the learning team, which directly helped challenge assumptions, give support as needed, and give direct feedback on Case 2's ideas.

Case 3 also worked under heavy load and stress, but there was no shift of expectations as for Case 2. Case 3 describes the load, particularly time pressure, and its effect on development:

time is a real resource. But the other thing, too, is that I tend to peter out pretty quickly. I'm not one -- That's one reason I left [former organization name] there's only a certain number of hours that I can crank in before I become combat-ineffective, so you just prioritize from there...

... one of my driving philosophies, is that a machine has to be somewhat sloppy in order to work well. If it is very very tightly wound, I don't think there's any room for improvement. And I think that a lot of [this organization] right now suffers from being 100% committed, and doesn't have any room to do anything to interest their growth.

Case 3 found that making time to develop the chosen skill became a little easier by the second interview, but still had no change in perspective. Development was skill oriented only, and the time pressures and organizational change were regarded with despair:

(how your approach to your development is different from several months ago..)

It's probably a little more routine. I mean, the fact that I do think about some of the areas that I need to focus on, it's not so much of an excursion, like I'm feeling a little bit into the process. But from other perspectives, because of the disarray right now in the company, the time pressure's really been higher, so right now I think it's tough for.. It's probably a good thing the MDP program ended a month ago! It's becoming really tight right now, and for the next couple of months. We went through a good many drills, as you can imagine with so many reviews on every report. It just takes a lot of time.

(Time seemed to be your main concern last time.)

I think it is right now for almost everybody. We just did the staffing drill, and it's not any better than it was.

Figure 5 depicts the processes that led Case 3 to change at the skill level only. Organizational support in the form of a development assignment was given, then delayed for several months. During that period, time pressures increased and distressing organizational changes (a second 10% reduction in force in 2 years, a change toward competition). The effect for Case 3 was to require full commitment to coping, which limited the change to superficial skills.

The motivation for change at the skill level for Case 4 was survival, as previously mentioned. When presented with both specific communication issues and somewhat

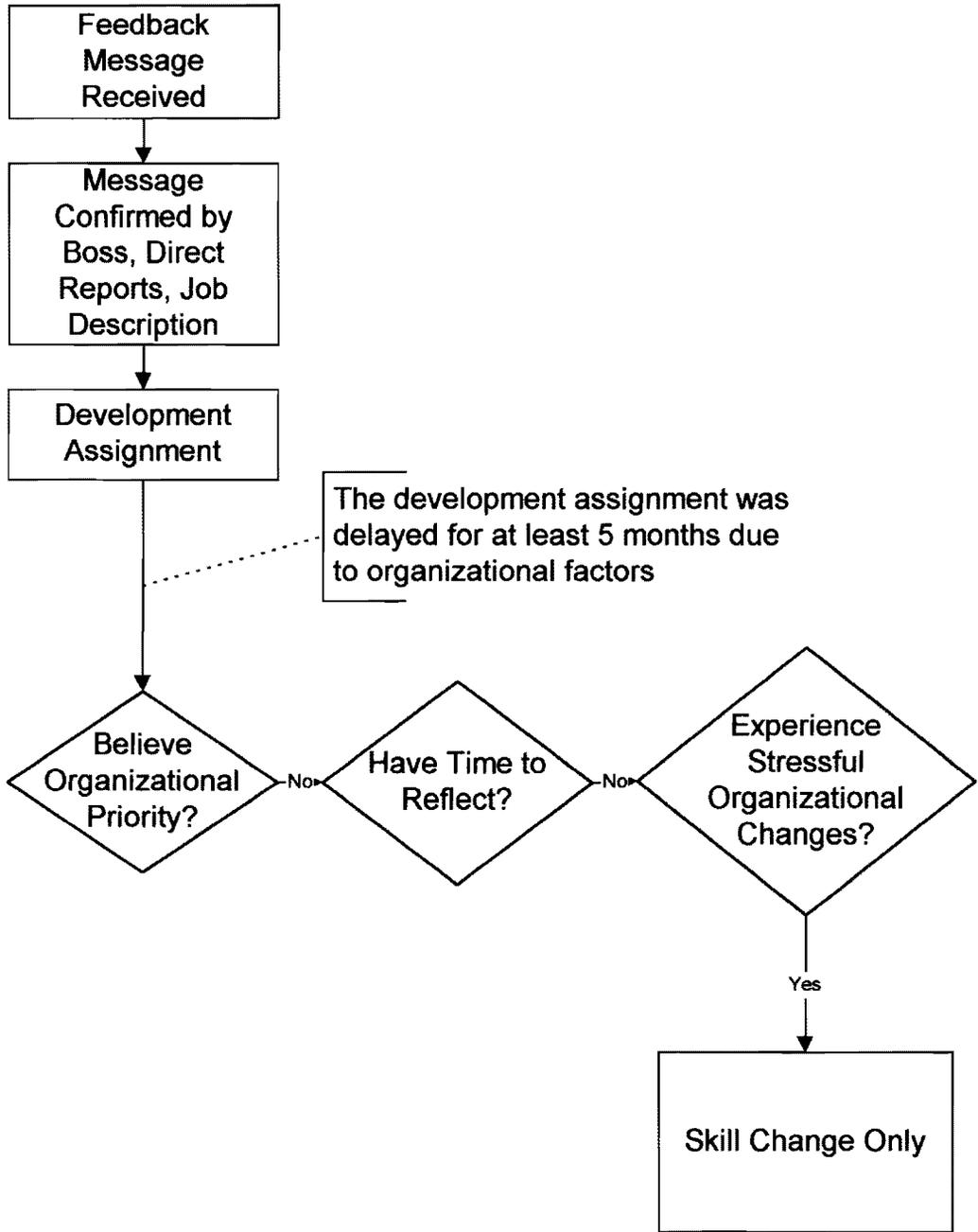


Figure 5. Influences on Case 3's Change.

vague, broad developmental needs by the low-rating boss, and with confirmation of a need to improve communications from Direct Reports, Case 4 chose the immediately demonstrable skill area. The survival mode was not optimal for deep change for Case 4.

High stress functioned for Case 5 in a similar fashion. When faced with the business shut-down and the need to find new jobs for the entire organization, and concurrently presented with the surprising and discounted feedback that his/her management style needed to be more like others' styles, Case 5 decided to maintain the existing changed perspective and communicate it more clearly:

I'm certain that I did not sit down and make a list of 3 or 4 things to do.

And again, by this time.. I DID that the first, and I even did it at the second, the Looking Glass thing was the second one, and I'm sure I did it after that as well. I didn't do it at this time. I guess as an excuse I'd say that it wasn't the top thing on my mind at the time

(because of the site closing and all that?)

We had other priorities.

(I remember that time)

It was probably the sixth or seventh feedback attempt, and I was to work on some things, maybe on trying to present a stronger image, whatever that image was. More definitive, not stronger, that's wrong. But more definitive image of who I was trying to be.

So the cues for depth of change varied, and were experienced differently, by the different Cases. All were under considerable organizational stress, but responded differently with depth of change: Case 1 saw the environment as so uncertain that his/her role needed continual redefinition, and took that as an opportunity to engage in possibly developmental dialog with clients. Case 2 saw the load in the environment become more bearable when he/she realized it wasn't supposed to be easy or controllable. Case 3 saw the time and "organizational disarray" pushing development to a lower priority. Case 4 saw environmental threat as a cue to cling to clearly demonstrable skill changes. Case 5 saw the organizational stress not as a time to "sit down and make a list of 3 or 4 things to do" but as a moment to assert a "more definitive image of who I was trying to be."

Research Question 2.3: How does initial acceptance influence commitment to change? The data from the five cases actually showed little about this question that has not been covered within the categories of surprise and acceptance (Question 1.1 above) or within the area of decision of what to change (Question 2.1 above). Only a couple of points emerged:

In Case 1, initial acceptance of the feedback from direct reports was not mentioned in the first interview or the second; it was in reflection during the third interview that it was recalled as a priority. An early remark about data from subordinates ("And subordinates were usually enough of an open relation that there was nothing new in the Profilor from them.") indicate that the surprise at the feedback and its acceptance emerged

rather slowly. In Case 1, there may be an instance of a lack of initial focus on a particular feedback message, yet a strong commitment later.

Conversely, in Case 3, there was an early high commitment to the developmental task of learning more about the organization, but it was pushed aside by the press of events.

Processes That Influence Change Continuation

The final general research question had to do with the continuation of the change - its incorporation, the possibility of a changed view of self and environment, and the forces that may affect retrogression to earlier behavior. As before, the general question will be examined first through its subquestions.

Research Question 3.1: What influences the incorporation of deep and lasting change? As not all Cases had deep and lasting change, this question will primarily address only those that do: Cases 1, 2, and 5. Those that did not experience deep and lasting change, Cases 3 and 4, will be the primary focus of Question 3.3, on retrogression.

Some of the influences that led Case 1 to deep and lasting change have already been mentioned in Question 2.2 (focus of attention, age, career-point, family status), but need to be extended with another important phenomenon: *Initiative*. One of the greatest distinctions between Case 1 and the others is the quality and quantity of initiatives in pursuit of insight. Beyond participating in all activities of the management development program, Case 1 also actively engaged in a community activity related to interviewing others, attended and applied learnings from an external management seminar, attended

several months of an acting workshop to "take text apart" to analyze meanings, initiated a mentor relationship with a peer, established new norms of critical reflection with Direct Reports, sought out feedback from external professional associates, and consciously analyzed conflicts in the workplace. Case 1 aggressively sought insights and got them.

Another support for the change in Case 1 came from Direct Reports who were willing to engage in a *Developmental Dialog*, a special kind of conversation that provides realistic feedback and support for changed behaviors and attitudes.

Case 5 showed *Initiative* in establishing a *Developmental Dialog* when he/she first was promoted to Department Head:

within that position I was able to try and effect some of these things. And they were things that I wanted to change, and I felt that I had to understand first where I was. And that's what started me asking "Tell me what you think about me." And that's how the ball got rolling.

The "ball rolling" is the annual feedback ritual, in which Case 5 initiated an internally developed multi-rater feedback system and publicly disclosed the results in an effort to establish a dialog and open relationships with Direct Reports. This violated the site's *Feedback Norms*, which led Case 5 to have some difficulties with the upper management and may have led to the suggestion, in the Profilor, to adopt a more directive style. Figure 6 shows how the process of a Development Dialog, over years, shaped Case

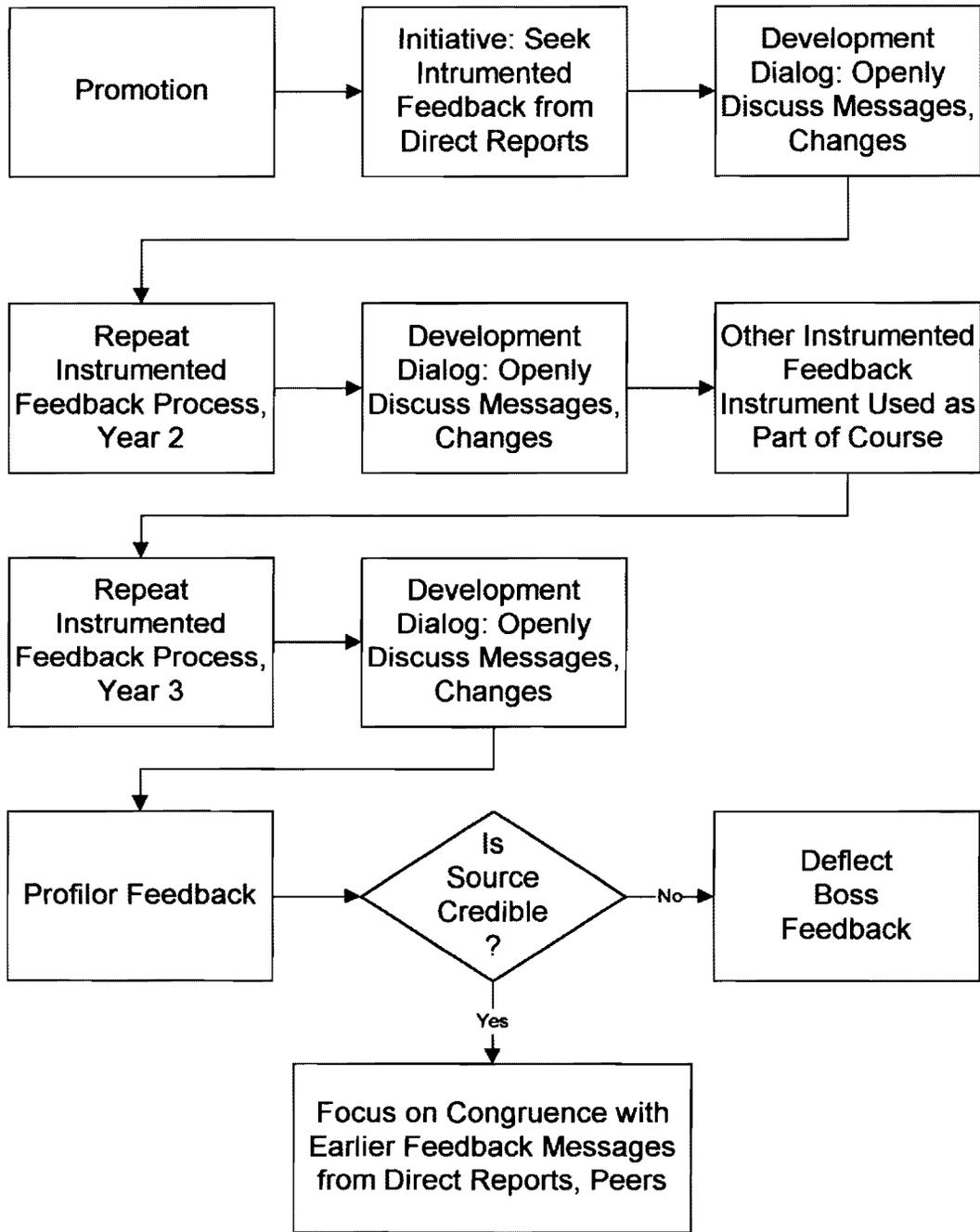


Figure 6. Case 5's Change Incorporation.

