The Experience of Learning for the Sake of Learning in Adulthood: A Phenomenological Study

by

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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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April 1987

Blacksburg, Virginia
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(ABSTRACT)

This study used the phenomenological method to investigate the structure of the experience of learning for the sake of learning in adulthood and the meaning of that experience for the individual who undergoes it. Using a modification of Barritt, Beekman, Bleeker and Mulderij's (1983) descriptive phenomenological approach, a four step analysis of protocols was conducted. First, descriptions of the experience were obtained from ten nominated adults, ranging in age from 35 to 74. These protocols were phenomenologically analyzed for emerging elements and common themes to develop individual descriptions. These descriptions were then integrated into the fundamental description, all of which were validated by the co-researchers.

The results of the research indicated that learning for the sake of learning can best be understood by seeing its horizon, process, and resolution. The horizon of the phenomenon is comprised of three factors: the opportunity to learn, the area of interest, and the desire to learn. The learning experience is initiated and continued because the learners enjoy the experience, are curious about something, and feel called to learn.

The primary focus is found in the process, not the resulting knowledge. The learners "follow the flow" of the experience, learning whatever seems appropriate at that time, whatever challenges them. The aim is not to reduce but sustain or increase
the challenge. The resolution of this experience is open-ended. As an individual learning experience brings satiation, learners seek to encompass more questions in a wider or new area of interest. This indefinite nature, coupled with the rewards, form a spiral which constitutes the horizon for and lures them to the next learning experience.

Implications for adult educators, society, and learners are discussed. While this study delves into the nature of the experience itself, further research may investigate the type of people who engage in this learning experience and/or the conditions within which it occurs.
Acknowledgments

It takes both courage and encouragement to begin an exploratory dissertation about a phenomenon not yet researched. The thrill of entering new territory is quickly dampened by the realization that perhaps there is a good reason no one has done this and as you advance you find more and more reasons why no one has done it. I would have succumbed to the "easy way out" without the encouragement and help of many people.

My committee was supportive and encouraging throughout this process. Marcie Boucouvalas, chair, nurtured my interest in learning for the sake of learning when I broached it as a possible dissertation topic a year before I began to really think about a dissertation topic. She spent many hours helping me narrow the topic to a feasible question, framing the question to ask just what I wanted to study, and then reading and providing feedback on the product.

took on the task of teaching me a new research method with a new vocabulary. He also led me through the intricacies of computer usage. His patience with my blank stares and blank screens was much appreciated. He devoted many hours to guiding me through the unfamiliar phenomenological method. It was always heart warming to hear his, "This is good, but if you want to make it better..." I always fell for it, too.

and provided more than "readership." They gave me confidence to set out on this journey when they said that they felt I could accomplish it. They provided resources and suggestions when I asked for them. They encouraged me when I was in deep despair and rejoiced in my accomplishments.
Without their intellectual and psychological support this project would not have been completed.

My family and friends assisted in many ways. My family helped with mundane chores such as stapling and taking messages from co-researchers and the more difficult work of encouraging my efforts and rationing their demands on my time. My friends supported this endeavor by listening with an interested expression on their faces when I talked about something new that had emerged from the study and a sympathetic expression when all was falling apart and I felt I was making no progress. , my fellow wanderer on this stroll, provided clarification, companionship, and consolation when needed.

My ten co-researchers deserve a great deal of thanks. They shared their learning for the sake of learning experiences with me, provided feedback on both the individual and fundamental descriptions, and were enthusiastic throughout the process. They paid me the supreme compliment when they said that they had learned something about themselves through this process.

Just as the phenomenon of learning for the sake of learning would be different if some of the themes of the experience were omitted, this dissertation would be different if the influence of the people listed above were omitted. A heartfelt thanks to all.
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Chapter One

Introduction and Background of the Problem

Some people learn constantly. They pursue knowledge for its own sake and they engage in learning as an avocation. Their learning is not done exclusively for pre-planned application or just to interact with other people. Their learning projects are often done alone. They learn for the sake of learning. This type of learning can be compared with the runners’ high which occurs after a certain distance is completed, causing the runners to feel that they could run forever.

Evidence of this type of learning experience may be present in each person’s learning repertoire. Research in another area may be relevant to this learning. Csikszentmihalyi (1982) researched the experience of adults at play and work and used the results to extrapolate a model of this type of learning stance. He states that “learning is essential, not only because of what one can do with the knowledge, but also because of how one feels while one is learning and the kind of person one becomes as a result of the experience” (p. 166). Despite Csikszentmihalyi’s statement, subsequent research in adult education has concentrated on other areas.

Adult education researchers have long been interested in the study of adult motivation and participation in learning. The results of this research will be presented in chapter two, but a short discussion of the type of research completed is relevant at this point. Research has been done on reasons adults participate in adult learning activities with particular emphasis on: (a) a relationship between participation and demographic variables (age, sex, race, and SES) (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980; Johnstone &
Rivera, 1965; Cross, 1979) or (b) a search for deeper psychological reasons for participation in adult learning activities (Houle, 1963). Tough (1978) studied adult learning projects and the National Center for Educational Statistics (1980) has conducted surveys to determine the number of adult learners. Research yielded profiles of the adult participants describing their sex, education level, income, and age (Cross, 1981; Johnson and Rivera, 1965; and Aslanian & Brickell, 1980). Long (1983) noted seventeen studies that dealt with the correlation between social, demographic, and personal variables and adult participation.

Researchers have sought answers to the questions: Why do adults learn and why do they participate in adult learning activities? Early research by Houle (1963) in which he conducted interviews with adult learners and identified three learning orientations: goal-, activity-, and learning-oriented adults was the seed for this study of the experience of learning for the sake of learning. Long (1983) provided a review of studies founded on Houle's typology. Building on Houle's base, adult education researchers have used different methodologies to determine the number and accuracy of the three learning orientations (Grabowski, 1973; Moorstain and Smart, 1974; Sheffield, 1964; Burgess, 1971; Boshier, 1971; Dickinson and Clark, 1975). Over twenty years after Houle's initial research on learning orientations, Boshier and Collins (1985) affirmed that the three typologies existed, although the activity orientation is made up of four sub-orientations. While the orientations have generated interest for researchers, little had been done to define and explore either the learning-oriented learner or the learning for the sake of learning experience.

This lack may be due to the assumption that the learners and experience are, at best, only a small part of the clientel and a small number of the learning experiences in which adults engage. Knowles (1984) wrote: "For the most part, adults do not learn for
the sake of learning; they learn in order to be able to perform a task, solve a problem, or live in a more satisfying way" (p. 12). The inclusion of the phrase "for the most part," allows for some experiences that are not task or problem oriented. Learning for the sake of learning is part of "a more satisfying way" of life for some people. An exploration of the experience was necessary to discern this. Houle's research dealt with the learning-oriented learner rather than the experience of learning for the sake of learning. In order to know who is learning-oriented one must understand this type of learning experience so that the individuals can be defined by their learning activities. Therefore, research in this area proceeds more clearly when it begins with an understanding of the learning for the sake of learning experience.

Csikszentmihalyi (1975) has explored the autotelic experience, which he defines as an experience pursued for its own sake. This is contrasted with exotelic experiences which are pursued for the end goal which results from the experience. He has reported that artists were devoted to their work although they were not financially rewarded. Once they had completed their product (picture, sculpture, etc.) they lost interest in it. They did not discuss their past works nor the works of their contemporaries or the old masters; they discussed "small technical details, stylistic breakthroughs - the actions, thoughts, and feelings involved in making art" (p. xii). They enjoyed the process of painting so much that they were willing to suffer economic hardship and make other sacrifices to continue painting and sculpting.

Preliminary research dealing with the question "How does an individual behave and feel when engaged in autotelic and exotelic learning experiences?" showed the presence of learning for the sake of learning episodes in three adults' lives (Asmuth, 1984). When talking to prospective subjects, not every person questioned could identify having experienced learning for the sake of learning, but three who remembered having the
experience were eager to share their recollections in interviews. The intensity and frequency of the episodes varied from individual to individual. Analysis showed the following three main reasons for learning: feeling the need to learn, learning for enjoyment, and seeking goals. Curiosity and compulsion were the two dominant reasons for learning in the category of "feeling of need." Subjects used such terms as "dying to find out," "pervading curiosity," "never fully satisfied at the end," "I feel like a dry sponge--I can soak up more," and "I want to [learn]." They listed their emotions as "excited, fascinated, challenged, interested, enmeshed, reluctant [to end] and tearful [at conclusion]" (p. 30). At the conclusion it was found that the three subjects also engaged in learning for goal and activity oriented reasons. They engaged in several different learning formats. The subjects did not define the specific reason they learned a particular thing; "all learning was done because they wanted to do it" (p. 3). This was true for the learning that had a purpose, also. Each of the three individuals had a different proportion of goal-orientation and learning-orientation within their experiences.