5's view of the appropriate role of a manager to the extent that discrepant feedback from Boss was deflected and ignored.

Case 2 had to struggle to establish a Developmental Dialog with his Direct Reports. He/she describes how the "technical people" regarded the early efforts to establish a new kind of communication for feedback:

these are very technical people, and they have a distrust of management as a science, or any sort of humanistic element in management. They just don't like it. The touchy feely.. They do not like it... Some of these raters come from a very technical background, and they have a deep mistrust for anything like this. As far as they're concerned, management is "Tell me what to do, objectively, to get the job done. Just tell me what to do and I'll do it. Why do we need to go through this communication touchy feely? If I don't understand what you're asking me to do I'll tell you. If I do understand it, nothing more needs to be done; I'll go out and do it. What's the problem?"

They come from that mentality. The technical people really suffer from that.

... it was very hard to convince them that it's useful. Not only did I have to convince them that I'm serious about it - that's the first hurdle, that I think everyone has to get through - but the second hurdle was to convince them that it's USEFUL. Not only am I serious about it, but it is also a useful

thing to do. Because, as I said, some of these people think this is just a distraction away from their mainstream work, and they're not sure that it will really lead to any improvement.

Case 2 did persist, and finally established a dialog with his technical people that led to continuing development after the resistance was overcome:

This getting back to them as an exercise in communication, per se, beyond the specific content we were talking about, but just as an exercise in communicating difficult topics, I think that was very valuable. And that has really affected my interactions with these people, I believe.

(sort of opened some doors?)

Yes, it has very much opened some doors, broken down some barriers.

Now they think of me as a person, instead of a manager or just a co-worker. And hopefully, they are more willing to share negative, constructive criticism - not negative, but constructive criticism, than they would have otherwise been.

Like Cases 1 and 5, Case 2 received support from Direct Reports in a *Developmental Dialog* that led to the incorporation of deep and lasting change. Some of the common elements between these cases are initiative at seeking feedback, persistence in pursuing a developmental dialog with Direct Reports, and willingness to try new approaches.

Research Question 3.2: How do participants view themselves and their

environment in terms of the change? The five Cases arrived at different views of themselves and their work environment by the end of the study. Cases 1 and 2 really came to see themselves in relation to their roles in substantially different ways, Cases 3 and 4 could be described as coping and hanging on, and Case 5 may maintain integrity with the well-elaborated view of what a manager should be and do by leaving the organization.

Case 1 welcomes the transitions and transformations, and seeks to accelerate them, describing his/her approach at the end of the study as follows:

Actually, my commitment is to continue to learn as much and as fast as I can. There are going to be some drawbacks to that, because now I've gotten to the point where I'm just, I'm a sponge. I'm just like a little kid, I'm a sponge, I want it from all over the place. And I've gotten to be very eclectic about where I get it. So I'm now into experimentation about possibilities..

While the organizational environment is chaotic where Case 1 works, he/she sees this as an opportunity to exercise initiative and create a role.

as a manager you have to carve out a niche for yourself, and make sure that people understand that you are still contributing. So I've spent the last year trying to do that. And with a [Vice President] replacement coming in, it's giving me another opportunity to refine that and have it ready for the next

person on the block. So I'm using [name]'s departure as an opportunity for further professional growth for me.

Case 2's view of self has changed considerably, as he/she describes it at 22 months after the Profilor, reflecting on the changes:

I feel less innocent, less naive. I feel that before I had this sense of complacency, accepted the idea that.. and again it gets back to this matter of attitude. I had this idea that once you got used to a situation or job, and if you were sharp and smart, you would pretty much cruise. You might have to work, spend a lot of hours, and you might have to work really hard. But working hard is different from challenging your basic assumptions, or challenging your basic framework of how you operated. And you can work really hard without doing.. without meeting those kind of challenges. And I thought before, I was naive or innocent, and I thought that's how life professionally could be. it could be fairly easy like that. But it can't be. As a manager, it can't be like that. Getting back to that attitude, that new attitude that I think came out of this course, was that it's NOT going to be easy, that you were going to have to constantly challenge myself. It feels like a loss of innocence.

Case 2's changed view of work was described above in answer to Question 2.2 about the depth of change. The work itself is "even tougher, piled on even higher... but it

just doesn't feel as bad" partly because of changed expectations about the work that "it doesn't get any easier, and it's not supposed to."

Case 3's view of self within the work environment could be described as quiet desperation, with a difference between individual skill development and organizational view. He/she sees progress in "people skills" compared to some indefinite past time, growing ease of focus on development, and increasing confidence using the new organizer; the skill development is progressing methodically. But Case 3 also sees that the organizational "disarray" causes greatly increased demands on time, which drain energy from development:

It impacts [commitment to development] as well. I think that everyone that you look at looks a lot more tired than they used to look.

(people look a little worn. shell-shocked, even...)

Yeah, I don't think it's from the workload, I think it's from the uncertainty.

And I think I'm in the same boat, to a certain extent. I guess I'm not sure what I'm going to do here, I don't know what's going to happen at (client), what the effects of the cuts are going to be, what kind of reorganization the division as a whole will do.

Case 4's self-view is that, despite a recent role change in which he/she was selected for a management position at another level in another organization, his/her opportunities are essentially unchanged:

I chose to apply, and happily I was chosen, because my preference is to stay in management. And I think I'm a damn good manager, and I think that is the area where I can be of most value. I don't really see that the ground rules have changed a whole lot, in that probably the same items I needed to work on as an ADH to become a department head are.. need to be worked on in order to become a program manager.

Case 4's view of self as a manager in a changing organizational environment shows some doubts about the organization's espoused beliefs on teamwork, and a growing unease:

And I believe that I have tried frankly some items (*change targets*) that I'm not pleased about but it is a matter of survival these days. And I am not really saying that [name]'s analysis and all of that is wrong, but my approach has always been more an orchestra leader than an instrument soloist. In that I do believe in trying to put a team together, keep track of what they're doing, and if they're kind of wandering off the track, try to keep them focused. But the outcome of it is more a team product. And I'm kind of invisible to that process. And I'm not sure that is what they want here. They SAY they want that, but in effect if you are specifically associated as the leader of that effort, it is asked "what role did YOU play?" or that stuff. So the primary change I have made is to try to make

myself much more - in most situations - try to make myself much more visible and be sure I am offering inputs at the right times, maybe directing the team toward a conclusion a little bit more than I used to, and DAMN well I'm letting my management know a lot more of what I'm doing.

The discrepancies are related to Case 4's deeply held beliefs and a growing distance between those beliefs and the organization's apparent policies.

Case 5, when interviewed, was working in the organization's headquarters office, having relocated from the site that closed during the study. Case 5's self-view as a manager has evolved from multiple experiences of feedback over several years, in a style summed up by the maxims listed in Chapter 4. Case 5 viewed the organizational turmoil and its effect on development:

Well anyway, when we got word that the contract would end on [date], the first thing I told [name] was that we needed to have an out-placement process. And my highest priority was trying to get people out-placed from the site, and particularly from my department. So I didn't.. That kind of turmoil just shut down any kind of work on the Profilor things.

Now at headquarters, Case 5's role and opportunity for development are sufficiently different that he/she describes it as:

A different kind of turmoil altogether. But it's had some of the same effects. In one case, I didn't really have time or inclination to work on it, and now I have the time and inclination but I don't have any subjects, so to speak. I don't have opportunities to try things.

Case 5, at the time of the interview, expected to seek opportunities to practice management in other organizations in the near future.

Across these cases, then, where there was a change of perspective about self (Case 1), work role (Case 2 and 5), there grew a resilience to change and a positive attitude toward further change. Where there was a negative perception of the organization's prospects or direction of change (Cases 3 and 4) there was increased unease, mistrust. Where both happened (Case 5), a manager with a broad perspective is ready to leave the organization.

Research Question 3.3: What influences retrogression to previous attitudes, beliefs, behaviors? The five Cases in this study all experienced pressures to retrogress to old behaviors and all talked about them in similar ways. Most of what they said has already been quoted or cited above, so only the phenomena will be listed here.

Time Pressure is the most commonly cited influence toward retrogression. All Cases experienced it as extremely challenging to find time first to understand and internalize the feedback, and then to find time to practice new behaviors or act on new perspectives. Notably, the most successfully changing Cases, 1 and 2, somehow managed

to make time available to exercise initiative in hunting for insights or to constantly communicate change intentions.

Organizational Uncertainty can have a debilitating effect on the individuals' motivation and ability to change. This appeared most prominently in this study in Cases 3, 4, and 5. Actual changes at this formerly-stable organization during the study period included reductions in force of 10-25%, a new performance appraisal system, restructuring to change the culture from a non-competing public-service scientific organization to a competitive consulting firm, a total financial re-engineering effort that created months of chaos, and a very good year for the rumor mill as organizational communications were widely distrusted.

An institutional version of *Source Credibility* (at the negative end of the scale) emerged as *Management Distrust*, in which individuals come to doubt the sincerity, good intentions, and abilities of the most senior managers. *Management Distrust* operated on change and development by fostering a survival mentality.

A final influence that emerged, affecting both retrogression and incorporation, is *Organizational Support*, a superset of the *Development Dialog* phenomenon already mentioned. *Organizational Support* is given by Boss, Peers, or Direct Reports as direct actions that support the development plan. An example from Case 3, both positive and negative, was an explicit tasking by the Boss to organize a client conference; this would have required Case 3 to search the organization for projects of interest, making exactly the

type of contacts suited to the development plan. This tasking became a negative when it was indefinitely delayed because of *Organizational Uncertainty*.

CHAPTER 6

Findings and Discussion

The purpose of this research was to discover how the experience of 360-degree feedback works: more specifically, what influences recipients of such feedback to accept it, what guides them to change deeply, and what makes the change durable. The approach was qualitative, generating insights from intensive interview data of select managers who had recently experienced 360-degree feedback in a management development program. The findings extend previous research in new directions by describing in depth the experience of several managers who exemplified phenomena related to the purpose of the research and proposing some theory of how the process actually works within their context.

Review of Questions and Summary Findings

The research explored the experience of managers from the framework of several research questions, and found answers that went beyond the scope of the questions, which are summarized here.

The first question was “What processes influence recipients’ initial acceptance or deflection of 360-feedback?” It sought to discern a list of factors and their interaction based on the experience of several managers; the research did generate such a list, and found the important factors of feedback credibility, source credibility, feedback history, and feedback norms interacted in interesting ways: strong negatives in any factor made

feedback acceptance very difficult, while moderate challenge to established feedback norms actually increased commitment to the process.

The second question was “After the feedback, what influences the development decisions about the content of any change and the commitment to that change?” It sought to understand the decision process itself, since 360-degree feedback provides information about a broad spectrum of behaviors as seen by others, and the choice of what to change can be bewildering. The research indicates that a developmental dialog with direct reports and/or peers, which clarifies mutual expectations and builds support, seems to be present and important in cases where there was deep, lasting change versus change at the skill level only.

The final research question was “As a change effort is attempted, what influences participants’ continuation of the change?” It sought to understand the phenomena of durability, since there is frequent retrogression after a weak, unsupported resolve to change in response to feedback. The research found that in some cases, the developmental dialog helped managers achieve a different perspective on their work, even on themselves, and that this redefinition seemed to bring resilience. The research also found that organizations may undo the intended development of a 360-degree program by increasing time pressure, stress, and organizational uncertainty, and by reducing organizational credibility.

Extensions of Prior Research Literature

This research originally reviewed several streams of literature for background and context: empirical work on feedback from the late 1970s to 1980s, later extended to 360-degree feedback in particular; Industrial/Organizational Psychology work on change; and writings from adult learning. Findings here add perspective or instantiation to several of the works cited earlier.

Ashford and Cummings (1983) proposed two types of feedback-seeking behavior, which were monitoring the environment and direct inquiry, with costs and benefits to each. This study found new and important benefits to the direct inquiry approach: in this study, it was associated with relationship-building, increased trust, and the developmental dialog that led to a partnership that was associated with perspective change. When the manager's attitude toward direct reports allowed openness to direct feedback, even a certain vulnerability and trust, the traditional perspective of control was altered.

In the literature on 360-degree feedback, Huntsberry's (1994) cautions that mis-used instruments can lead to self-doubt and mistrust of colleagues, as well as Baron's (1988) criteria for constructive feedback were embodied in the cases of the research where the feedback was ambiguous and attributional. In Case 4, where feedback from one boss was ambiguous, broad, and never fully accepted as valid, it did lead to anguish and mistrust, voiced as "feeling kind of bruised about that."

Case 5 exemplified the prediction of Antonioni & Keenan (1992) that negative feedback reception would be driven by feedback source credibility. Case 5 had two

feedback sources with no credibility (one unfamiliar with Case 5's work, the other generally not trusted or respected), and the phenomenon of *source discounting* was most clearly demonstrated here. More generally within the present research, *source discounting* was the prime means to deflect feedback, whether in whole or in part; this finding is an instance of fundamental attributional bias and its effect on managers' decisions explained by Wiswell & Lawrence (1994).

Some sources in recent literature on 360-degree feedback have suggested that face-to-face corroboration of the feedback increases its impact on the receiver (Edelstein & Armstrong, 1993; Carton, 1994). A primary finding from the present research indicated clearly that when that face-to-face contact was extended to a partnership in a *development dialog*, then the feedback receivers gain important support for continuing the new behaviors as well as an improved relationship with the feedback givers. In Case 1, a continuing dialog with Direct Reports about decision-making went well beyond the scope of confirming feedback, and became a partnership in which Case 1 is challenged when former behavior re-emerges. Case 1 knowingly frustrates Direct Reports when they want a "snap judgment" style. As Case 1 puts it, "I have to *live* with these people. I am not now going to go back, regress to that top-down approach."

Hellervik, Hazucha, & Schneider's (1992) Integrated Behavior Change Framework provides a good overlay to the research results. At the Assessment/Needs Analysis stage, the Cases in this research were very deliberate in their choice of raters and were generally eager for the assessment information in a feedback-starved environment.

At the Assignment of Behavioral Standards stage, all but one Case in this research responded to surprising information about their performance by calibrating and negotiating understanding of the feedback message, which turned the assignment of standards into an agreement between the raters and the Cases, which they found motivating.

The heart of this research falls within the Intention Formulation and Protection stage. The Cases varied considerably in the depth and specificity of their plans to change, from a deliberate, aggressive search for whatever would provide new insights and opportunities for reflection, all the way to a detailed development plan, "filled out with great fervor" and soon misplaced. The research directly addressed how feedback recipients decide what to change, and found that successful change was based on feedback, clarification, and guidance from Direct Reports. The research explored what cues a feedback recipient to respond with deep or superficial change and found that where there was a change in perspective about self or role, deep change occurred with an enabling sense of freedom and capability; without the change in perspective, the pressures of time and load led to a sense of burden.

Continuing in the Hellervik et al. (1992) framework, this research found at the Behavioral Expression in Change Environment stage that *initiative* in seeking new growth experiences and in pursuing a *development dialog* with direct reports were important. Within this change framework, the developmental dialog emerged as an important influence at the previous stage, continues to play a key role at this stage, and seems to continue its importance into the next stage, Generalization and Maintenance of New

Behaviors. What the research found about development dialog is that it seems to start with (or is renewed by) feedback clarification, strengthens mutual trust relationships through difficult communications, and provides continuing feedback as change is attempted in the work environment.

The research also adds detail and instance to some literature of adult learning. Mezirow (1994) suggests that the urgent need to understand the meaning of our experience is central to adult development, and that we do so by striving toward viewpoints that are more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative; Case 2's change of attitude, realizing that "working hard is different from challenging your basic assumptions, or challenging your basic framework of how you operated" seems very close to Mezirow's intent. Case 2's "sense of complacency" before the management development program was shaken by *load* (workload and Profilor results concurrent with a sports injury), perhaps leading to the realization that "As a manager, it can't be like that [fairly easy]... the new attitude that I think came out of this course is that it's NOT going to be easy, that you were going to have to constantly challenge [yourself]."

The works of Kegan on adult development stages (1994, 1986) may also apply here. In the Cases where there seemed to be a changed perspective, part of that change seemed to be to see more possibilities, to look at situations from the others' points of view, to mentally switch roles with others, and to view issues as complex. In response to a question about seeing issues as black and white versus shades of grey, Case 1 said, "I've got more damn grey about me now than I *ever* had!" Cases 1, 2, and 5 seemed to operate

at Level 4 within Kegan's taxonomy, at which autonomy and interdependence balance, choice of framework becomes available, and the world no longer looks simple.

Where the research adds value specifically to the works of Mezirow, Kegan, and others is that these Cases were responding, within their work context, to a *planned* critical moment. Such an experience was for some what Mezirow (1990) calls a "disorienting dilemma," a trigger event that forces new meaning. The responses to a deliberate critical moment are the heart of the research, and the variety of experience in dealing with it from the adult development perspective elaborates how some adults will consciously seek to develop new perspectives. Within this research, those who sought to develop a different perspective through developmental dialog achieved their goal.

Research Procedures

This research was opportunistic in that the author had a coaching role with a group of 84 middle managers who were engaged over 2 program years in a management development program at a high technology research corporation. In that role, the author took the managers through various program modules, coached their action learning teams, arranged for their Profilor experience, attended all feedback sessions, and led them in their teams through development planning. Close and confidential relationships developed with most of the 84 participants, and gave the author insights about who seemed to be changing.

For the research, a pool of 15 participants were selected to be interviewed. The basis for selection was originally to find several who had changed most, several who had

changed some, and several who had not changed. The design was to include five from the first program year (1993-1994) to interview at 22 months after Profilor, and eight from the second program year (1994-1995) to interview twice, at approximately 4 and 8 months after the Profilor. After the initial interviews from the second program year, two more were added and interviewed once at 6 months, to correct an imbalance by finding cases who exemplified the absence of change. In all, 24 interviews, from 45 minutes to 2 hours in length, were conducted.

The interviews were transcribed and read in detail, a set of five cases were selected as exemplifying the phenomena of interest, and their interview data were analyzed in depth (Chapter 4, Case Summaries, introduces these cases fully). The approach to analysis followed guidelines from Strauss & Corbin (1990) and Miles & Huberman (1994). The interview data were coded using a constant comparative method to systematically notice similarities within and across interviews, and to build a description in terms of concepts, processes, phenomena, dimensions, and locations within dimensions. The Ethnograph v4.0 software made this detailed analysis of nearly 10,000 lines of text possible. After coding and recoding to reconcile and build concepts across interviews, various tables and displays were used as interim analytical steps, as recommended in Miles & Huberman (1990). These tables were then used to fuel cross-case searches on codes linked to phenomena of interest as the research evolved. The product of one such cross-case search is included as Appendix 3, showing both coding and source data found with the codes for the processes and phenomena related to Research Question 3.1, as well as influences on

the incorporation of deep and lasting change (for brevity, only the first 10 pages of the 80+ page file are included).

The data products from searches on most major concepts, and especially those linked to the original research questions, were analyzed on a cross-case basis, and are explained in Chapter 5, Cross-Case Analysis. And from the cross-case analysis against the research questions, the Findings emerged.

Findings

Just as 360-degree feedback sometimes achieves message clarity by providing views from different perspectives, in order to fully represent the findings, four views are presented below: sequentially phased, individual, relationships, and organizational.

Sequential phases. Findings from before, during, and after the 360-degree feedback and development experience are presented as the first view.

From *before* the feedback is received, *Feedback History* has an effect on how 360-degree feedback will be received; specifically, where an individual had prior negative experience of seeking feedback directly or with instruments, that individual will need extra coaching to avoid early deflection or misinterpretation of feedback messages. Case 3's prior experience of getting a multi-rater assessment from a new and hostile group led him/her to take an extremely cautious, literal, narrow interpretation of the feedback message meanings, and to challenge and question the credibility of the instrument, the raters, and the process. More generally, where the *Feedback Norms* are to withhold any negative feedback or give no feedback at all, there may be unreasonably great

expectations. In a feedback-poor environment, using 360-degree feedback may be a deluge in a desert.

Results from the period *during* the feedback indicate that while participants are receiving 360-degree feedback and planning what to do with it, *Change-Support* (sharing ideas, building support networks, establishing some accountability with Direct Reports or Peers) is helpful in terms of feedback acceptance, and distractions of *Load* (increases in the press of deadlines, stress, time pressures) are unhelpful both at the moment of acceptance or deflection and beyond.

From the period *after* the feedback and development planning, the need for *Change Support* continues and increases. Those who set up and nurture a *Development Dialog* with Direct Reports and Peers seem to gain both support and changed relationships.

Individual. Individual perspectives contain several factors that contribute to making an individual *Ready* for 360-degree feedback: a sense of adequate security to take risks, a managed level of stress, and cognitive maturity played a role for the Cases in this research.

Adequate sense of *security* to take risks manifested itself as one contrast between the Cases that changed more (1 and 2) and those that changed relatively less (3 and 4). Case 2 voiced no concern over security, and in fact explicitly mentioned "So except for the fact that I already had too much to do, my environment was very conducive to experimenting, to taking the time if I had it to do these things."

A managed level of stress also seems connected with greater benefit from 360-degree feedback. While all managers may routinely seem to experience high stress, those who are dealing a life transition (divorce, death of parent, marriage, birth of child, etc.) should perhaps defer this experience. Of the original 15 persons interviewed, at least three were going through such transitions and were not among the five Cases selected for extensive examination; however, they consistently reported setting aside the feedback during the transition and returning to deal with it when they were able.

Cognitive maturity refers to the level of adult cognitive development referenced above. Those cases in this research who seemed to grow most also showed a high interest in stepping outside themselves and reflecting on what they were doing, how others saw them, what their essential roles were. The cases who changed relatively little spoke often in dualistic terms, seeing the world as more clearly contrasted than those who changed more.

Relationships. The Relationships perspective showed that seeking feedback is not a neutral act in a relationship: depending on how the communication is handled, feedback seeking and giving can do harm or good in a relationship. This research found, repeatedly, that the Cases experienced the feedback as having the effect of focusing their discussions on what was frequently undiscussable, which led to more or less trust as an outcome.

A critical moment seems to come in the relationship between a feedback recipient and rater(s). The conversation after the feedback is an opportunity for disclosure that seems to build the relationship by becoming somewhat vulnerable.

When the relationship aspects are handled well, it can lead to a *New Relationship*. One interviewee, not among the cases studied in detail, engaged a boss in a mutual development dialog, both seeking and giving feedback; he reports that it has made a large positive difference for both. Case 1 actually used the Profilor feedback as an opportunity to establish a new relationship with a distant Peer, who became a mentor. Case 2 describes the improved relationships and ability to communicate about difficult issues with Direct Reports, and also cites the powerful impact the support of a learning team had in reaching the changed attitude. Case 5 describes an important Peer who provided trusted counsel through troubled times.

Organizational. The Organizational view of the findings shows that 360-degree feedback has a large impact on the time, energy, and motivation of those who touch it. And once touched, it sticks -- that is, when organizations commit to 360-degree feedback, it is watched closely as a symbolic corporate act.

As the feedback follow-up is important in building relationships between individuals, it is also important for the relationships between individuals and the collective organization. Just as trust can be hurt by non-disclosure or inaction when feedback is exchanged between individuals, the same trust and credibility factors apply.

There may also exist a threshold of *Organizational Uncertainty* that will undermine the efforts to implement a 360-degree feedback process. In this research, where uncertainty was great, change was small ; however, for Case 1 organizational uncertainty was very high and his/her readiness to change overcame worrying about the organization.

Recommendations for Practice

From this research, some recommendations emerge to guide practices of organizations that would implement a 360-degree feedback program.

Manage support for the process and participants before, during, and after. The trust damage when support is offered and then withdrawn can be large. This may mean visible, durable organizational support, and the increased trust in the organization may be well worth it.

Keep a relationship and development focus embedded in the program structure to maximize effectiveness. In management development programs, encouraging and training participants to form learning groups and to establish developmental dialog within their “back home” environment may be critical. In this study, that relationship-building aspect was strongly present in all cases where profound change occurred, and nearly absent in cases where the change was superficial.

Be wary of the wrong organizational moments to start a program like this: during this research, there were RIFs and rumors, and it had an eviscerating effect on motivation to grow and develop. While few organizations can ensure prolonged stability, ways

might be creatively found to isolate individuals trying to develop from some level of change at least temporarily.

Recommendations for Research

This research suggested several directions for possible future studies.

What is the relationship (if any) between post-formal cognitive development and how recipients understand 360-feedback? This qualitative research, within its limits, observed that those who begin to see more possibilities, develop the ability to step outside of themselves to see issues from other perspectives, who come to see themselves as reflective, critical learners, seem to integrate their feedback more fully into their behavior. Those who speak in dualistic terms and remain convinced of one right answer seemed to approach the feedback with less understanding and a narrow skill focus. Do those who have achieved more cognitive maturity understand and respond to the feedback experience differently?

What is the relationship between cognitive maturity and participation in a developmental dialog? This research suggests that they are related: those who actively participated in developmental dialog, with openness to others' feedback, seemed to gain some ability to reflect differently on their work, their roles, their selves, and seemed to achieve a higher level of cognitive development. Future studies might confirm this in other context, or look for an empirical link.

How might Developmental Dialog be encouraged in an organization? This study found that where feedback recipients focused on confirmation and support for change

from supporting groups or mentoring relationships, the change was greater. Future research might examine whether such benefits hold true in other organizational contexts, and how such structures for support might be organizationally encouraged.

Conclusion

This study found that 360-degree feedback in a management development program can, in fact, lead to transformational development with certain processes in place.

Organizations can enhance the likelihood of substantial change in such programs by providing consistent support, especially in the form of time for development and support structures for the participants. Individual recipients of 360-degree feedback can enhance the development potential of the experience by finding resources for trusted dialog about development, and engaging with such resources on a long-term basis. This study indicated that where such dialog existed, transformational change can occur.

For organizations that seek to develop leaders who are insightful, self-aware, and able to view the complex tasks they face from agile perspectives, 360-degree feedback combined with group support for development may help provide the next generation of transformational leaders.

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Appendix 1:

Data Sampling for Research Question #1

Data Sampling for Research Question 1

This appendix contains excerpts from the source data that were found through searching the coded data files for the five cases. It also contains key relevant memoranda (from The Ethnograph's memo facility) to show some of the concept development. Both source data and memoranda are related to the elements of the first research question to demonstrate how the coding, cross-file searching, and memoing work together to develop the concepts that answer the first research question.

The first question is general, with three parts. Procedurally, the three parts are answered first, with the more general question answered last to bring together the unexpected phenomena the research uncovered and the interplay between expected and unexpected across cases.

In the text below, the numbered sections are the source data, printed in a font that maintains line and code placement; unnumbered data in the same font are the memoranda. In the first example, the search code was SURP*, which captures the various codes indicating surprise at the content of the feedback. Other codes, indicated with an E: are extensions from a few lines earlier in the data, still applied here. The codes are defined in Appendix 2, the Code Book.