The research mentioned above, which will be described in greater detail in the literature review, provides a basis for a better understanding of the adult learner, but it is incomplete. It does not develop an understanding of the learning experience from the perspective of the adult learner.

**Statement of the Problem**

Adult educators and others have studied adult learners' motivation and participation and made explicit and implicit claims that, for the most part, adults learn for instrumental reasons. Tough (1982) found that most of the reasons for adults making intentional changes in their lives were goal-oriented. They wanted to be able to do some-
thing better or do something new. His claim and the claims of others (Knowles, 1984; Aslanian & Brickell, 1980; and others) may be the result of insufficient research in the area of adult learning experiences.

It is difficult to determine if an individual is learning for the sake of learning if there is no understanding of this type of learning experience. In order to make this determination adult educators should be able to define the experience accurately. With a description of the experience of learning for the sake of learning it is possible for an adult educator to determine when the learner is learning for the sake of learning rather than learning for a different reason or reasons.

Although researchers in adult education have investigated adult learners’ power and rate of learning (Thorndike, 1928, Lorge, 1936), their reasons for learning, and what they want to do with the learning, the phenomenon of what the learning experience is like and what it means to the learners is just beginning to receive attention from researchers (Barer-Stein, personal communication, February 21, 1985; Brookfield, 1986; Danis and Tremblay, 1985).

**Purpose of this Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore, identify, describe and define the experience of learning for the sake of learning in adulthood. There were two specific research questions. The first was what is the experience of the phenomenon of learning for the sake of learning in adulthood? The second was what is the meaning of this experience?

Questions used to guide this research were:

1. What is it like to learn for the sake of learning?
2. How does the learner feel when learning for the sake of learning?

3. What meaning does the experience of learning for the sake of learning have in the learner's life?

4. What, if any, are the common themes among adults that occur in this learning experience?

Definition of Terms

Learning for the sake of learning is difficult to define. The phenomenon must be defined well enough to enable people to identify this type of learning experience and to guide them in speaking about their experiences. It can not, however, be so circumscribed that it eliminates some experiences that might be learning for the sake of learning or pre-defines the experience so the participants "give the researcher what she wants." Since little is known about this experience the definition must be a preliminary description to guide this research project in order that more accurate parameters can be developed from this study.

A Preliminary Definition

Figure 1 displays the placement of the autotelic learning experience within a learning framework. Learning can be either incidental or deliberate. If the learning is deliberate it may be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. Extrinsically motivated learning occurs when learners are coerced or are learning for a reason other than self desire. If the adults have consciously made the decision to learn and believe that they have responsibility for this decision, intrinsic motivation is present. Either exotelic or autotelic learning can result in the presence of intrinsic motivation. Exotelic learning is learning for an outside goal such as a reward, grade, or money. It includes learning a task such
as how to tune a car or to research Lee's battles for a history term paper. The end goal is where the reward is found, in the newly tuned car or the history grade. Intrinsically motivated learning that is entered into for its own sake has been labeled autotelic learning. There is no outside reward for such learning. The experience of learning itself is the reward.

Csikszentmihalyi (1975) adopted the term autotelic from the Greek: _auto_ meaning self and _telikos_ meaning goal. Autotelic means the goal is within the activity. Since phenomenological research (the approach used in this investigation) makes every attempt to use language that is clear and understandable for both the co-researcher and the community for which the research is written, the term "learning for the sake of learning" rather than autotelic learning will be used. Learning for the sake of learning is defined as learning that is deliberate and intrinsically motivated with the reward provided by the learning activity itself. This experience is one in which the motivation to continue the learning comes from the learning itself. This activity may occur separately or within an extrinsic learning experience. It happens when learners find something of special
interest and pursue that topic with determination and curiosity. They may be enrolled in a course on American History and become enamored with the winter encampment at Valley Forge. They maintain their class work but also research Valley Forge on their own. This is an experience which, although lacking external reward, does satisfy something within themselves. This is an experience of learning for the sake of learning within an extrinsic, exotelic, learning activity.

**Significance and Implications of the Study**

The research dealing with adult learning has for the most part not dealt with this type of learning experience. Research has emphasized other areas such as participation, demographic information, learning orientations, and incidental learning. Long (1983) listed thirteen research projects dealing with participation in his review of adult education research. This research focus received it impetus after Houle (1963) identified three types of adult learners: goal-, activity-, and learning-oriented learners.

Demographic studies of adult learners have been conducted so that we have an idea of the types of persons who engage in adult learning activities. Research also has been done on the types of programs that are being run and which are most successful. Participation research has been done to provide answers to the question "why do adults learn?" This participation research leaves an aspect of the research begun by Houle (1963) unexplored. One area that has remained unpursued is an understanding of the experience of learning for the sake of learning. In fact, twenty years later, Knowles (1984) writes "for the most part, adults do not learn for the sake of learning" (p. 12). Long states that this is a neglected area of study because it is not productive (personal communication, October 23, 1986). An understanding of the experience of learning for
the sake of learning is not viewed as immediately useful and is not necessary for program planning and course development.

This study will begin to deal with this deficit. It will provide information about a little studied, little acknowledged area of adult learning: The experience of learning for the sake of learning from the perspective of the adult learner. This study confirms the presence of this type of learning experience, so adult educators may expand their present assumption that all adult learning must have immediate applicability and utilitarian value. This assumption, which has guided our practice for years, may be replaced with a broader view of the adult learner. This study provides us with information that we do not have: It gives us information about how the learners feel about their own learning and what they value. This information can be used in at least three ways: (a) to help adult learners become more effective and more enthusiastic learners for the sake of learning; (b) to lay a foundation for further research; and (c) to expand the assumptions of why adults learn.

This research, which explores, identifies, defines, and describes the experience of learning for the sake of learning, should encourage researchers to devote attention to and develop concern for this phenomenon. Practitioners of adult education may use the results of this research to facilitate program design and personal learning stance development of adult learners. If adult educators understand what the learning experience is like for learners, they will be able to construct and help learners construct learning experiences that will more closely satisfy individual needs and wants.

Understanding the meaningful aspects of this experience and what individuals do and feel when engaged in this activity will help adult educators better understand how to develop programs and activities to better motivate people to learn. Learners may be better able to manage their individual learning projects and feel greater personal
satisfaction throughout the process when the experience of learning for the sake of learning is understood.

The information gathered from this research project may help adult educators understand one type of learning experience and they in turn can help adult learners better understand their learning processes. If adult learners can be helped to engage in learning for the sake of learning they may become more eager participants in the learning society and become lifelong learners.

This research contributes to our knowledge about the adult learning experience. It provides adult educators with new insights into how some adults view certain learning experiences. This study provides a basic knowledge that can be used by future researchers to develop instruments to measure the amount of learning for the sake of learning which occurs in our society.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The search for literature on the experience of learning for the sake of learning was varied. Computer searches were made of the Dissertation Abstracts Online 1861 to January, 1987, and the past twenty years of Educational Resources Information Center and Psychological Abstracts. Various combinations of the terms autotelic, adult learning, learning for the sake of learning, motivation, and intrinsic were used in an attempt to find articles, books, or other forms of research relating to this learning experience. A computer search for books on autotelic learning or learning for the sake of learning was made at the Library of Congress. Material relating directly to the topic was not found. This literature review presents material that will provide a background for researching the experience of learning for the sake of learning. Topics which seem relevant to this study are reasons for participation, demographic data about adult learners, autotelic experiences, individual differences of adult learners, and motivation. The final topic is an introduction to the theory of phenomenology, the research method used in this study.