1.1 How does the content of the feedback affect the process?

Subject of Case 1 describes reaction to feedback content that disconfirms self-image, self-assessment of own behavior:

I7_3 E: @-DEV-DIAL-D
 E: %-CH-ACTION
 E: #-RELA-CH-DR
 SEARCH CODE: SURP*
 *-SURP-H+-D

: how you want to process it." See, I	886				-*	
: talked the talk before, but I didn't	887				*	
: walk the talk. I thought I did. I	888				*	
: really thought I did.	889	-#		-%	*	
:	890				*	
: (and you heard some disconfirming things	891				*	
: in the Profilor..)	892				*	
:	893				*	
: I did! I mean, the profilor said "You	894				*	
: don't do this" and I went "Whoa, wait	895				*	
: a minute! That's what I DO!" And the	896				*	
: feedback was honest and said "No you	897				*	
: don't!"	898				*	
:	899				*	
: (Or "we don't see you do..")	900				*	
:	901				*	
: "We don't see you do that." So if I	902				*	
: valued the input, then it was up to me	903				*	
: to make the changes.	904				-* -@	

Case 2 talks about the surprising lack of insight from results. Outcome was neither deflection nor acceptance, but persistent efforts at communicating sincerity of wanting results and usefulness of whole exercise:

I13_1
 SEARCH CODE: SURP*
 #-SURP-H-/A %-FB-DSCREP

: Well it was surprising in that what	43	-#		-%		
: I thought were my weaknesses	44	#				
: weren't really picked up by	45	#				
: people as weaknesses, and what I	46	#				
: thought were my strengths also	47	#				
: weren't picked up. And I was	48	#				
: thinking about the weaknesses	49	#				
: part, and I realized that	50	#				
: perceiving them as weaknesses	51	#				
: made me kind of compensate for	52	#				
: them, to the degree that that	53	#				
: didn't effect or hamper my	54	#				
: performance, and that's why	55	#				
\$_SURP-H+/A						
: people didn't pick them up. But	56	-#		-\$		
: the fact that my strengths	57			\$		
: weren't picked up, some of them,	58			\$		
: by the respondents, that was more	59			\$		
: troubling. And I really didn't	60			\$		

:	have an answer for why that was.	61	\$	
:	It was maybe because I thought I	62	\$	
:	was already doing so well that I	63	\$	
:	thought I didn't have to try	64	\$	
:	anymore. I was surprised, I was	65	\$	
:	very surprised, and those were	66	\$	
:	the specific things. Neither the	67	\$	
:	strengths nor the weaknesses	68	\$	
:	seemed to be universally picked	69	\$	
:	up. They didn't match my	70	\$	
:	perception.	71	-\$	-%

Later in Case 2, the subject discusses the high value of the feedback, which is interesting in light of its relatively empty content.

I13_1

SEARCH CODE: FB-CRED

#-FB-CRED

:	I mean, the profiler, the initial	222	-#
:	profiler report, was extremely	223	#
:	valuable, I thought. The only..	224	#
:	There's no other tool, no other	225	#
:	way that I know of to accurately	226	#
:	gauge how I'm really doing. It's	227	#
:	the only real reality check I can	228	#
:	imagine receiving. So I think	229	#
:	the original profile was	230	#
:	fantastic. In fact, the two.. I	231	-#

Case 3 here questions the content of the feedback, specifically the importance ratings, by challenging the measure's repeatability. This leads to a reduced acceptance of the feedback, and possibly to lower commitment to the priority of change.

I2_1

SEARCH CODE: FB-CRED

#-FB-CRED

:	clarification, we talked a lot about	506	-#
:	there was that one page up front where	507	#
:	you talked about the 25 traits, and	508	#
:	they were all important, but you had	509	#
:	to split them out into very important,	510	#
:	not so important, and so on.	511	#
:		512	#
:	And almost everybody that I talked to	513	#
:	kind of got the impression that that	514	#
:	was not very repeatable. Maybe it is,	515	#
:	statistically, but the people taking	516	#
:	it and the people receiving it kind of	517	#
:	got the feeling that they're not	518	#
:	really sure they could repeat it.	519	#

```

:
: I had the opportunity not only to have 520 #
: it done to me, but to do it for one of 521 #
: the group leaders. When I finished 522 #
: it, I thought to myself "I wonder how 523 #
: repeatable this is" I mean I really 524 #
: similar if I sat it down for a month, 525 #
: not just turn right around and do it 526 #
: again, but sat it down for a month or 527 #
: two and came back, which I'm almost 528 #
: curious to do but I haven't taken the 529 #
: time, what would I say? how much 530 #
: would it vary? 531 #
: 532 #
: 533 #
: That's an area where I have a lot of 534 #
: trouble personally is with making 535 #
: decisions like that, where it really 536 #
: is a sort of an artificial, depends 537 #
: upon the day and what you're thinking 538 #
: about, cut, because, to me, you don't 539 #
: really see the value in that, so I 540 #
: have trouble making those kinds of 541 #
: decisions. 542 -#

```

Here Case 4 did not agree with the content of feedback from the low-rating boss, and deflected to a more skills-oriented change.

I4_2

E: #-DEV-PLAN

SEARCH CODE: FB-CRED

\$-FB-CRED

```

: pretty well. I think there was a 97 | -$
: dramatic increase in the amount of 98 | $
: interaction I had with [name], and I felt99 | $
: we got to a common understanding - and 100 | $
: I'm emphasizing understanding, not 101 | $
: agreement - as to the situation, the 102 | $
: areas he felt I was weak. And I am 103 | $
: not clear at this time, however, 104 | $
: whether he viewed I addressed the 105 | $
: issue adequately. I can surmise the 106 | $
: answer is no. 107 -# $
: 108 $
: (let me press on that a little bit. 109 $
: When we talked before, the action plan 110 $
: you had was to communicate better with 111 $
: [name], to keep your project in front of112 $
: him, to deal with him face-to-face..) 113 $
: 114 $
: I had, I mean, all of that happened, I 115 $
: believe, excellently. The part that I 116 $
: feel is incomplete are the specific 117 $
: areas that came out of the Profilor 118 $

```

:	that he felt were my weakest areas,	119	\$
:	and that he and I felt it would	120	\$
:	appropriate to concentrate on. And I	121	\$
:	think that area is incomplete. The	122	\$
:	actual action on some of those	123	\$
:	attributes.	124	\$
:		125	\$
:	(can I know what those attributes are?)	126	\$
:		127	\$
:	Yes, I believe I can articulate them.	128	\$
:	There was an issue of leadership. As	129	\$
:	an example, he acknowledges that I am	130	\$
:	excellent at putting a team together,	131	\$
:	getting a team cranked up and off on a	132	\$
:	track, but then it isn't clear always	133	\$
:	that issues come to conclusion or that	134	\$
:	the outcome of the team is always in a	135	\$
:	kind of optimal ... So it's an issue	136	\$
:	of, Yeah, I do a great job getting	137	\$
:	things started, but it's the issue of	138	\$
:	closure. That was an area.	139	\$
:		140	\$
:	The other area was, as he called it,	141	\$
:	thinking out of the box. That is,	142	\$
:	don't be afraid to do things that are	143	\$
:	kind of radical, or don't be trying to	144	\$
:	preserve the status quo, but kind of	145	\$
:	shake things up. There were a couple	146	\$
:	of other ones, but I think those were	147	\$
:	the kind of major areas.	148	-\$

Case 5 describes an earlier experience with the multi-rater assessment instrument, in which he/she found that personal issues thought long-resolved were still being observed.

The surprise factor here is high, and so is acceptance.

I12_1

SEARCH CODE: VU-SELF*

#-AHA #-VU-SELF

:	It worked so well the first year, and	356	-#
:	there were 2 or 3 things, and I don't	357	#
:	exactly know them all, and one that	358	#
:	really flipped me over backwards, and	359	#
:	I don't say this like a 90 percentile	360	#
:	response or anything, but it was "[Case5]	61	#
:	is too aloof." I've always thought I	362	#
:	was a little shy, and I still think	363	#
:	I'm somewhat shy. Some of this	364	#
:	gregariousness is a defense that I	365	#
:	stand behind sometimes, in a way it's	366	#
:	defensive. Sort of "If I can make you	367	#
:	laugh, then you won't come over the	368	#
:	wall at me." Particularly if you're a	369	#

```

: stranger. So I keep the semblance up. 370 #
: But I have never thought of myself 371 #
: aloof. 372 #
: 373 #
: And one was really strong. I mean, it 374 #
: just stung me to the heart. And this 375 #
: was one response. And I remember that 376 #
: it was only one, but I didn't want to 377 #
: discount it among the others. it was 378 #
: "**** never gives anybody a second 379 #
: chance." Gaa, right through the 380 #
: heart. 381 -#

```

Some memoranda help the process along of going from data to description to process description and theory. Case 3 offered the clearest example of how challenges to feedback credibility could have a diminishing effect on commitment to change; the memo below is based on the same interview with Case 3 already quoted above, and adds a dimension of trust to the feedback credibility issue:

Memos for I2_1 Printed On: 3/12/1996 08:39 Page 8

```

-----
Line: 441A to 486
Date: 03/02/96 Time: 16:40 By:
Topic: FB discount- partial
Code1: FB-CRED Code2: Code3:
-----

```

feedback credibility is challenged here on the basis of the statistical artifacts - rolling up numbers into aggregates loses some meaning.

Subject identified some "red herrings" where numbers seemed to indicate a skill deficit, yet subject could think of no example. And in FB mtng, "no one could come up with any -- or was willing to say -- any examples"

Does this indicate a lack of trust w/ DRs and peers? Is that a transitory phenomenon, or a function of being asked publicly as a group? later insights about the differences of approaching feedback individually vs in groups are in another note..

Subject at end of this clip does see feedback as pointing a general direction, and accepts that level of validity.

1.2 How does the source of the feedback affect the process?

Case 1 describes relative valuation of feedback sources, with DR's offering most;

note that there is high acceptance of feedback even when it is disconfirming:

I7_3

E: #-RELA-CH-DR

SEARCH CODE: SRC-CRED

%-FB-SRC *-SRC-CRED

:	question. Because I would have to say	815		-%	-*
:	that I valued the input of my	816			*
:	subordinates more than anything else	817			*
:	in the Profilor. The interaction with	818			*
:	the other manager was gravy. It was	819			*
:	an opportunity, and it was gravy that	820			*
:	it turned out the way that it did. It	821			*
:	could've just as easily gone the other	822			*
:	way, but it didn't. But the feedback	823			*
:	from the boss was not nearly as	824			*
:	important as those other two	825			*
:	populations. Having taken the	826			*
@-DEV-DIAL-D					
:	profilor provided the opportunity to	827			* -@
:	get in tune with my subordinates,	828			*
:	which, as I said, in my scheme of	829			*
:	things was very high. I value their	830			*
:	judgment, I value their input, and I	831			*
:	wanted to know from them how I could	832			*
:	help them do a better job. Because I	833			*
:	knew that they respected me for what I	834			*
:	contributed, even when I didn't	835			*
:	respect myself! So that was important	836			*
:	to me.	837		-#	*
:		838			*
:	(that must have been wonderfully	839			*
:	bolstering, affirming..)	840			*
:		841			*
#-FB-DSCREP #-SURP-H+-D					
:	Oh, they told me some things that I	842		-#	*
:	didn't want to hear, Steve! Things	843			*
:	like "We don't like this!" and "Oh	844			*
:	Crap! I thought I was doing a pretty	845			*
:	good job of that!" But it was the	846			*
:	opportunity to get the reality check.	847		-#	*
#-RELA-CH-DR					
:	And maybe not for everybody, maybe	848		-#	*
:	from the subordinates isn't the place	849			*
:	you want to get it. Maybe they want	850			*
:	to get it from the top. That wasn't	851			*
:	as important to me because I just felt	852			*
:	that the subordinates were the ones	853			*
:	who could catapult me into being	854			*
\$-CH-SPT-DR					
:	better. Because if I could meet their	855		-\$	*

```

: vision of what a good manager was,      856 | | | * |
: then I thought I'd be pretty good.      857 | | -% * |
: And from the feedback and now from      858 | | | * |
: some of the kinds of interactions        859 | | | * |
: we're having are different from          860 | | | * |
^-TELLING
: interactions we had a year ago. Now I    861 | | | -* | -^

```

Case 2 describes some raters in terms of their acquaintance, and sets some high standards for when acquaintance is long enough to give very reliable feedback:

```

I13_1
SEARCH CODE: FB-SRC*
#-FB-SRC      #-RELA-DIST
: Actually, they didn't know me all        107 -#
: that well, because not only had I        108 #
: been recently promoted, I had            109 #
: also moved relatively recently,          110 #
: within 2 years or so, to the             111 #
: site. So they'd known me for a           112 #
: couple of years, but since I'd           113 #
: been at [org] for 13 years, 2             114 #
: years seemed a short time to me         115 #
: to know [org] people. At least,          116 #
: I was wearing a new hat at the           117 #
: time, and I didn't feel, I don't         118 #
: feel, as though I knew all the           119 #
: respondents very well. With one          120 #
: or two exceptions, of people that        121 #
: I used to work with when I was           122 #
: still in Bedford.                        123 -#

```

This story of Case 3's prior feedback experience shows how the source of the feedback, and particularly known bad relationships, can lead to feedback deflection:

```

$-RELA-DIST  $-ORG-UNCERT  $-RELA-DR
: done. I had just been ejected to         222 # -$
: [org], and then the profile came along.  223 # |
: I didn't know anybody in that            224 # |
: department. I had been thrown into a     225 # |
: crisis, I was taking over for a Group    226 # |
: Leader who was everybody's friend.       227 # |
: And he was moved off to another          228 # |
: assignment and I got all these people    229 # |
: who were not exactly top of the          230 # |
: barrel.                                  231 # |
:                                           232 # |
%-FB-CRED    %-SRC-CRED
: And so there was a lot of resentment and  233 # | -%
: contention with the folks in there.      234 # | |
: it was extreme, I mean there were        235 # | |

```

```

: people where I'd walk into the room      236 # | |
: and they wouldn't turn to face me.So     237 # | |
: it was a pretty tough situation, so      238 # | |
: when I asked these people what they      239 # | |
: thought of me I wasn't surprised that    240 # | |
: I came off pretty poorly.                241 # -$ |
:                                           242 #   |
$-TIMING
: I felt as if the exercise wasn't really  243 # -$ |
: worth all that much. And I think it      244 # | |
: was, not to slam the program, but I      245 # | |
: think the timing and everything really    246 # | |
: detracted from the ability of it to     247 # | |
: give any reasonable feedback.           248 -# -$ -%

```

Case 4 describes his/her view of the differential value of feedback sources:

```

I4_1
SEARCH CODE: FB-SRC*
$-FB-SRC
: Well again, I think of the three sets of 504 -$
: feedback - clearly the most important    505 $
: is from the bosses. Second is the       506 $
: feedback from the direct reports.       507 $
:                                           508 $
#-SURP-N//P
: Third in value is from the peers - I     509 -# $
: still am somewhat skeptical about the   510 | $
: value of that. I can see the value,     511 | $
: but at least for me personally, either  512 | $
: I gave it to the wrong set of          513 | $
: individuals or, well, these are         514 | $
: individuals that I deal with all the    515 | $
: time, we talk a lot about common        516 | $
: problems, common issues, and all of     517 | $
: that. So the amount of new insight      518 | $
: that I got from that was not that       519 | $
: important from the feedback stuff,      520 | $
: other than to verify the general slope  521 | $
: of the graphs.                          522 -# -$

```

Case 4 later describes how the original feedback message from the low-rating manager (with whom "we got to a common understanding - and I'm emphasizing understanding, not agreement - as to the situation") would need confirmation with others after the reorganization:

I4_2

SEARCH CODE: FB-SRC*

#-FB-SRC

```
      : And it is his prerogative as a manager,      842 -#
      : but it also again reaffirms that I          843 #
$-FB-DSCREP
      : have to take his inputs very                844 # -$
      : seriously, and I have to figure out         845 # |
      : the areas that I truly, seriously need     846 # |
      : to work on, and what is either a clash     847 # |
      : of wills, or a clash of personalities.     848 # |
      : Because that's why I want, to go back      849 # |
      : to [boss2] and back to [boss1], to try     850 # |
      : to get a sort of a re calibration as       851 # |
      : to exactly what is reality here as to      852 # |
      : what areas I need to work on.              853 -# -$
```

Case 5 describes how credibility of one source (boss) was much less than credibility of other source (direct reports) and how the discrepant boss feedback was discounted:

I12_1

SEARCH CODE: SRC-CRED

#-SRC-CRED #-FB-SRC-DSC

```
      : No, I thought about that real hard,        936 -#
      : and I almost did it. What took me          937 #
      : away from that was that I knew what he     938 #
      : would say. I knew him well enough          939 #
      : that I knew exactly what he was gonna      940 #
      : say. And remember, he was an inch          941 #
      : away from the other layer. His             942 #
      : response was far enough away, and by       943 #
      : that time he'd been down there 3 and a    944 #
      : half years, and I knew him very well.     945 #
      :                                             946 #
      : (when you say an inch away, was that an   947 #
      : inch positive, or negative?)              948 #
      :                                             949 #
      : In general, it was negative. in           950 #
      : general.                                   951 #
      :                                             952 #
      : (So if most of the folks said a 4.2, he   953 #
      : might have said a 3.2)                    954 #
      :                                             955 #
      : Yeah, in general it was a little          956 #
      : negative there. [name] on the other        957 #
      : hand, in general was in a positive         958 #
      : direction. But I knew [name] was          959 #
      : dealing with very scant data. I could     960 #
      : look at 3 or 4 of the questions, and      961 #
      : know darn good and well that he had no    962 #
      : basis for making any answer. But he       963 #
```

: would mark a 4 or something.

964 -#

Some memoranda may also shed light on the process of generalizing from the data to broader descriptions. When Case 4 mentioned the priority of feedback sources (listed above) for him/her, it led to some early cross-case observations:

Memos for I4_1

Printed On: 3/12/1996 11:07

Page 9

Line: 504A to 542

Date: 03/09/96 Time: 11:57 By:

Topic: FB-SRC priority

Code1: FB-SRC Code2: Code3:

Subject ranks FB SRC in order of importance - most important is boss, then DRs, then Peers.

Subject then talks about what she/he gets from peers, and it seems like a lot of practical advice.

Other subjects share (and don't) this prioritization:

Case 1 hardly mentioned boss FB, alleging a close relationship and no surprises. Most useful FB was from a distant Peer and from DRs

Case 2 hardly mentioned boss FB, though she/he did mention dutiful support 2 levels up. Most useful FB was from DRs.

Case 3 mentioned it at length, in terms of calibrating meaning on the importance ratings, plus a direct development plan discussion that led to a tasking; in fact, case 3 got no useful info from face meetings w/ DR or P.

Case 5 mentions Boss FB as primarily valuable in showing Boss' values and importance scheme, which differed from the more important DRs; the boss FB wasn't discounted, but factored into what subject had to do. Case 5 Subject sought and got lots of FB from all sides, but valued others' FB more than boss FB.

=====

And a further memo on the same subject, while reviewing Case 5, added a layer of theory onto the description:

Memos for I12_1

Printed On: 3/12/1996 13:33

Page 6

Line: 704A to 745

Date: 03/12/96 Time: 12:15 By:

Topic: FB SRC Value

Code1: FB-SRC Code2: Code3:

Subject is concerned w/ boss FB, though less than those who changed

less, and more like those who changed more.

That is, Cases 1 and 2, and also this one, value FB from DRs and Peers most.

Cases 3 and 4 valued Boss FB most.

This case values both, but the Boss FB more defensively, to prescribe presenting behavior to boss rather than to change self.

1.3 How do discrepancies in the feedback affect the process?

Here Case 1 reports how, two years before this study in the prior 360-degree process, he/she handled a discrepancy in the feedback. Note that it is a prototypical violation of anonymity, and how much it differs from how Direct Report feedback is now valued in the section quoted above.

```
I7_1
E: ^-LOAD
E: %-CH-CHOICE
E: $-TRANSIT
E: #-FB-HIST
SEARCH CODE: FB-SRC*
*-FB-SRC-DSC *-SURP-H/-D *-SURP-H/-D @-CNFL-HNDL
: not to change. For instance, a direct 145 | | | -* -@ -^
: report had given me some really 146 | | | * |
^-SRC-CRED
: negative feedback about my behaviors. 147 | | | * | -^
: And I chose to ignore it. Because 148 | | -% * | |
: there were other performances on that 149 | | * | |
: individual's part. Although it was 150 | | * | |
: anonymous, so you didn't know who the 151 | | * | |
: stuff was coming from, but you could 152 | | * | |
: figure out where some of it was coming 153 | | * | |
: from. And I actually used that as a 154 | | -* | |
```

Here Case 3 reconciles surprise at feedback with self image by challenging the validity of the constructs in the instrument, and by citing that no raters were able (or willing!) to offer examples of the surprising feedback.

```
I2_1
SEARCH CODE: FB-CRED
#-FB-CRED
: Most of the feedback was along the same 441 -#
```

```

: lines I think that with any          442 #
: instrument that is rolling up numbers, 443 #
: there are some things in there that   444 #
: are kind of artificialities. One      445 #
: additional area he has as one of the   446 #
: subcategories is "fighting the right   447 #
: battles"                               448 #
:                                         449 #
: That kind of surprised me, because I   450 #
: don't feel that one's on the mark. I   451 #
: think in general it kind of got rolled 452 #
: in because of some of the questions in 453 #
: there. I kind of looked at that and    454 #
: said "oh, okay." But I can't really    455 #
$-FB-MTNG
: match that to any examples. When I     456 # -$
: tried to clarify that, which didn't    457 # |
: work all that well in general, no one   458 # |
: could come up with any -- or was       459 # |
: willing to say -- any examples of      460 # |
: where they thought that was the case.   461 # -$
:                                         462 #
: (somewhere where you'd fought the wrong 463 #
: battle?)                                464 #
:                                         465 #
: Yes, so I think there were probably some 466 #
: red herrings, but that was the only    467 #
: one that really caught my attention.    468 #
: The others were in the top 20 and      469 #
: bottom 20, you know, there's a couple  470 #
: of red herrings in there. One was      471 #
: "knows the job" -- the question is,    472 #
: what job? you really can't tell. Is    473 #
: it "knows the job as ADH which he's    474 #
: been doing for 3 months, well,        475 #
: probably no. Vs, kind of management in 476 #
: general, which, theoretically, you     477 #
: should know a little bit of.          478 #
:                                         479 #
: So how to interpret some of those      480 #
: specific things, but I don't think     481 #
: that's the goal of the profiler. At    482 #
: least, that's not what I interpret the 483 #
: goal as. It's "What's the broad        484 #
: direction?" and then go off in that    485 #
: direction, in that heading.            486 -#

```

Case 4 describes the discrepant feedback from two different bosses, one an immediate boss [boss1] and the other the cognizant Senior Vice President [boss2].

I4_1

SEARCH CODE: FB-DSCREP

#-SURP-H/-B \$-FB-DSCREP

```

: Well as I'm sure you recall I had a case 104 -# -$

```

```

: where I had a very wide spread of the 105 | $
: scores between [boss2] and [boss1], and that | $
: really concerned me initially. At the 107 | $
: time, I said "Oh boy, this is real 108 -# $
: trouble here." Interestingly enough, 109 $
: [boss1] was relatively low and [boss2] was0 $
: high. But the process as you 111 $
: suggested of connecting the dots and 112 $
: seeing what the slopes were of the 113 $
: curves and all that, it confirmed that 114 $
: in all but a couple of areas the 115 $
: general pattern was relatively 116 $
: consistent, so I felt a little bit 117 $
: better about that. 118 -$

```

Here Case 5 discusses the discovery of a substantial discrepancy between Direct

Reports and two bosses:

I12 1

E: #-RATER-SEL

SEARCH CODE: FB-DSCREP

\$-FB-DSCREP

```

: spread it around pretty good. The 661 -# -$
: thing that jumped off the page at me 662 $
: was - and this is what almost drove me 663 $
: to write the profile people and say 664 $
: "Do something graphical!" and I don't 665 $
: know what - in fact, I did draft 666 $
: something up to send to them. I took 667 $
: each of the pages where they had the 668 $
: composites under the direct reports 669 $
: and your manager and whatever it was, 670 $
: and connected up all the dots on the 671 $
: page so that I could take a look at it 672 $
: either front or on the edge like this, 673 $
: and get some.. And at arm's length, 674 $

```

#-SURP-H/-B

```

: you could start to see, and if here 675 -# $
: was the path down the page for the 676 | $
: direct reports, and if upper 677 | $
: management tracked almost an inch away 678 | $
: from it, and in fact crossed where a 679 | $
: high rating was good or bad, the lines 680 | $
: crossed. Surely there was a different 681 | $
: perception between the people who 682 | $
: worked for me and the people I worked 683 | $
: for. They saw me in an entirely 684 | $
: different light. Entirely different. 685 | $
: Not 0 to 7 or whatever the scale was, 686 | $
: but enough off that they ran almost 687 | $
: like railroad tracks down the page. 688 | $
: And that was shocking, amusing, 689 | $
: interesting, I didn't know what to 690 | $

```

%-FB-SRC-DSC

: make of it, what to do about it.

691 -# -\$ -8

General Question 1: What processes influence recipients' initial acceptance or deflection of 360-degree feedback?

In response to this broader question, other excerpts and memoranda shed light.

These may have to do with more than one of the subquestions above, or with none of them.

In the memo below, a phenomenon called "insulation" is noted, from various points in Case 1's interviews. It relates to both the content issue and the source issue, as the process uses some aspect of the source (familiarity, unfamiliarity, attributed agenda..) to discount the content of the feedback message:

Memos for I7_1

Printed On: 3/11/1996 22:31

Page 5

Line: 55B to 77

Date: 02/07/96 Time: 00:53 By:

Topic: **insulation phenom

Code1: FB-SRC-DSC Code2: FB-NTRN-N Code3: INSULATION

When the feedback from a senior manager is perceived as hostile and even role-based ("beat up on HR, using me as the vehicle to do that"), there was no reflection, no internalization.

Seems to insulate subject from bad news, to rationalize in order to put distance between self and negative feedback.

Clearer examples follow of where subject defends or insulates self from criticism:

w/ Direct Report who was "off the scale" w/ neg FB, considered source and chose to ignore.

@400+, w/ profiler FB, expected & got no surprises from boss (shielded w/ familiarity?)

w/ peer profiler FB, discounts by saying "they didn't know me well enough" and "one of them was a hard grader"

w/ subords, asserts "enough of an open relation that there was nothing new"

However, in later interview of same subject, there were surprises in FB from subords.

The phenomenon of insulation is present in other cases, as well, to varying degrees: at its most minor instantiation, in Case 2, the high familiarity requirements for those who had not rated either strengths or weaknesses could be a case of source-discounting, a primary means of insulation:

Memos for I13_1 Printed On: 3/12/1996 01:17 Page 1

Line: 43A to 56
Date: 02/19/96 Time: 00:07 By:
Topic: FB Missed +/- Surprise
Code1: FB-H+/A Code2: FB-H-/A Code3:

Subject was surprised at FB missing both "weaknesses" (FB-H-/A) and perceived strengths (FB-H+/A).