Seemingly related literature from learning theory, particularly a concept such as discovery learning, was excluded from review since it dealing more with the process of learning it tended not to provide a frame for the actual experience of learning itself. Also, although a literature base on incidental learning is emerging, the present inquiry focused on deliberate efforts in the learning for the sake of learning experience.
Reasons for Participation

Early research focusing on individual adult learners was done by Houle (1963) and resulted in the identification of three learning orientations. Houle wanted to understand the actions, beliefs, and nature of the adult learner. Twenty-two adults who were identified by directors or counselors of continuing education programs or the learner's friends as being conspicuously engaged in various forms of adult learning were interviewed. Although the subjects were grouped at the upper end of a continuum of adult education participation, they were widely varied in sex, age, social status, religion, national origin, race, marital status, and level of formal education. The interviews were designed to explore the themes of adult participation. Nineteen major questions were included in the open-ended interviews which were taped and transcribed. The subjects were asked a question and allowed to talk at length.

All of the subjects had goals they wished to achieved and felt that learning was significant or enjoyable and "worthwhile for its own sake" (p. 15). Within this similarity Houle (1963) found three learning orientation subgroups: learning-oriented, activity-oriented and goal-oriented. It was matters of emphasis that separated each group. Most subjects clustered together into one of three subgroups, but they had similarities with one or both of the other groups so that there was some overlapping. While members of each group valued learning, they were divided on the major emphasis of their learning. The goal-oriented subject used education to accomplish clear objectives. The activity-oriented individual found in the "circumstances of the learning a meaning which has no necessary connection... with the content or announced purposes of the activity" (p. 16). Knowledge for its own sake was sought by the learning-oriented adult. The learning-oriented learners have two conceptions about their learning. They
are aware of their preoccupation with learning and they view learning as a way to have fun. This individual usually engages in the learning experience that this research will study.

Sheffield (1964) used Houle's work as the basis for an instrument he developed to determine adults' learning activities. His factor analysis showed five learning orientations: learning, fulfillment of needs, societal and personal goals, and the desire for sociability. He stated that his research supported Houle's typology. His third and forth orientations were the same as Houle's goal-orientation and the second and fifth was the same as the activity-orientation. Sheffield's learning-orientations matched Houle's learning-oriented person. Burgess (1971) also felt his research supported Houle's typology. His factor analysis resulted in seven factors: The desires to know, to reach a personal, social, or religious goal, to escape, to participate in activities, and to comply with formal requirements.

Boshier (1971) developed the forty-eight item Educational Participation Scale (EPS). His sample of 233 adults brought out fourteen orientations: social welfare, social contact, other-directed, professional advancement, social conformity, educational preparedness, cognitive interest, educational compensation, social sharing, television abhorrence, social improvement and escape, interpersonal facilitation, and educational supplementation. The orientations that developed with the third ordered factor analysis were: other-directed advancement (goal orientation), cognitive interest (learning orientation) and self-verses other-centeredness and social contact (activity orientation). Long cites others (Dow, 1965; Souvie, 1973; Flaherty; 1968 and Morstain and Smart, 1974) who used the EPS to verify the existence of Houle's typology. They did not find a one to one match of their factor analysis with Houle's three learning orientations.
Boshier and Collins (1985) have updated the research dealing with Houle's typology with a large scale test of the EPS. "The central issue in this study concerned the theoretical and psychometric defensibility of a three-cluster resolution of the correlation matrix" (p. 122). They asked researchers who had used the EPS to send the data, coding schedules and one completed questionnaire to be read into their files. Two forms of the EPS have been used. The first, prior to 1976, consisted of 48 items and a nine-point scale. The current form has 40 items and a four-point scale. Other researchers had developed five-point and ten-point scales. The two forms and the different scales were transformed into common formats. Fifty-four files resulted in a total of 13,442 cases. In order to simultaneously display two or more cluster solutions a cluster analysis was chosen for the data analysis.

Cluster analysis was performed on all the cases and then on the 8,107 cases using the newer 40-item EPS. The results of the two analyses were similar. A low similarity statistic (9.96) resulted from the cluster of the entire 40 item data set. Houle's goal orientation and learning orientation formed reasonably clear clusters in this analysis. The activity orientation appears to be more involved than Houle perceived and has four sub-groups: social stimulation, social contact, external expectations and community service. The four variables that make up the Cognitive Interest Items which correspond to learning orientation are learning for its own sake, inquiring, learning for the joy of learning and learning for the sake of learning. These four variables "yielded a mean intra-cluster correlation of .47" (p. 126). The adult who learns for the sake of learning exists in the community of adult learners.

Long (1983) concludes his chapter on participation research with the thought that perhaps motivation cannot be measured with paper and pencil. Motivations may "operate at a subconscious level and, as such, are best ascertained by projective techniques" (p.
The phenomenological method used in this research uses reflective techniques when asking the subjects to go back into their learning for the sake of learning experiences and to share the experiences with the researcher.

The work done by Houle and the researchers that followed identified three or more learning orientations of adult learners. One of these typologies, the learning-oriented learner, forms the basis for this research. Houle (1963) claimed that the three orientations overlapped each other. Individuals may learn predominantly in one orientation, but there are times when they learn in one of the other orientations. This research sought to understand the learning for the sake of learning episodes of adult learners.

**Demographic Data about Adult Learners**

Research in adult education has also concerned itself with who participates in adult learning activities. Johnstone and Rivera (1965) found that the well educated, white-collar, young person with a moderate income is most likely to begin an educational activity.

A contrast between nonlearners and learners was made by Aslanian and Brickell (1980). Learners were younger, better educated, women with children under 18. Adults who were single or divorced participated more often, while individuals who had been widowed did not participate as often as married people. The learners were more likely to have a higher income, to be employed, and to have professional or technical jobs.

Aslanian and Brickell found that while 83% of the learners they surveyed learned because of some change in their lives, 17% of the individuals cited other reasons for learning. "Many of the 17% made it clear that the experience of acquiring the knowledge was as important to them as the satisfaction of possessing it" (Aslanian and Brickell,
A number of this percent said they learned continuously. Some were continuing with learning they had begun earlier and others went from one learning topic to another. These people found learning the end, not the means to an end. Although Aslanian and Brickell found this subgroup in their population they dealt with the 83 percent who learned to assist in completing a transition. This presently reported study investigated the experiences of that part of the 17 percent who learn for the sake of learning and developed a description of this experience so that additional research may be done in this area.

Anderson and Darkenwald (1979) studied 1975 National Center for Education Statistics data. They found that an analysis of 11 independent variables could explain only 10% of the variance between nonparticipants and participants. Through the use of multivariate procedures they found that race does not explain participation/nonparticipation when the variables are controlled for occupational status, education and income.

The research presented above is important to adult educators. It is necessary to understand who participates in adult education activities. Marketing, recruiting, and programming decisions may be facilitated when this information is available. This research would be expanded by knowledge of how the learner perceives the learning experience and an understanding of the experience of learning for the sake of learning.

The Autotelic Experience

While Houle studied the adult learner, Csikszentmihalyi (1982) researched intrinsically motivated experiences. Csikszentmihalyi has studied the relationship of flow and enjoyment in many activities. He maintains that "it is not so much what people do but how they perceive and interpret what they are doing that makes the activity enjoyable"
(Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, p. x). In order to "preserve an understanding of the active, creative, self-motivated dimensions of behavior" he studied adults at play. He believed that the liberating experience of play could be discerned from the experience and applied to nonplay activities.

Csikszentmihalyi (1975) interviewed rock climbers, chess players, professional composers, female modern dancers, basketball players, and surgeons. Each respondent filled out a questionnaire and participated in an open-ended interview. He found six characteristics present in these play and work experiences.

1. All respondents reported a "flow" experience. In this flow experience action and awareness merge. In this state individuals are aware of their actions, but are not aware of being aware. They do not evaluate what they are doing, they just do it. Flow occurs when the individual has the ability to perform the skill necessary. Csikszentmihalyi quotes a rock climber's report of the experience, "You are so involved in what you are doing [that] you aren't thinking of yourself as separate from the immediate activity... You don't see yourself as separate from what you are doing" (p. 39).

2. The participant's attention is focused on a limited field. A woman composer reported, "I am really quite oblivious to my surroundings after I really get going. I think that the phone could ring, and the doorbell could ring, or the house burn down..." (p. 41).

3. The individual is completely involved in the situation, and "'selfish' considerations become irrelevant" (p. 42). A composer reported that "You yourself are in as ecstatic state to such a point that you feel as though you almost don't exist" (p. 44).

4. The individuals are in control of both their actions and their environment. A respondent said, "Although I am not aware of specific things, I have a general feeling of well-being, and that I am in complete control of my world" (p. 45).
5. The experience "usually contains coherent, noncontradictory demands for action and provides clear, unambiguous feedback" to the participant (p. 46).