Subject thinks known weaknesses "made me kind of compensate for them, to the degree that that didn't effect or hamper my performance

=====
Memos for I13_1 Printed On: 3/12/1996 01:19 Page 2

Line: 106A to 123
Date: 02/22/96 Time: 22:42 By:
Topic: Knowledge of respondents
Code1: RELA-DIST Code2: Code3:

Subject sets very high criteria for what it takes to know a manager well: 2 years didn't seem long enough, relative to 13 years w/ org.

Is this a subtle source discounting to explain why strengths and liabilities were missed?

Other memoranda captured insights as they occurred. When Case 4 talked of experience with prior Profilor, it led to cross-comparisons about an important factor in feedback acceptance - feedback history. In the memo below, it begins to shape:

Memos for I4_1 Printed On: 3/12/1996 11:07 Page 1

Line: 57A to 63
Date: 03/04/96 Time: 22:32 By:
Topic: Experience factor w/ FB
Code1: FB-HIST Code2: Code3:

Subject describes prior experience w/ 360 FB as adding value to recent experience - "got a little bit more out of it" "know a little

better how to operate on it".

Note the differences and similarities w/ other cases:

Case 1 had prior FB experience, both direct and instrumented, and found it important, if not always useful. When ready, took it very much to heart.

Case 2 had NO prior FB experience, believed in it, championed it, used it to develop new communication w/ DRs

Case 3 had negative prior instrumented FB from timing (recently dropped into hostile group), little face-to-face FB, and did not find it overly useful.

Case 4, here, had prior moderately positive, takes an active attitude toward development generally, and found second FB more useful than first.

Case 5, next, had extraordinary instrumented FB history, inventing his own, using the one in Ldrship Excellence, 3 prior profilors, and from the recent one drew some insights.

Therefore, in group so far, where HIST: non-negative later FB felt useful.

=====

Other broad phenomena emerged from the data and were not explicitly expected within the framework of the research questions. Some memos and data are listed here, to capture the flavor of discovery, and their relationships are more fully described in Chapter 5, Cross-Case Analysis.

Time for Reflection/Time Pressure - where the subjects are under too much time pressure to reflect on the feedback, it seems to impede the incorporation of the feedback message and the practice of any changed behavior:

Case 3:

SEARCH CODE: TIME-PRESS

```
#-LOAD          #-RFL-NOTIME #-TIME-PRESS
:  department", so that one of the things  999  #
:  I have, one of my driving                1000 #
:  philosophies, is that a machine has to  1001 #
:  be somewhat sloppy in order to work     1002 #
:  well.  If it is very very tightly      1003 #
:  wound, I don't think there's any room   1004 #
:  for improvement.  And I think that a    1005 #
:  lot of [org] right now suffers from     1006 #
```

: being 100% committed, and doesn't have 1007 #
 : any room to do anything to interest 1008 #
 : their growth. 1009 -#

Case 1:

E: @-LOAD

E: *-CNFL-HNDL

E: %-FB-NTRN-NO

E: #-FB-HIST

SEARCH CODE: RFL-NOTIME

\$-RFL-NOTIME

: It was a factor of time, and you just	73		-\$			
: kind of considered it for the moment,	74		\$			
: let it settle wherever it settled, and	75		\$			
: then you're off [gesture of hand	76		\$			
: moving outward, quickly]	77		-\$	-%	-*	

Case 1:

Memos for I7_1

Printed On: 3/11/1996 22:31

Page 7

Line: 64A to 77

Date: 10/04/95 Time: 13:52 By:

Topic: *Reflection

Code1: RFL-NOTIME Code2: Code3:

This (64-67) is first expression of Subj's valuation of reflection, tho here it's hypothetical and notable for its absense for lack of time (priority?)

When referenced again, reflection happens in the context of getting the negative instrumented fdbk from the earlier 360 instrument (142-158), specifically in identifying the low rater among subords and deciding 1) to ignore the fdbk (see SRC-DSCNT), and 2) to use fdbk as "springboard to do some counseling" and get DR to leave company.

In describing self-view as mgr (278-288), seems to indicate MDP as decision point (or at least a time marker) for recognizing need to refocus, "take a look at what was working well.." as opposed to "go with the flow".

Case 2:

E: #-HEADWINDS #-LOAD

SEARCH CODE: TIME-PRESS

%-TIME-PRESS

: constrains it is that it takes	598		-%	
: work. It takes time. And you	599		%	
: have only so much energy and time	600		%	

\$-STRESS

: during the day. And if you're in	601		-\$	%
: a job that already stresses you	602			%
: to the limit, it's very hard to	603			%
: find any additional energy, any	604			%
: additional emotional energy to	605			%

: put into this. This kind of 606 | | -%

Readiness for feedback and the relationship aspects also featured more prominently than anticipated in the data:

Memos for I7_1 Printed On: 3/11/1996 22:31 Page
13

Line: 175A to 182
Date: 10/04/95 Time: 10:40 By:
Topic: *Readiness for feedback, 2
Code1: READY Code2: RELA-NEW Code3:

This is the first direct mention of the readiness phenomenon.

Earlier indirect reference (60-77) shows lack of time or priority to "peel back the onion skin"

Here (175-182) Subj directly says "not prepared...to receive and respond to the information" and later (236-240) specifies "Both from a physiological standpoint and a professional standpoint.." at 2 yrs before interview.

Contrast this to the deliberate relationship-building use of feedback at 323-342, where fdbk information is not only sought but strategically used.

Contrast also to the outcome of the relationship-building via fdbk w/in new group norm of reflecting to seek rationale for policies (486-495 and 509-519) and especially the phrase at 525-527: "timing is everything."

The data sampling approach shown above used coding to name phenomena, constant comparative analysis to examine similar and different phenomena for the "fit" of the codes, generation of a "codebook" (analogous to a data dictionary in programming), and the generation of memos to capture observations, particularly those that applied across cases.

**Appendix 2:
Codebook from Ethnograph**

Codebook from Ethnograph

This appendix reproduces the codebook from Ethnograph for this project. It represents the evolving definitions, a snapshot of the final version. The codebook is a perpetual work-in-progress, as definitions are enriched and changed in their application to new instances. Thus it will necessarily seem unpolished, and is reproduced on the following pages to give a flavor for the evolving pattern of definitions.

The role of the codebook in the data analysis was central. Like a data dictionary in programming, it was a ready reference to compare new phenomena in the data with existing definitions that had emerged from the data earlier, and provided standardization of spelling and abbreviations for the codes. Some codes evolved to carry several elements of data, such as the family of codes that begins with SURP. The data these codes carried about the degree of surprise, the expected versus received content, and source allowed a cross case analysis.

TYPE	CODEWORD	PARENT	DEFINITION
Text	AGE	CH-VU	Subject attributes change of view to age
Text	AHA	VU	A "light bulb going on" phenomenon, in which the subject has a realization, usually sudden, of relationships between events, different potential perspectives, etc.
Text	CAREER-PT	CH-VU	Subject attributes change to view to having reached a certain point in career - plateau? Boredom? Risk?
Text	CH-ACTION	CHANGE	Where subject attempted an action that was an example of a new target behavior, an implementation of an intention to change
Text	CH-ATTIT	CHANGE	Attitude toward change, ranging from fearful to eager, with many subtle variations
Text	CH-ATTRIB	CHANGE	Change attribution, where subject directly attributes change to some cause or factor
Text	CH-CHOICE	CHANGE	Change choice, where subject makes a conscious choice or decision about what/whether/extent of change
Text	CH-COMM	CHANGE	How subject refers to, talks about intended change to those in a position to observe any change
Text	CH-CULTURE	CHANGE	Describes or mentions change in organizational culture
Text	CH-MOTIVE	CHANGE	Subject describes a new motive for a new or existing action, a change in WHY
Text	CH-READY	CHANGE	Change readiness, where subject refers to own readiness to change, as in terms of emotional, developmental, situational context that leads to readiness.
Text	CH-SPT-DR	CH-SPT	Change support, or support for change from Direct Reports. This support may be in the form of accountability, continuing feedback, favorable comment...
Text	CH-SPT-EXT	CH-SPT	Change Support from EXTERNAL sources, such as family, community, friends external to the organization.

TYPE	CODEWORD	PARENT	DEFINITION
Text	CH-SPT-ORG	CH-SPT	Change support from the organization, in the form of growth assignments, challenging tasks around an area the subject perceives as a weakness
Text	CNFL-DURA	CONFLICT	Duration of a conflict (as experienced by subject) as long or short. Other dimensions of conflict may include intensity (low to high), and these may both be influenced by relationship distance (rela-dist).
Text	CNFL-HNDL	CONFLICT	Conflict Handling - strategies, approaches, tactics for handling conflict.
Text	CNFL-NTNST	CONFLICT	Describes the intensity of feeling that the subject describes in a conflict
Text	CNFL-TRGR	CONFLICT	Conflict Trigger - Perceived conflict as a trigger to reflection. Can be a specific event or change in a situation that leads subject to reflect on events leading up to it.
Text	CRISIS-MGT	MGT-MODEL	Crisis Management, as a paradigm of how management is done. Expectation of perpetual crisis may effect willingness or ability to deliberately change.
Text	DEV-DIAL-B	CHANGE	Development Dialog with Boss - where subject and boss engage in a discussion of the subject's intention, plans, execution, or perception of change
Text	DEV-DIAL-D	CHANGE	Development Dialog, Direct Reports - where subject engages in a discussion with direct reports about intention, plan, execution, or perception of change
Text	DEV-DIAL-P	CHANGE	Developmental Dialog with Peer - where subject engages with a peer or outside source in a discussion of intention, plan, execution, or perception of change.
Text	DEV-DIALOG	CHANGE	Development dialog - general term, specified w/ other partner in dialog. Larger than discussion, implies ongoing dialog and commitment on both parts to honest communication about behaviors and perceptions. Implies subject vulnerability, openness.

TYPE	CODEWORD	PARENT	DEFINITION
Text	DEV-PLAN	*	Development plan - where subject maps out explicit, often sequential steps in a plan to change a specific behavior or perception
Text	DR-ATTIT	CH-SPT	Direct Report Attitudes - may range from openly skeptical to highly supportive. This range can (and does) change during the experience described.
Text	DR-CMTS	CH-SPT	Direct report comments reported by subject that support change efforts.
Text	FAMILY-STG	CH-VU	Subject attributes change of view to changes in family status, such as greater independence of growing kids
Text	FB-CRED	FB	describes the degree of belief the subject has toward the content, importance, utility, accuracy... of the feedback. Stands for Feedback-Credibility
Text	FB-DSCREP	FB	Feedback Discrepancy - internal or inter-rater inconsistencies in the feedback message, or variance w/ other messages that subject gets from others/environment
Text	FB-FACE	FB	Describes situation and dynamics when feedback is sought face to face, as opposed to through an anonymous instrument
Text	FB-HIST	FB	Feedback History - subject's prior experience with receiving feedback on work behaviors
Text	FB-MTNG	FB	Feedback Meeting - a meeting that includes direct discussion of subject's work behavior in terms of 360 feedback. Dimensions include parties (Boss/Peer(s)/DR(s)), situation (private, group), initiator.
Text	FB-MTNG-B	FB	Feedback Meeting w/ Boss (subset of FB-MTNG)
Text	FB-MTNG-DR	FB	Feedback Meeting w/ direct reports (a subset of FB-MTNG)
Text	FB-MTNG-P	*	Feedback Meeting, Peers - describes feedback meeting with peers, including sources outside of organization.
Text	FB-NORMS	FB	Feedback norms - the accepted standard behaviors within a group about how / whether direct feedback is given

TYPE	CODEWORD	PARENT	DEFINITION
Text	FB-NTRN-NO	FB	Feedback was received without internalizing it
Text	FB-SCOPE	FB	Feedback scope - the boundaries of the feedback conversation. Scope may be a particular incident, a broad behavior, an observed change, or others.
Text	FB-SRC	FB	Feedback source, as in one who delivers feedback to the subject
Text	FB-SRC-DSC	FB	Feedback Source Discounting - describes how subject may discount the truth or importance of feedback by discounting or discrediting the source. This may happen by denying that source has info, alleging a hidden agenda, etc.
Text	FB-SRC-EXT	FB	Feedback source is external, sought by subject to provide input and feedback on new behavior.
Text	FB-WILLING	FB	Feedback willingness - willingness of rater(s) or other feedback giver(s) to give feedback. Varies from eagerness to avoidance.
Text	FOCUS-TALK	*	Property of 360 feedback to focus the developmental discussion by supplying all parties with common language.
Text	FOLLOW-DIR	*	Describes subject's attitude toward following directions from various sources (coach, boss, etc.)
Text	FREEDOM	CH-SPT	describes how subject felt the freedom to experiment, to fail, to be wrong when trying new behaviors.
Text	GREYSHADE	VU	Subject sees events in a relativist position (relatively!!). Contrasts w/ seeing world in black and white, to finding shades of grey in most decisions.
Text	HEADWINDS	CH-SPT	headwinds is a common symbol of environmental or organizational resistance to development or change (from a Diversity course all subjects in this study attended)
Text	INITIATIVE	CH-SPT	Change support initiated by the subject. Includes voluntary, self-initiated readings, workshop attendance, sought-experience related to change

TYPE	CODEWORD	PARENT	DEFINITION
Text	INNATE	MGT-MODEL	Innate describes a subject belief that management ability or skill is an innate trait, not something consciously developed.
Text	LENS	VU	Metaphor for how subject sees self, especially when multiple. Organic term for perspective.
Text	LOAD	CH-SPT	Load is the amount of stress, time pressure, etc. that effect how a subject may focus on developing or changing. May be positive or negative factor.
Text	LT-DEV	CH-SPT	Support for change from the learning team - may describe a developmental relationship.
Text	MD-MODEL	MGT-MODEL	Managing Diversity model, which all subjects learned; model based on TQM's CPI, w/ people as variable to be optimized.
Text	MGT-DSTRST	ORG-CLIM	management distrust (one aspect of organizational climate) is the disbelief or distrust in the competence, good intentions, judgment, honesty, decisionmaking... of those one or more levels above the subject.
Text	MORALE	ORG-CLIM	Morale, an aspect of organizational climate, refers to the morale of the subjects and those surrounding them as it applies to the decision to change or the ability to implement and maintain a change.
Text	MTNG-FREQ	FB-MTNG	Meeting Frequency (a dimension of parent code Feedback Meeting) addresses how frequently meetings on feedback occur
Text	MTNG-INIT	FB-MTNG	Meeting initiation identifies which party sought the feedback meeting.
Text	MTNG-PRTS	FB-MTNG	Meeting Parties describes who was present or indirectly interested in the feedback meeting.
Text	MTNG-PURP	FB-MTNG	Describes relative role of feedback in meeting - principle purpose, incidental..
Text	NEGO-EXPCT	*	Negotiating expectations - process of communicating with clients & others to determine & calibrate mutual expectations

TYPE	CODEWORD	PARENT	DEFINITION
Text	NSTRM-HIST	HIST	Instrument History - subject's history of using feedback instruments. May be absent (no experience), parallel (earlier use of Profilor), similar (different 360 instrument), extensive (multiple experiences w/ multi-rater instruments)
Text	ORG-UNCERT	ORG-CLIM	Organizational uncertainty - may relate to decision, commitment, maintenance of change effort
Text	OTHR-DEF	VU	Subject describes how others define who subject is, or the perception that definition is up to others
Text	PROB-AWARE	*	Problem awareness - how aware subject was of problems indicated by Profilor.
Text	RATER-SEL	*	Rater selection - describes subject's thinking or rationale for choice of raters.
Text	RCVR-EFFRT	*	Receiver effort describes how hard the subject tried to understand, interpret, analyze, confirm the feedback message
Text	READY	FB	readiness, openness, situational or emotional ability to receive, interpret, and act on feedback
Text	RELA-CH-B	RELATION	Change in the relationship between the subject and boss
Text	RELA-CH-CL	RELATION	Change in the relationship between the subject and a CLIENT.
Text	RELA-CH-DR	RELATION	Signifies a change in the relation w/ someone - in this case, subject's direct reports.
Text	RELA-DIST	RELATION	relationship distance - subject's perceived closeness or distance in relationship with another. Some locations on this dimension would range from stranger to mentor/friend
Text	RELA-DR	RELATION	Relationship with direct reports. May vary along dimensions of trust, communication, relationship distance, length of relationship..

TYPE	CODEWORD	PARENT	DEFINITION
Text	RELA-NEW	RELATION	New Relationship, includes changed relationship (note: doesn't mean positive or negative, but implies substantial change)
Text	RFL-ACTION	REFLECTION	reflection on actions taken - indicates mental "debriefing" or later rehearsal to identify other potential courses of action
Text	RFL-JOINT	REFLECTION	Joint reflection, in which subject and other reflect on and analyze a shared experience, perception, etc.
Text	RFL-NEED	REFLECTION	Recognition/awareness of the need to reflect in order to understand or learn
Text	RFL-NOTIME	REFLECTION	No Time for Reflection, where subject reports inability to reflect or process
Text	RFL-OUT/IN	REFLECTION	Describes a practice or ability to view self as if from outside, to look at situation from different vantage able to watch own actions.
Text	RFL-RELA	REFLECTION	Reflection on relationship with another
Text	RFL-ROLE	REFLECTION	Subject consciously and deliberately focuses attention to work and other roles
Text	RFL-SCOPE	REFLECTION	Scope of Reflection by subject - may include action only, or relationship, or meaning itself.
Text	RFL-SITU	REFLECTION	Reflection situation - physical, temporal, situational circumstances that lead to or facilitate reflective thinking.
Text	RFL-THNKNG	REFLECTION	Reflection on thinking - how subject describes and analyzes own thought processes
Text	RFL-TIME	REFLECTION	Time for reflection - subject makes time for reflection (opposite case of RFL-NOTIME). May also be indicator of priority.
Text	RFL-WORK	REFLECTION	Reflection on work behaviors or tasks or interactions
Text	RIF	ORG-CLIM	Reduction In Force, a part of organizational climate, effects subjects as a morale factor, influences trust, load, stress, view of work, and may lead to some reflection on role

TYPE	CODEWORD	PARENT	DEFINITION
Text	RTRO-NO	CH-SPT	Factors and conditions that lead to no retrogression or resumption of old bad habits.
Text	SELF-DEF	VU	Terms that subject uses to describe self, role, self-concept...
Text	SRC-CRED	FB	Source Credibility - how credible the source is to the subject. May be effected by knowledge of subject performance, relationship, power, perceived integrity. Differs from FB-CRED (more instrument-focused)
Text	STRESS	CH-SPT	Stress described as a factor that can impede or facilitate change.
Text	SURFACE	MGT-MODEL	subject describes management role as superficial, focusing on appearances and techniques
Text	SURP-H+-D	SURP	Feedback received was High-surprise, where subject expected HIGH ratings and got LOW ratings, from Direct Reports.
Text	SURP-H+/A	SURP	Feedback received was High-surprise, where subject expected HI ratings and got neutral ratings from All raters.
Text	SURP-H-/A	SURP	Feedback received was High-surprise, where subject expected LOW ratings and got Neutral ratings from All.
Text	SURP-H/-B	SURP	Feedback received was High-surprise, where subject expected Neutral ratings and got LOW ratings from Boss
Text	SURP-H/-D	SURP	Feedback recieved was High-surprise, where subject expected Neutral ratings and got LOW ratings from Direct Reports
Text	SURP-L//A	SURP	Feedback recieved was LOW-surprise, where subject expected Neutral ratings and got Neutral ratings from All
Text	SURP-N--D	SURP	Feedback recieved was NO-surprise, ratings unknown, from Direct Reports
Text	SURP-N//A	SURP	Feedback recieved was NO-surprise, where subject expected Neutral ratings and got them from All.

TYPE	CODEWORD	PARENT	DEFINITION
Text	SURP-N//B	SURP	Feedback recieved was NO-surprise, where subject expected Neutral ratings and got Neutral ratings from Boss.
Text	SURP-N//DR	SURP	Feedback received was NO-surprise, where subject expected Neutral ratings and received Neutral ratings from Direct Reports.
Text	SURP-N//P	SURP	Feedback received was NO-surprise, where subject expected Neutral ratings and got Neutral ratings from Peers.
Text	SURPR-INIT	SURPRISE	Initial surprise - the degree of surprise that the subject experienced on receipt of feedback
Text	SURPR-NONE	SURPRISE	No surprise - condition in which subject already has good knowledge of own work behavior and thus is not surprised by the feedback
Text	TAILWINDS	CH-SPT	From subjects' common experience, a metaphor for supporting forces that move a change effort along with relatively less effort. Opposite of "headwinds"
Text	TELLING	MGT-MODEL	An expectation that management role is to tell or direct subordinates specifically what to do as the normal form of communication. Opposite of participatory decision-making
Text	TIME-PRESS	CH-SPT	Time Pressure - possible interfering factor in development, ability to reflect on experience, and realized opportunity for new action.
Text	TIMING	CH-SPT	Timing refers to that fateful coincidence of readiness and opportunity
Text	TRANSIT	CHANGE	Transition (physical, work, personal..)
Text	TRNS-LOAD	CHANGE	transition load - cumulative load factor felt by subject from various concurrent transitions
Text	TRNS-PHYS	CHANGE	References to physical transition, as in declining health, changes in physical ability..
Text	UTILITY	FB	usefulness of feedback as perceived by subject

TYPE	CODEWORD	PARENT	DEFINITION
Text	VU-SELF	VU	More general code than -T1 or -T2, where subject discusses and contrasts former and current view of self
Text	VU-SELF-T1	VU	Self-View at Time 1 - subject's view of self, roles, before the management development effort.
Text	VU-SELF-T2	VU	Self view at Time 2 - How subject views self, roles after 360 feedback, development planning, and time.
Text	VU-WORK	VU	How subject views work - roles, expectations, aspirations...
Text	VU/WORK	VU	How subject's View of work effects the work itself

Appendix 3:

Search Results Sample for Research Question #3.1

Search Results Sample for Research Questions #3.1

The listing below shows part (about 10%) of the results of a cross case search done on several codes, in Ethnograph, to answer Research Question 3.1, "What influences the incorporation of deep and lasting change?"

The search went across all interviews, all cases, to find instances of 12 codes. The result went on for 80 pages or more, and the first results are reproduced here as a sample.

```
SEARCH RESULTS 3/16/1996 15:53
Page 1
SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE
```

```
-----
I4_2
SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE
#-INITIATIVE
: good. But how I plan to address this 486 -#
: is in, after everything kind of calms 487 #
: down, everyone's kind of in turmoil, 488 #
: and I assume that after the fiscal 489 #
: year begins, it will calm down some 490 #
: and we'll have an organization in 491 #
: place, I'm going to go have a one-on- 492 #
: one with [boss2], and say "Look, 493 #
: you were in on all these discussions 494 #
: and deliberations, and I'd like to get 495 #
: your view of how I stand and areas I 496 #
: need, out of those discussions, YOUR 497 #
: view of the areas I'm viewed to be 498 #
: weak in and how I can work on those. 499 #
: And I plan to basically do the same 500 #
: thing with my new tech director, [name] 501 #
```

```
=====
I7_1
E: #-FB-HIST
SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE
%-INITIATIVE
: outlier who you counseled out, did you 244 | -%
: go back and discuss the feedback with 245 | %
: the others?) 246 | %
: 247 | %
$-FOLLOW-DIR
: No, because that wasn't part of the 248 | -$ %
: assignment. I take instructions real 249 | | %
: well. [laughs] 250 | | %
: 251 | | %
: And I've got this thing about authority 252 | | %
: figures and I extrapolate that onto 253 | | %
```

```

: lots of circumstances. If you did not 254 | | %
: tell me to you it, my brain just did 255 | | %
: not go in that direction. So I did 256 | | %
: not. 257 | -$ -%

```

SEARCH RESULTS 3/16/1996 15:53

Page 2

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

I7_2 Some of it

E: *-AHA

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

#-CH-ATTRIB #-INITIATIVE

```

: Some of it has to do with the lens being 35 -# |
: opened as a result of classes in MDP, 36 # |
: and seeing opportunities when they 37 # |
: come across your desk, and acting on 38 # |
: those opportunities. A couple of 39 # |
: things have happened - three things - 40 # |
: that have happened most recently. 41 # -*
: 42 #
: The first one is that I went and put my 43 #
: son in acting class this summer. I 44 -#

```

I7_2

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

#-CH-ATTRIB #-CH-SPT-EXT #-INITIATIVE

```

: This past Tuesday I did a one-day 159 -#
: seminar given by one of the Covey 160 #
: institute principals on the 7 habits 161 #
: of highly effective people. 162 #
: 163 #
: And I can't tell you have that has 164 #
: dovetailed with what we have learned 165 #
: here at MDP.. For me it's helping to 166 #
: put the meat on the bones. There are 167 #
: some other things I still have to work 168 #
: around about the femaleness and that 169 #
: kind of thing, but it's helping me to 170 #
: paint the picture. 171 -#

```

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Page 3

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

I7_2

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

#-CH-ATTRIB \$-CH-SPT-EXT \$-INITIATIVE

```

: And then lastly [laughs] all at once, 205 -# -$
: I've worked on a school reform effort 206 | $
: for the last two years. 207 | $
: 208 | $
: (You mentioned that before) 209 | $
: 210 | $

```

: And then Monday night, my board of	211		\$
: education is presenting a certificate	212		\$
: of appreciation to me for the work	213		\$
: that I've done on that project.	214		\$
:	215		\$
: (wonderful)	216		\$
:	217		\$
: Yes. This one came out the blue. It	218		\$
: really came out of the blue. I didn't	219		\$
: do it for that reason.	220	-#	\$
:	221		\$
: (I know. you did it for your kids)	222		\$
:	223		\$
: I did it for my kids. But that says to	224		\$
: me that there's at least some	225		\$
#-CH-ATTIT #-CH-ATTRIB			
: recognition. And what I'm exhibiting	226	-#	\$
: is something as a result of all of the	227		\$
: learnings that I'm having.	228		-\$

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SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

I7_2

E: \$-CH-ATTIT

E: #-RFL-THNKNG #-AHA

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

%-INITIATIVE

: I know, but that's where I want to go.	561			-%
: It's where I want to go. It's an	562			%
: adventure that I'm on not by	563			%
: happenstance now. It is conscious.	564			%
: That you've provided me with some	565			%
: wonderful opportunities to get there,	566			%
: and I just want you to know that. And	567			%
: I appreciate it. This is happening at	568			%
: the right time for me.	569		-\$	%
:	570			%
: (that's wonderful)	571			%
:	572			%
: So I'm not sure what the flower is going	573			%
: to look like at the end of the	574			%
: rainbow, but that's OK. I'm on this	575			%
: adventure, and I HAVE to know.	576	-#		%
:	577			%
#-CH-SPT-EXT				
: You know what's amazing, I talked to my	578	-#		%
: sister yesterday, and she said "DON'T	579			%
: raise that stuff, I don't wanna answer	580			%
: that kind of question!" And I said	581			%
: "how could you NOT want to answer that	582			%
: kind of questions?!" Of course, for	583			%
: me, now that the lens is wider, I	584			%
: think "Well surely, everybody ought to	585			%