6. The activity is an autotelic experience. The reward of the activity is enough. A rock climber stated, "You get to the top of a rock glad it's over but really wish it would go forever.... It is not a moving up but a continuous flowing; you move only to keep the flow going" (p. 47).

Flow occurs when the individual's skills match the opportunities presented in the activity. Figure 2 is a model Csikszentmihalyi developed to demonstrate this experience.

![Figure 2. A model of the flow experience. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1982).](image)

Csikszentmihalyi (1975) stated in the conclusion of his study on adults' autotelic activities that "anything one does can become rewarding if the activity is structured right and if one's skills are matched with the challenges for the action. In this optimal condition, people enjoy even work, extreme danger, and stress" (p. xiii). Changing a boring activity to an autotelic activity can be accomplished by "symbolic restructuring of information" (p. xiii).
In his article on the learning experience and its effects upon the learner and society, Csikzentmihalyi (1982) calls for research "to confirm the following relationships: (a) that, other things being equal, one enjoys more an activity from which one learns; (b) that the more opportunities for enjoyment one has, the more happy the rest of one's life is" (p. 185). This research on the phenomenon of learning for the sake of learning explores ten individuals' learning experiences to develop a description and structure of that phenomenon. Developing a description of this phenomenon provides us with information to compare with Csikszentmihalyi's work on play and see if there are similarities and differences between the experiences.

**Individual Differences of Adult Learners**

Research that deals with the individual differences of adult learners has been of little interest until recently (Cross, 1981). Barry Sheckley (1983) studied individual differences of adults completing learning projects. He found that the most active learner was the individual with a Y temperament and internal locus of control. He also stated that adult learners enrolled in formal academic programs are intrinsically motivated and self-directed. Londoner, Linder and Bauer (1985) analyzed the relationship between locus of control and value orientation of adult learners. Using Rokeach's Value Survey, Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control Scale and demographic data they found that as age increased the individual became more internally oriented and that men were significantly more internally oriented than women. While externally oriented individuals valued "family security," "a comfortable life," "national security," and "salvation," internally oriented individuals valued "self-respect," "wisdom," "freedom," and "a sense of accomplishment."
Danis and Tremblay (1986) did a content analysis of the learning experiences of self-taught adults and identified hypotheses that were present in the learning experiences of each of the ten subjects. They discovered how these adults learned, what assistance they sought, how they transferred their knowledge to other learning situations, and the learners' responsibilities, motivation and enjoyment of the process.

**Motivation**

"Curiosity is a basic propensity in human functioning. The desire to explore, discover, understand, and know is intrinsic to people's nature and is a potentially central motivator of the educational process" (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p. 245). Although this facet of the learning process is deemed of great importance "there is no major research study that thoroughly examines the exact relationship between adult motivation and learning" (Wlodkowski, 1985, p. 3).

Adult motivation operates on four integrated levels. Success is the first level. Success plus volition is the second level. The learners must feel they have a choice in the learning as well as feel successful. The next level adds value to success and volition. If the learning is meaningful and worthwhile the self-esteem of the learners is enhanced. The final level of the four is "success + volition + value + enjoyment... Every adult wants this learning experience, especially in the realms of life where competence is highly valued" (Wlodkowski, 1985, p. 3).

Wlodkowski (1985) has developed five critical assumptions for educators who help adults learn. Two of these assumptions are relevant to this study.

1. "People are always motivated." Individuals are always motivated to do something. When they are not motivated to learn they are motivated for another activity.
2. "People are responsible for their own motivation." Learners perceive and filter what occurs in a learning situation and then modify it by their judgments, beliefs, and values. The situation is not the same for each learner. (p. 12).

At this time, no one has scientifically investigated and explained "the meaning of motivation from the instructor's and adult learner's perspective" (Wlodkowski, 1985, p. 5). "It is important to understand what motivation means to both the adult learner and the adult instructor in order to build and utilize instructional strategies" (Wlodkowski, 1985, p. 6). An understanding of the motivation present in adult learning activities assists adult educators in other ways: (a) programming emphasis can be changed to meet new motivations, (b) a better understanding of the adult student is possible, and (c) new reasons for learning may be found. The information provided by this study of the experience of learning for the sake of learning provides a better understanding of what motivates some adults to begin to learn, to continue to learn, and to end the learning experience.

Deci and Ryan (1985) have developed an organismic theory about intrinsic motivation that assumes the human organism is active rather than passive and acts on its internal and external environments in order to effectively satisfy its needs. They view intrinsic motivation as based on the individual's need to be self-determining and competent.

The effect of reward on intrinsic motivation has peripheral implication for this research. Amabile, (1983) asked 72 young adults to write a creative poem before and after filling out a questionnaire that focused on intrinsic or extrinsic reasons for being involved in the experiment. The poems written by the individuals in the extrinsic group were significantly less creative than those written by the control and intrinsic groups.

Common concerns are developing within the adult education community about the intrinsic aspects of learning (Warnat, 1980). Sarkisian (1982) found that "few of the
older community college students were motivated to enroll mainly for practical reasons. Many registered because of intrinsic interest in the topic. Beer (1980) studied why adults continue their education and found that while men went to the university for extrinsic reasons, it was intrinsic reasons that drew women to the university. Richmond's research (1982) revealed a significant relationship between motivation and age. Intrinsic values were rated higher by older students while extrinsic values were rated higher by younger students. Galloway (1983) found that intrinsic or extrinsic motivation are not the best indicators of the reasons individuals seek or do not seek credentialing. Adults who completed a telecourse placed an intrinsic value on completing the course and had an interest in the subject matter (Maher, 1985). Adults enrolling in an Iowa Adult Basic Education program cited intrinsic reasons for participating. (H. Beder, personal communication, February 20, 1987).

Research has also defined motivation aspects that adult educators can use to help adults learn. Raymond Wlodkowski (1985) lists three factors that enhance students intrinsic motivation as positive feedback, optimum challenge, and choice. Students are more likely to develop intrinsic motivation when they view their learning as a self-determined activity. Lawler (1982) states that basically change is intrinsically motivated, but its reinforcement comes extrinsically. She also found that learning is greatly facilitated by a democratic and open climate.

The importance of intrinsic motivation to the experience of learning for the sake of learning is uncovered in this study. The processes which can assist adults to move toward self-actualization are involved in intrinsic learning. The ultimate goal of adult education is intrinsic learning. (Maslow, 1965)

"There is a good deal of research to be done before it is possible to develop a complete and accurate theory of the process of learning under different motivational
contexts. In particular, the role of the 'self' in the whole process needs much additional research, as well as the importance of the perception of control over events" (Condry & Chambers, 1978, p. 81). Understanding the experience of learning for the sake of learning in adulthood provides the beginning of an understanding of the role of the 'self' in the learning process and assists educators in understanding the motivation present in this type of learning experience.

**Phenomenology**

It may be concluded from the above review that few studies on learning for the sake of learning have been done, consequently the type of research that should be done is basic research asking what is the meaning of the phenomenon under investigation. Basic research which discovers theory from the data is a type of research encouraged by Glasser and Strauss (1967).

They believe "that the discovery of theory from data - which we call grounded theory - is a major task confronting sociology today, for... such a theory fits empirical situations, and is understandable.... It works - provides us with relevant predictions, explanations, interpretations, and applications" (Glasser and Strauss, 1967, p. 1). A theory that is grounded in the experience of learning for the sake of learning is needed so that this experience may be defined and understood. Until this is done it is impossible to conduct further research in this area, i.e. count how many people engage in it, know under what conditions they engage in it, and how it effects other experiences. Hypotheses for this type of learning experience do not exist and cannot exist for verification until basic research has discovered the meaning of this experience and, more fundamentally, whether or not it exists. This study is a beginning of this type of basic
research. The approach and method most helpful to study the experience of learning for the sake of learning in adulthood is found in phenomenology.

Phenomenological research is not new to adult education. Judy-Arin Krupp (1984) used phenomenological analysis of her data to develop a "holistic theory about adult learners that integrates knowledge from personal experience, observation, and such disparate disciplines as biology, education, human development, philosophy, and sociology" (p. 91). Paul Ilsley (1982) used the phenomenological method to study images of the future in adult education. A phenomenological research method was used to identify common constituents of two educational programs "that can 'trigger off' and sustain perspective transformations in the lives of prison inmates" (Collins, 1986, p. 66).