: want to know that." And she said "no,	586			%
\$-CH-ATTIT				
: I don't want to." And that helped me	587		-\$	%
: keep perspective in terms of trying to	588			%
: put on other people what they're not	589			%
: ready for, or what they don't want to	590			%
: go and explore.	591			%
:	592			%
: And I'll have to be real careful about	593			%
: that.	594	-#		%
:	595			%
: So I'm so excited about this now,	596			%
: because every day is just...	597			%
:	598			%
: I want more.	599			%
:	600			%
: but what i have to be real careful about	601			%
: is that sometimes I do it to the	602			%
: exclusion of everything else around	603			%
: me. And I can't do that.	604	-\$	-%	

=====
I7_3

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

#-CH-SPT-EXT #-INITIATIVE

: again, there are a multitude of things	15	-#		
: going on, and not just MDP. Last time	16	#		
\$-RFL-THNKNG %-DEV-PLAN				
: I think I mentioned some of the other	17	#	-\$	-%
: personal development classes that I've	18	#		
: undertaken, like the acting class. It	19	#		
: was just wonderful. I'm glad this one	20	#		
: is over. This particular class was	21	#		
: not really designed for the emotional	22	#		
: part of the acting. It was the text	23	#		
: unraveling from the beginning, the	24	#		
: middle, and the end. And I did that	25	#		
: specifically because I was looking at	26	#		
: this class to enhance my speaking	27	#		
: capabilities, and to make sure that	28	#		
: when I make presentations, they are	29	#		
: LOGICAL, and have a beginning, a	30	#		
: middle, and an end. it was a	31	#		
: supplement to the public speaking	32	#		
: classes that I'm already taking, so	33	#		
: that was the benefit that I expected	34	#		
: to receive.	35	#		-%
:	36	#		
: The value added was discovering, in	37	#		
: times of the lens continuing to open.	38	#		
: And again, it's just getting	39	#		
: information from a variety of sources	40	#		
: and being able to boil it down so that	41	#		
: it makes sense for me. And right now,	42	#		
: it makes sense for me, if I'm working	43	#		
: with stimuli, and looking at how to	44	#		
: value a stimulus. And how does my	45	#		

: behavior react to that stimulus. 46 -# -\\$

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SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

I7_3 I was stil

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

#-INITIATIVE #-CH-ACTION

: I was still, several months ago, 408 -#
: allowing things to happen to me. And 409 #
: somewhere, in the last couple of 410 #
: months, I have made the transition to 411 #
: orchestrating that myself. I don't 412 #
: know when I made the transition, and I 413 #
: can't point to any one stimulus. I 414 #
: really can't -- not yet! But maybe in 415 #
: a couple of months I might be able to 416 #
: pinpoint exactly when that happened. 417 -#

I7_3 No. Well,

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

#-INITIATIVE

: No. Well, it may have been. I can't 472 -#
: tell you why I decided to take the 473 #
: acting class when I decided to take 474 #
: it. At what stage in my growth and 475 #
: development was I when I decided I 476 #
: needed another stimulus or impetus or 477 #
: impulse to ratchet me up again and to 478 #
: move me to another level. 479 -#

I7_3

E: #-CH-ATTIT

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

§-INITIATIVE %-RTRO-NO

: I'm going to continue with my acting, 545 -# -\\$ -%
: because I think there are some gems 546 \$ |
: there that will help me with my lens 547 \$ |
: and with my focus. To help me 548 \$ |
: broaden, which I would not have 549 \$ |
: allowed myself to do before. I'm 550 \$ |
: going to continue professionally to 551 \$ |
: engage externally, to make sure that 552 \$ |
: I'm grounded where I know I can be 553 \$ |
: grounded. You know, we always, - no, 554 -\\$ |

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SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

I7_3 Well, I do

E: %-CH-SPT-EXT

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

#-INITIATIVE

```
: Well, I don't get together with them,      607 -# |
: but if I ever want to test something I      608 #  |
: just go and I say, "I think I'd like       609 #  |
: to be the Liturgist this Sunday - can      610 #  |
: I do that?" And I get up in the           611 #  |
: pulpit, and there are 300 people in        612 #  |
: the congregation, and I think "I'm        613 #  |
: gonna try this out!" [laughs] I mean,     614 #  |
: so it bombs. If it bombs, I wait 3       615 #  |
: months, and there'll be a different       616 #  |
: 300 people in the congregation, and      617 #  |
: it's not gonna matter.                   618 #  |
:                                           619 #  |
: (or it it's the same 300, they'll notice  620 #  |
: it's so much better)                     621 #  |
:                                           622 #  |
: Or if they're like me, they forget so     623 #  |
: fast [shrugs]                             624 #  |
:                                           625 #  |
: (and they've heard it before)             626 #  |
:                                           627 #  |
: Yes! And when you go to church, how       628 #  |
: many times DON'T you focus, because       629 #  |
: you've heard it before. And so there      630 #  |
: might be 2 or 3 that catch it, or        631 #  |
: maybe fifty, but perhaps not the same     632 #  |
: group. And then if I want to do          633 #  |
: something else in a public forum, I've    634 #  |
: always got my PTA, and they're always    635 #  |
: looking for volunteers. you can do      636 #  |
: anything there.                           637 -#  -%
```

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SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

I7_3 Well, you

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

#-INITIATIVE

```
: Well, you know, there are so many        649 -# |
: different avenues to test things.        650 #  |
: Before, I thought there was just one     651 #  |
: avenue, and I thought "O gawd if I      652 #  |
: bomb there, can I ever hold my head up   653 #  |
: again, and go try it someplace else or  654 #  |
: try something different." But now       655 #  |
: it's just [shrugs] "Yeah, right. I'm    656 #  |
: gonna go do this."                       657 -# |
```

I7_3

E: *-CH-MOTIVE

E: %-ORG-UNCERT

E: #-RFL-ROLE

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

\$-INITIATIVE

: next person on the block. So I'm	738	-\$		
: using (VP) departure as an	739	\$		
: opportunity for further professional	740	\$		
: growth for me. But I don't have to--	741	\$		
: I could just sit here and twiddle my	742	\$		
: thumbs and wait for the new person to	743	\$		
: show up, and ask "Okay, how do you	744	\$		
: want me to act tomorrow?" And I'm	745	\$		
: choosing, consciously, not to do that.	746	\$	-%	-*
: so no matter what else is going on	747	\$		
: around me. So I think these	748	\$		
: revelations have made me a better	749	\$		
: manager, but I've had to learn how to	750	\$		
: do some things differently. But that	751	\$		
: was a conscious decision. MITRE	752	\$		
: didn't help me be a better manager.	753	\$		
: The MDP by itself didn't help me be a	754	\$		
: better manager. I think what it did	755	\$		
: was provide the conduit for the	756	\$		
: learning, and if there's anything that	757	-\$		

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SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

I7_3 I think th

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

#-INITIATIVE

: I think that has to do with some	908	-#
: confidence building, and none of that	909	#
: was in the MDP, that's all been extra	910	#
: work. It's been a conscious effort at	911	#
: the extra work. Becuase that's what I	912	#
: want to do. And MDP provided the	913	#
: opportunity to build upon it and	914	#
: enhance it.	915	-#

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SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

I12_1

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

\$-INITIATIVE

: Well, I got the be an ADH for 9	198	-\$
: months, and [name] got promoted and	199	\$
: sent up here, so I got to be the DH	200	\$
: for the last couple of years I was	201	\$

```

#-FB-HIST
: down there. And within that position 202 -# $
: I was able to try and effect some of 203 | $
: these things. And they were things 204 | $
: that I wanted to change, and I felt 205 | $
: that I had to understand first where I 206 | $
: was. And that's what started me 207 | $
: asking "Tell me what you think about 208 | $
: me." And that's how the ball got 209 | $
: rolling. 210 -# $
: 211 $
: And I did it the first year, [name]-- 212 $
: who I'm sure you know. [mentioned 213 $
: other names at site]. [name] is a 214 $
: statistician, and his love is software 215 $
: reliability, and metrics to measure 216 $
: that and show you where things aren't 217 $
: right. And when you do metrics it 218 $
: starts looking a lot like statistics. 219 $
: Because he measures a lot of things, 220 $
: and builds a lot of means, and 221 $
: averages, and standard deviations and 222 $
: all that kind of stuff. So he deals 223 $
: with a tremendous amount of figures. 224 $

#-NSTRM-HIST
: So I had him to help me develop the 225 -# $
: instrument devoted to the measures 226 | $
: that we used, and then the next one. 227 | $
: Actually we developed 4 of them, did 228 | $
: one while I've been up here. And he 229 | $
: acted as the blind part of the survey. 230 | $
: 231 | $
: So I went to the people and explained 232 | $
: what we were going to do, how it was 233 | $
: going to be anonymous and this kind of 234 | $
: stuff, and [name] would be getting the 235 | $
: data, and I wouldn't be getting the 236 | $
: raw data back. And that's how the 237 | $
: whole thing got started. 238 -# -$

```

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SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

I13 1

E: *-DR-ATTIT

E: #-FB-MTNG

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

\$-CH-COMM %-INITIATIVE

```

: has to jump through. And I find 143 | -$ -% |
: myself trying to constantly 144 | | % |
: communicate to them that this is 145 | | % |
: real, that this is something that 146 | | % |
: will make a difference. Maybe 147 | | -% |

```

I13_1

E: *-DR-ATTIT

E: \$-CH-COMM

E: #-FB-MTNG

SEARCH CODE: INITIATIVE

%-FB-FACE @-INITIATIVE

: Getting back to them was awkward,	156			-%		-@
: because I found myself	157					@
: emphasizing over and over that I	158					@
: am really interesting in how I've	159					@
: changed, how you perceive my	160					@
: behavior, my effectiveness to	161					@
: have changed. And generally, I	162		-\$		-*	-@

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Page 13

SEARCH CODE: CH-SPT*

I2_2 (what is t

SEARCH CODE: CH-SPT*

#-CH-SPT-ORG

: (what is the effect of this environment	515	-#
: on your own individual development and	516	#
: commitment to development?)	517	#
:	518	#
: It impacts it as well. I think that	519	#
: everyone that you look at looks a lot	520	#
: more tired than they used to look.	521	#
:	522	#
: (people look a little worn. shell-	523	#
: shocked, even)	524	#
:	525	#

-\$-ORG-UNCERT

: Yeah, I don't think it's from the	526	#	-\$
: workload, I think it's from the	527	#	
: uncertainty. And I think I'm in the	528	#	
: same boat, to a certain extent. I	529	#	
: guess I'm not sure what I'm going to	530	#	
: do here, I don't know what's going to	531	#	
: happen at [client], what the effects of the	532	#	
: cuts are going to be, what kind of	533	#	
: reorganization the division as a whole	534	#	
: will do.	535	#	
:	536	#	
: You've got to take a case in point - I	537	#	
: don't have a complete picture, but I	538	#	
: just got a little MDP picture today in	539	#	
: the mail, something that you sent out.	540	#	
: And if you want a case study, grab the	541	#	
: picture and get out your little Xs,	542	#	
: and start drawing them. Just start	543	#	
: drawing Xs on the folks in their	544	#	
: groups, in terms of how many people	545	#	
: aren't doing what they were doing when	546	#	

```

: the management development program      547 # |
: started. [looks in briefcase for       548 # |
: group photo from capstone/graduation   549 # |
: event] Ah, there it is. I was going    550 # |
: to show this handsome picture to my    551 # |
: wife.                                   552 # |
:                                         553 # |
: Okay, this is just one group. Look at  554 # |
: the list, and we've got [name]whose job 555 # |
: changed substantially from start to    556 # |
: finish, she became the Mom             557 # |
:                                         558 # |
: (what?)                                 559 # |
:                                         560 # |
: Mom- she became the personnel rep, for  561 # |
: the entire division. She calls her     562 # |
: job position "Mom" Which I think is    563 # |
: appropriate. [name] no longer has a    564 # |
: traditional management role            565 # |
:                                         566 # |
: (isn't he still site leader at a couple 567 # |
: of sites?)                             568 # |
:                                         569 # |
: But he doesn't have the people         570 # |
: responsibility, or something like      571 # |
: that, but anyway, he considers his job 572 # |
: to have changed. [name] is no longer a 573 # |
: department head, [name] is no longer a 574 # |
: manager in the traditional sense.      575 # |
: [name]'s department dissolved out from 576 # |
: under her. That's a lotta Xs, and I'm  577 # |
: not looking that hard at this picture. 578 # |
:                                         579 # |
: You start to look along the back row,  580 # |
: and you say 2 down, there's a change,  581 # |
: 1 down, there's a change, and you're   582 # |
: left with the last 3 people in the     583 # |
: row. Actually, hey, there's one other  584 # |
: change - there's you. So the whole     585 # |
: back row has been restructured. And    586 # |
: if that's how it needs to go, I       587 # |
: consider it as well. So I think it     588 # |
: impacts productivity.                  589 -# -$

```

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Attended Davidson College, in Davidson, North Carolina, graduating with a BA in Spanish Language and Literature in 1971.

Taught English as a Second Language to immigrants and refugees in the 1970s, helping many adjust to their new lives.

Earned a Master of Science in Adult Education in 1979 from Virginia Polytechnic Institute's Northern Virginia campus.

Became a technical trainer, learned Instructional Systems Design, and wrote curricula and computer-based training at the Senate Computer Center from 1980 to 1986.

Joined Science Applications International Corporation, became a manager of technical training projects and instructional designer.

Joined the research and development organization where this study occurred, as a staff development specialist and Program Leader. Besides working as a coach, developed courses on negotiation, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and fiscal management.

Studied for the Doctor of Education degree at Virginia Polytechnic Institute's Northern Virginia Graduate Center, from Spring 1990 to April 1996.

Moved with family to Minneapolis, Minnesota, to join Personnel Decisions, Inc, as a consultant and Manager of Instructional Design. Leads a group that creates leadership development programs.