There are specific advantages for adult education research to use phenomenology. This method allows researchers to explore new areas or previously researched subjects in a new way. Sherman Stannage (1986) stated that "adult learning projects in the everyday world can only be understood and resolved when the philosophical roots of these are excavated and laid out for everyone to see and to explore for themselves" (p. 269). This research is the study of one type of adult learning project - the experience of learning for the sake of learning - to find the roots of this phenomenon.

Michael Collins (1980) states that phenomenological research is a way to systematically extend and enrich practice and research in adult education and philosophical research has a prominent role to play in redressing the impoverishment that preoccupation with narrowly conceived operational definitions has brought to the field. Methods of philosophical inquiry can alert adult educators to crucial limitations in statistical studies, raise questions about unconditional acceptance of operational definitions, and help examine the relevance of various research methods for adult education. (1981, p. 54)
The General Phenomenological Approach

Giorgi (1970) states that research of any description is based on three things: approach, method, and praxis. Before the phenomenological method can be understood, its approach must be understood. Approach is "the fundamental view point toward man and the world that the scientist brings, or adopts, with respect to his work as a scientist, whether this viewpoint is made explicit or remains implicit" (p. 126).

The term "phenomenon" is derived from the Greek phainomenos meaning to be seen, to appear to the mind or senses. (Oxford English Dictionary, 1961, p. 772). Phenomenology has two meanings for Giorgi who states that "phenomenology is the study of phenomena as experienced by conscious beings and it is a method for studying such phenomena" (1984, p. 14). Phenomenology is thus an approach for understanding our experience of the world.

This is a fundamentally different approach from the natural scientific approach which sees the world as that which objectively exists in space and time, the rec extensa of Descartes, and then proceeds to find cause and effects between the entities that exist in the world. To the phenomenologist the world is the world that is lived in. There is no other world that "objectively exists" that can ever be known. The world that we live in is the world that we experience. That is the world that we know. That is the world we live out. That is the world that must be investigated when phenomena are studied.

To do research in the world is to research our experience of the world. For phenomenologists our experience of the world is the meanings that the world holds for us. Phenomenologists believe that the world is the sum of the meanings we have in our life. The meanings are nothing other than the structures by which we make sense of the world. Thus when one is finding a fundamental structure and when one is finding the
meaning of an experience, the same thing is being sought. The structure of the world which is discovered and invented simultaneously (co-constituted), and the use to which it is put comprise the meaning that we have. The sum total of those meanings, the sum total of those structures, is the world.

The aim of phenomenology is thus to gain an understanding of a phenomenon on its own terms. Rather than imposing a predetermined structure developed from the world of the scientist, the world of the artist, or the world of the lover, (three different worlds) and asking the researcher to validate that structure, phenomenological research starts with the experience itself in the form of a "naive" descriptions obtained from subjects/co-researchers. It is a "naive" description in that it is the straight-forward presentation of the experience without analysis by the co-researcher. This description is the basis for understanding the fundamental structure or meaning which emerges as the researcher studies the experience.

In the uncovering of meanings which are latent in the actions and behavior of the co-researcher, occasionally here-to-fore unrecognized significance becomes apparent. Since the goal of this type of research is to deal with the experience itself, with no preconceptions or hypothetical thoughts imposing themselves between the researcher and the experience being studied, phenomenology is an excellent method for this study of the experience of learning for the sake of learning in adulthood. The phenomenological method was thus chosen for this study because it provides the best way to answer this research question: "What is the experience of learning for the sake of learning in adulthood?" To answer the type of question "What is the experience?" the experience needs to be understood in its Gestalt. The experience should be understood as a structural whole, thus an analytical approach, which breaks the phenomenon into its
parts, is not as appropriate as the phenomenological approach, which deals with it in its structural wholeness (Bruck, personal communication, December 19, 1986).

The phenomenological approach gives voice to the learners' assessments of their learning situations. The learners, as the individuals closest to the learning experience, participate in the study as co-researchers. In the role of co-researchers, the individuals communicate their own experiences to the researcher and verify the researcher's analysis of those experiences. Since there are no presuppositions about what will be found, the co-researchers need to be able to speak about all facets of their experiences so that the elements and themes of the phenomenon will be perceived. Phenomenology requires that the researcher go directly to the source for the data. The co-researchers' experiences are the data that are studied.

Background of Phenomenological Approach

Phenomenology is based on the philosophies developed by Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and others (See Endnote 1). Husserl (1970) began to develop his phenomenological philosophy when he critiqued science as the unphilosophical study of mere facts. He believed that science should be a system of knowledge in which each step of the process is built directly and logically upon the preceding step. This sequence of steps must be evident to others so that other propositions can be built on them. Husserl felt that science needed to begin at the foundation of knowledge and not make assumptions about knowledge's roots. To find these roots Husserl went "zum den Sachen selbst" (to the things themselves). For Husserl, phenomenology was the study of the essential structures of the consciousness's acts and contents. The study is based on
an intuitive grasping of the "Sachen's" (things) essences. The study of the phenomenon itself forms the foundation of the knowledge that Husserl was seeking.

While Husserl was a pure phenomenologist, interested in the mind and its relationship to consciousness, Heidegger used the phenomenological method to uncover hidden phenomena and particularly the meanings of these phenomena for the human condition (thus technically Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty were considered existential-phenomenologists.) Heidegger (1962) expanded Husserl's more theoretical findings into the area of "Dasein" (human existence) and its relationship with death, temporality, spaciality and other fundamental aspects of the human condition. It was Heidegger who explicated the concept of authentic vs. inauthentic living which Sartre and other existentialists later popularized.

Merleau-Ponty (1983), a contemporary of Heidegger, had three points that furthered Heidegger's work. He proposed first, that human behavior is a circular dialectic between man and the world; second, that man originates his world order and at the same time is acted upon by other beings and objects and acts upon them; and third, that the body, which an individual lives from the "inside," is not the same as that body observed by others. Although there are two different perceptions that may overlap or coincide at only a few points, each view is correct. He also conceived three orders of reality--the physical (matter), the vital (life), and the human (mind). Each of these "must participate unequally in the nature of form; they must represent different degrees of integration and, finally, must constitute a hierarchy in which individuality is progressively achieved" (1983, p. 133).

These three realities were the primary influences that contributed to Giorgi's work. Giorgi applied this phenomenological philosophy to the approach and method of phenomenological research in psychology using the following six characteristics. These charac-
teristics are sufficiently different from characteristics of experimental research that their elucidation will assist the reader in understanding the phenomenological method.

1. Psychology must develop and clarify a specialized attitude that begins with phenomena of the life-world. A dialogue with that life-world must be maintained to prevent the researcher from being separated from the source of raw data.

2. There are three major factors to consider when discussing the origins of the psychological data used in phenomenological research.
   a. Since these phenomenon are essentially dynamic their temporal aspects must be considered when they are studied.
   b. During any theoretical or research situation a constant dialogue among the phenomenon, the approach, and the method must be maintained.
   c. The term "structure" refers to the phenomenal origins and "psychological meaning" refers to "the point at which sufficient closure has resulted for it to be established as a relevant psychological datum or reality" (p. 178).

3. There are three key presuppositions the researcher should remember while dealing with psychology as a human science.
   a. While maintaining the relationship between the method, approach, and phenomenon, the emphasis should be on the phenomenon of the individual as a person. As Giorgi says "our aim, however, is to broaden the understanding of science by trying to devise ways in which to study man as a person rigorously and systematically without losing his personhood." (p. 185).
   b. Merleau-Ponty's perception of the human order as being irreducible has
expanded the number of processes which could be studied by allowing those which were believed to belong only to organisms to belong also to the "uniquely human" order.

c. Each phenomenon that is studied involves both human and world. The researcher must understand this "primacy of relationships" concretely and express the variables as related, which they are in fact.

4. The attitude of the researcher toward the phenomenon should be different in this type of study than in natural scientific studies. The researcher needs an attitude that opens and allows for future possibilities and past facticities, rather than one that forecloses the reality of being indeterminate and ambiguous. The researcher must maintain fidelity to the experience as it appears, "and not to an idea of science that has been developed in a different context" (p. 188).

An engaged attitude is also necessary in this approach. Both subject and researcher should develop an attitude that precisely reflects their interactions with their world. An acknowledged attitude of engagement on the part of the researcher is preferable to an attempt at objectivity in the human environment. The subject is also engaged in the experience and actually completes the constitution of the researcher's work.

5. In order to understand the subject matter it is advantageous to look at attitudinal difference and to clarify behavior and to experience phenomena. "The main concern is to discover the actual, by means of description, in order to learn about the structure of the situation as a whole, which is done by revealing the context" (p.190-191). Psychology as a human science aims to integrate the individual as a part of the world with the individual for whom the world exists. This latter aspect is rarely considered in the natural science
6. The scientists' inevitable presence in the constitution of science has two implications. "The context for investigating man as a person cannot be less than the context for understanding man the investigator.... [and] a non-manipulative paradigm is necessary" (pp. 202-203).

Having reviewed the approach that the study uses, the next logical step is to determine what formal sequence of operations will be based on this approach, i.e. the phenomenological method. Before reviewing the specific or detailed methodology of Barritt that this study uses, it would be informative to look at two principles developed by Merleau-Ponty that underlie all variations of the phenomenological method.

Merleau-Ponty (1962) developed a method based on two major principles, imaginative variation and bracketing of the natural attitude, which he deemed necessary to carry out phenomenological research. Imaginative variation is used to determine which characteristics of the phenomenon are essential for the phenomenon to be itself. Imaginative variation helps the researcher move from the specific to the general. It is a tool used by the researcher to determine which characteristics of a situated example of a phenomenon are essential to that phenomenon. The researcher mentally varies each characteristic of the phenomenon and assesses whether the variation or absence of that theme changes the phenomenon. If the phenomenon is altered, then the theme is necessary for the phenomenon's existence. If the phenomenon is not changed by the theme's variation, then the theme is unnecessary and is eliminated from the description. For example, in a description of being afraid of the dark the fact that the experience occurred in an individual's bedroom is not essential. The researcher could imagine the experience to be just as frightening in a basement or outside.
"Bracketing the natural attitude" refers to putting aside one's everyday notions and prejudices. It admits the impossibility of perfect objectivity and asks that the researcher's biases and perspective of the world be admitted and put aside during the data analysis. For example, "She made me angry," a common way of expressing our anger, contains a hidden causal relationship. What she did is an outside cause of my anger. Bracketing the natural attitude would be saying rather "I got angry when she did this." These two principles formed the basis for other phenomenologists to develop a step-by-step research method.

The Phenomenological Method

Just as there are some variations within experimental psychology, certain variations exist within the methods phenomenologists use. Adrian Van Kaam (1969) concentrates on enumerating similarities and differences in co-researchers' experiences, whereas Giorgi (1970), Barritt et al. (1983) and Paul Colaizzi (1973) focus on the underlying significance of these enumerated themes. While Giorgi, Callazi, Barritt and Spiegelberg all are accomplishing the same task with their method, i.e. achieving fundamental descriptions of phenomena, Giorgi and Callazi use a three step approach to data analysis, Barritt et al. use a four step approach, and Spiegelberg uses a seven step approach. For purposes of this study the approach Barritt et al. developed was used because his four step explanation was most detailed and comprehensive.

Barritt et al. (1983) developed the phenomenological method that served as the basis for this study of the experience of learning for the sake of learning in adulthood. The four steps which will be discussed in detail below are:

1. Obtaining descriptions.
2. Initial reading.

3. Co-researcher validation.

4. Fundamental description.

The first step deals with the data gathering, the second and third are the data analysis steps and the final step is the preparation of the results of the study.

1. The research process begins with a description of a lived experience. This may be an experience of the researcher or one related by another individual. The subjects independently write their experiences for the researcher. This written description is the protocol.

2. The analysis is begun by the researcher developing an intuitive grasp of the phenomenon. This involves devoting a critical concentration to the phenomenon. The protocol is read and reread several times until the uniqueness of the phenomenon is grasped. This is done by immersing oneself in the description until the researcher feels that the experience is understood from the experiencer's viewpoint.

The researcher then begins the analysis of the protocol for common themes. The researcher denotes the elements, the characteristics that make the experience what it is, of the phenomenon. The elements are what the co-researcher means when he makes his statements. For example, in one of the protocols for the present study the co-researcher Vanya says, "I get going and there is an excitement element there and finally I look at the clock and say, 'Oh, my God, it's two o'clock.'" This statement was seen as a significant element. These statements are not "parts" of the phenomenon, because the phenomenon cannot be broken into sections, it is a whole, but without these factors the phenomenon would not be the same. The elements are those that
must be present to make this phenomenon. The next sub-step is to label each element of the experience. As the research progresses the researcher labels the elements within the phenomenon by the central characteristic they portray. At this point the element noted in the paragraph above would be classified as an example of the learner's level of concentration while in the learning experience.

The second step is to develop the general themes of the phenomenon. The elements are formed into natural groups. Elements that have similarities are grouped together and separately from those that are different. The elements that portray levels of concentration are grouped together and those that portray a different characteristic of the phenomenon are grouped together. Generalities are developed from the elements of the phenomenon under study so that the common pattern of the phenomenon may be seen. Then the researcher develops statements that expressed the general theme of the specific elements. This generalization would explain to the reader the meaning of each group.

3. The themes that are developed in the previous step are given to the co-researcher "to see if they accurately capture the intended meanings" (Barritt, et al., 1983, p. 81). The co-researchers are asked to validate the researcher's analysis of the their experiences.

4. The final step is the writing of the fundamental description of the phenomenon. This is the description of the phenomenon which is developed from the individual descriptions. Each of the individual's experience of the phenomenon is analyzed with the other individual experiences and a description of the phenomenon is developed and written.
Summary

This literature review has briefly surveyed the research that has been done in areas related to this type of learning experience. Research on reasons adults participate in adult learning has dealt with the different types of learners and the reasons adults give for beginning a learning activity, but it has not investigated the experience of learning for the sake of learning.

Demographic data on adult participants provide important information for adult educators. These data provide information about the characteristics of adult learners, but do not tell program designers and other professionals about the learners’ learning experiences and how they perceive their learning experiences.

The research on the autotelic experience has concentrated on the leisure and work environment. It is important that this work be extended to the learning environment so that educators can better understand why and how some people learn. Wlodkowski (1985) stated that there is a void in research on adult learning and motivation. Our knowledge of the effects of intrinsic motivation on the adult learning experience can be greatly expanded.

This study to explore, identify, describe and define the experience of learning for the sake of learning in adulthood provides a basic structure of this phenomenon and knowledge about adult learning in one type of experience. Additional research may be built on this base to describe other types of learning experiences that will increase our knowledge about adult learners and how they perceive that experience. This new knowledge of learning experiences may be used to structure autotelic adult learning experiences.
Chapter Three: Method

How the phenomenological method was applied to the research question, what is the experience of the phenomenon of learning for the sake of learning in adulthood, is explained in this chapter. The method used in this study was developed by Barritt, Beekman, Bleeker and Mulderij (1983). Their four step method has been altered to allow for the use of transcribed tape recorded interviews as the protocols. This is explained in the interview segment below.

Selection of Co-researchers

"Subjects" in phenomenological research are selected because they can supply first-hand information about the phenomenon being studied. They are not selected to represent certain groups so that the data can be generalized to the population, but for their "expertise" or ability to relate their experience to the researcher. The subjects are considered co-researchers rather than subjects, because they participate in two ways with the researcher. They provide the data for the analysis by the researcher and then validate the descriptions written by the researcher. The ten co-researchers taking part in this study were selected from nominations made by educators who were told of the project. Several co-researchers also suggested other individuals whom they felt engaged in learning for the sake of learning. After being given a person's name each prospective co-researcher was called and told about the study. It was explained that this study was a doctoral dissertation about the experience of learning for the sake of learning and that
a mutual friend or acquaintance had suggested they were individuals who seemed to have had this type of learning experience. In most cases the person instantly agreed or disagreed. The few who asked "What is learning for the sake of learning?" were told that it was learning that was not goal directed. This "definition" was deliberately vague to preclude biasing the prospective co-researcher's thought. Two of those approached could not remember any instance when they had experienced that kind of learning. They often engaged in learning activities, but felt all these activities were done so that they could accomplish some task. In addition, three individuals were asked to be participants but for various reasons did not begin or complete the two interviews (See Endnote 2).

As these three individuals were omitted from the study, others were added. The selection of co-researchers was an ongoing process. As people learned of the study, they often nominated themselves or others as subjects. The self-nominators were not interviewed because through conversation with the researcher they knew too much about the goal of the study. Co-researchers were to be "uncontaminated" by previous discussion of the topic with the researcher.

**Role of the Co-researcher**

Before beginning the initial interview the commitment asked of the co-researchers was reviewed. This had been discussed originally when telephone or face-to-face contact was first made, but it was important that the individuals knew this was not a short term, passive role they were undertaking. Phenomenological research involves the subject in the research. Since they serve as both the source of the data and the validator of the interpretation of the data, several hours of their time was needed. Each individual was asked to agree to participate in the following four steps of the research:
1. Participate in two tape recorded interviews.

2. Read, edit, if necessary, and return the transcripts of each of these interviews.

3. Read and comment on the individual description.

4. Read and comment on the fundamental description.

After they agreed to participate in the study they were asked to sign the consent form (See appendix), the tape recorder was plugged in, and the first interview began.

**Length and Location of the Interview**

Each participant provided the two interviews and in many cases talked beyond the suggested hour. It was not a case of pulling information from them and pushing the interview into overtime, but that the co-researchers had more to talk about than they could say in an hour. Each initial interview closed with the reminder that the second interview was another chance to talk about their learning experience.

Both interviews took place at locations selected by the co-researchers. Seven people (15 interviews) were interviewed in their homes, 2 (4 interviews) in their offices, and one (2 interviews) in a classroom at a local university. The appointments were made at times convenient to them. Five were held in the evening, 4 interviews were conducted on weekends, and 12 were done during the day. The extra interview resulted from a malfunctioning tape recorder. When it was impossible to transcribe more than half of Will's second interview he agreed to be interviewed a third time.
Nature of the Interview

As the underlying question of this study is: "what is the phenomenon?" the data gathering should not prejudice the answer. The researcher collects all the data that is available and during the analysis decides if any of the data are superfluous. This need to be inclusive in the data collection prescribes a method that is open ended and encourages the co-researchers to share their experiences in depth.

Oral tape recorded interviews were chosen as the data gathering technique for this study because it offers several advantages for the co-researchers. They may be more willing to share their perceptions about their learning if they do not have to write them down. They will be less inclined to edit their responses, worry about form, grammar, or neatness if they dictate their response to an interviewer and a tape recorder. An interview will also give the co-researcher a better chance to understand what the researcher wants to know, why she wants to know it, and what she will do with the information. This format reduces the initial time spent by the co-researcher. People can speak much faster than they can write, and can expand upon and explain ideas that they might not be willing to expand or explain on paper because it will be more time consuming.

This format also has advantages for the researcher. In the face-to-face interview the researcher can ask questions when further clarification is needed. If the written description is used, the researcher may have to request clarification after reading the description instead of during the interview.

The disadvantage of this method is that the co-researcher may discuss irrelevant topics during the interview which prolong the interview and lengthen the transcript, but this disadvantage is balanced by the wealth of detail provided by this type of interview.
Maccoby and Maccoby (1954) define interview as "a face to face interchange in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expressions of opinions or beliefs from another person or persons" (p. 499). The unstructured or nonstandardized interview which does not use prespecified questions nor a specified order for the questions was used. This format allowed the interviewer to ask questions that are relevant to the individual experience related by each co-researcher. The co-researcher did not have to search for preconceived answers to predetermined questions. In this situation it was preferable not to standardize the questions or the setting of the experience since the individuals were relating their own learning experiences which were different from other peoples' experiences. A check sheet of questions was developed and used to assure that certain aspects of the experience were discussed during the interview, (See the appendix for a copy of the interview checksheet). This check sheet was modified as co-researchers brought out new areas to be discussed. The list was referred to by the researcher near the end of the interview and any topics that weren't covered during the interview were asked then. Maccoby and Maccoby (1954) indicated that the unstructured, nonstandardized interview is the better interview technique for exploratory studies. When the goal is to learn about the subjects meanings and definitions, this is the most suitable format.

**Focus of the Interview**

When answering the question "what is the experience of learning for the sake of learning?" it is most appropriate to get the best examples of the phenomenon from which to draw the description. Although Houle (1963) believed that the three learning orientations, goal, activity and learning were not exclusive, but overlapping categories, the most
concise description would come from each of the co-researchers' "cleanest" learning experience. Thus the focus of the interview was one experience which they felt they could discuss in detail.

Before the interview the co-researchers were asked what they had learned for the sake of learning. This often led to a discussion of several topics which were discarded because the learners felt they were definitely goal directed learning. They were asked to think of experiences they felt that they could most fully remember and discuss in detail. If several experiences were offered, each was discussed and the one that was felt to provide the most and best data was selected. This may have been the most recent experience or a very significant experience. The co-researchers made the final decision about which experience to relate. In several cases they felt they could better explore another subject than the one referred to by their nominator.

Eight of the co-researchers related mainly one experience, while two related two or more experiences. The later two felt that while the experiences were on different topics they flowed together making it difficult to discuss the learning event on which we were focused without many references to other learning experiences. All of the co-researchers made reference to other learning experiences that were done for the sake of learning. None felt that the experience they related in the interview was their only experience of learning for the sake of learning.

Each participant was asked to go back into the experience and relate it as it actually happened. A retrospective or analytical view of the experience was not being sought. It was the researcher's responsibility to do the analysis. There were usually moments when each of the co-researchers analyzed their experiences, but if they became analytical for a great length of time they would be interrupted and asked a specific
question to bring them back to relating an aspect of the experience without the self-analysis.

The Sequence of the Interview

Since the purpose of this research was to discover the meaning of the experience of learning for the sake of learning, rather than verify predetermined suppositions, the researcher did not know, or want to know, exactly what were the themes of the experience. The key themes were to emerge from the co-researchers' experiences, not any preconceived notion of the experience based on the researcher's personal learning experiences. As a result, this was an evolving study. In order to "bracket the natural attitude" of the researcher and prevent any preconceptions from entering the interviewing process, the checklist consisted of very general questions to ask if the co-researcher needed prompting. These general questions dealt with the individual's feelings during the experience, reasons for beginning and ending, the process used to learn, and whether the learning occurred alone or with others. These thoughts were structured into broad, nondirectional questions to use if the learner did not discuss these topics. This list of questions evolved as the interviewing process proceeded. As co-researchers discussed areas that were new, questions were developed and added to the interview guide sheet to see if these new topics emerged in the interviews with the new co-researchers. If the topics did not surface during the discussion, the researcher would ask the co-researcher about the new area.
The Structure of the Interview

The interview was semi-structured. It opened with a request that the co-researcher "tell me about your experience of learning for the sake of learning." While there were areas in which information was sought, the interviewer waited for the participant to mention them.

The interview was a conversation. It was not a "third degree" of the participant nor did the interviewer remain aloof from the situation. If asked a question, the interviewer answered it except in the rare instance that it was felt that an answer would bias the co-researcher's comments. The interview was a discussion between two people who were interested in the same subject - a certain learning experience. The co-researchers related their experiences only being asked questions when they stopped talking. The questions were either to gather additional detail about something they had mentioned or to ask about something they did not discuss. The questions were general ones that allowed them to answer as they wished.

When the interview ended each co-researcher was reminded that when they received the transcript they were free to make any changes that would expand the explanation or some point they made, add new material that they felt was relevant, and delete anything they felt incorrect or embarrassing.

The amount of editing done by co-researchers varied greatly. In one case no changes were made while another individual deleted many digressions, re-punctuated, and constructed complete sentences from sentence fragments. The middle ground was represented by the man who said, "Lynne, I started to rewrite this until I realized that the spoken word doesn't read the way the written word reads." Most changes of the first interview transcripts were minor.
After the changes on the transcript were made the transcript was reread to determine what additional information was needed. What areas needed expansion? Where was more detail required? After these questions were developed, the second interview was conducted.

**The Process of the Second Interview**

The second interview was usually smoother. Both the co-researcher and researcher had some understanding of the experience being talked about and they had usually given it some, often a great deal of, thought since the first interview. The first interview had been a broad, cover-the-spectrum interview, an attempt to find the borders of the experience and make sure that the whole experience was exposed. The second interview focused on areas that had been missed or dealt with peripherally in the first interview. One of the co-researchers brought notes to the second interview.

At the conclusion of this interview the final steps were reviewed with the co-researchers. They were asked to review this transcript as they had done the first. When the description of this individual learning experience was prepared, each would review it and share personal thoughts and comments with the researcher. The final step would be their review of the fundamental description of the experience of learning for the sake of learning.

If questions developed about the learning experience as the second transcript was prepared they were written in the margin of the page. They were comments like: "Please expand on this statement... I don't fully understand it," or a more specific question such as "How is this done?" The co-researchers answers ranged from a short
"yes" to a paragraph which was incorporated into the transcript, noting its post-interview origin.

The second transcripts were delivered to the co-researchers, edited by them, and returned to the researcher. After the changes and corrections on the second transcript were made, both the first and second transcripts were edited by excising the personal information that was irrelevant to the study. The next step was the protocol analysis.

Analysis of the Protocols

"The goal of the analysis is to find common themes in the descriptions and to find language that captures these themes" (Barritt, et al., 1984, p. 90). A theme is a collection of similar elements from the co-researchers' interviews. The element is a moment "which seem[s] to be at the center of the event for the person" (Barritt, et al., p. 92). These themes were found by following the steps developed by Barritt et al. which are described in Chapter 2.

Emerging Elements

Each protocol was individually analyzed in the order in which the co-researcher had been interviewed. The analysis began with the reading of each person's protocol several times. The researcher's goal was to try to put herself into their experiences and see and understand them from their points of view, from their words. The goal was the emergence of the elements that made this experience learning for the sake of learning. To discover the themes of the learning experience the important elements of the
experience were underlined as they were seen in the protocol. This excerpt from Jason's protocol shows the beginning of the analysis process.

Yes, in different ways than I used to. It used to be difficult for me because I just didn't understand it. I would put stuff down because it just didn't make any sense to me. I remember my friend Mike gave me Hegel's History of Philosophy years ago. I picked that thing up and I managed to get about forty pages into it. It is not one of your smoother tomes. I remember putting a pencil in the page where I closed the book up. And ten years later I opened it up and the pencil was in the same place. It had not been opened in those years because I just hadn't been able to understand what he was doing. Well, I picked it up and I started reading it again. I couldn't remember why it had been hard the first time. It was difficult, it is not easy stuff, but it was much easier. Much easier to understand and to get a feel for where he was going. The same thing happens with most of the philosophical readings that I have done. There was a time when it just was gibberish to me.

Emerging Themes

Upon reading and rereading certain themes began to emerge from the experience and were noted. Spiegelberg (1962) asks that the researcher develop an intuitive grasp of the phenomenon. As the elements were underlined and compared with other elements it was possible to see similarities and differences between them and to begin to understand what made the phenomenon unique. At this point the elements were given labels that identified them.

List of Elements of Jason's Learning Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty</td>
<td>It used to be difficult for me because I just didn't understand it. I would put stuff down because it just didn’t make any sense to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty</td>
<td>I picked that thing up and I managed to get about forty pages into it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty</td>
<td>I remember putting a pencil in the page where I closed the book up. And ten years later I opened it up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


and the pencil was in the same place. It had not been opened in those years because I just hadn't been able to understand what he was doing.

I picked it up and I started reading it again. I couldn't remember why it had been hard the first time. It was difficult, it is not easy stuff, but it was much easier. Much easier to understand and to get a feel for where he was going.

**Labeling the Themes**

The labels above note that the statements refer to the difficulty Jason felt and the challenge he faced while in this learning experience. The labels could have been "hardness of learning" or numbers, anything that would have stood for the type of statements to which they referred. When the statement was about his feelings while in the experience the phrase was labeled "emotion", if about how he worked, learned, or interacted with other people it was called "others". The statements that dealt with non-cognitive difficulties were labeled "impediments." At the conclusion of the protocol analysis a total list of 18 labels was developed from the ten protocols: Atmosphere, challenge, concentration, curiosity, effort, emotion, failure, finite, goals, impediments, life, others, payback, plan, process, reasons, selfish, and time. A miscellaneous category held statements that were felt to be important but too vague to be accurately categorized at this stage of the analysis. As the analysis progressed, they were moved to another category or were found to be not as important as first thought. Not every category was used in each transcript and not every label began with the first transcript or lasted through the analysis process.
Theme Development

As the analysis progressed new themes would emerge from a new protocol and previous transcripts would be checked to see if the new theme was present, but not as obvious as in the new transcript. Midway through the analysis of the protocols the statement "Basically selfish, isn't it? Yeah, I'm pleasing myself." appeared in Amanda's protocol. Nothing similar to this thought had surfaced before, but it seemed significant so Vanya's and Thomas' protocols were reread and similar elements were found. Vanya had said, 'I study Japanese when I decide I'm going to take some time for me to do something just for me and not for any other reason. And I guess I use that in that sense. It could be the same as I want something just for me I'll have a chocolate milkshake or something.'' Thomas said that learning for fun is "(a) selfish, (b) a private, inner satisfaction, and (c) has no external, social impetus." So a new theme was developed.

In other cases, as the analysis progressed themes that had originally appeared separate showed similarities and were merged. The way the learners viewed their learning difficulties made it more accurate to combine the "difficulties" theme with the "challenge" theme.

Development of Theme Descriptions

After each underlined statement was labeled the statements with the same label were grouped and a chart for that theme was developed. The chart for "emotion" was labeled "How it Feels While Learning" and the chart dealing with "selfish" was titled "Learning for the Self." The statements on each chart were analyzed to eliminate redundancies. If
two or more statements expressed the same idea the one that was more definitive was selected to represent that thought. When the chart was reduced to a single quotation representing each idea within the label a description of the theme was written and added to the chart. This paragraph combined all the sub-themes that were part of the theme and were represented on the chart.

Table 1

The Challenge of Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>ELEMENT STATEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The learners experience a challenge in learning. If the challenge is not met, they persevere at a later time.</td>
<td>I remember putting a pencil in the page where I closed [Hegel's History of Philosophy] up...I picked it up and I started reading it again. I couldn't remember why it had been hard the first time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Development of Individual Descriptions

After all the themes that were part of this individual's experience have emerged, they are developed into a description of that particular experience. The description was a synthesis of each person's experience using quotations from the protocol to illustrate or expand upon the general statements. This paragraph from the description of Jason's learning experience is an example of this process.

When Jason runs into difficulty understanding, he does not regard it as failure as he might if he is preparing to try a case in court. "This is an intensely private experience. I am not tested. There is no risk of public humiliation." He doesn't often find the material difficult, but when he does he puts it aside to pick up later and pursues some other reading in the meantime. "I remember putting a pencil in the page when I closed [The History of Philosophy] up. And ten years later...I picked it up.... I couldn't remember why it had been hard the first time."
When it was completed, the description was sent to the co-researchers with a cover letter asking for their comments. (See appendix for cover letter.)

**Validation of the Individual Description**

In phenomenological research the co-researcher validates the researcher's analysis. It is the co-researcher who is most knowledgeable about the experience. They look at the analysis of their learning experiences and determine if it is an accurate representation of those experiences. When the ten descriptions had been validated they were used as the basis for the fundamental description of the phenomenon.

**Development of the Fundamental Description**

**of Learning for the Sake of Learning**

Developing and validating the fundamental description of this learning experience were the final steps in the protocol analysis. It was done in two ways. The last three or four individual descriptions were very similar. The major difference was the subject studied. It was felt that a more generalized version of the tenth description might suffice as the fundamental description. To check this evolution the paragraphs of all the descriptions were sorted by theme and compared. The themes were grouped, but were not ranked for importance. A theme was either important to the phenomenon or it wasn't important and therefore irrelevant to the description.

Each individual experience was read and reread and sections of the experiences were read together as similarities and differences within and between the descriptions were sought. Alternating between the combined description of one theme and the entire
ten descriptions enabled one to develop a sense of the individual theme without losing the essence of the experience. This was a dialectical analysis. As structure was put on the data, the data would call for a new structure. After completing the analysis of ten descriptions and the grouped themes a general outline of the experience was prepared and the general description was written. The following paragraph is from the fundamental description. It presents the "difficulty" and "challenge" themes of the phenomenon.

This afternoon stroll is not without its difficulties and failures, but they are viewed differently than they are in the everyday world. Difficulties are viewed as challenges to be worked through or material the learner is not ready to deal with yet. Since the learner alone decided what and how much is to be learned, when it is to be learned, and to what degree of mastery, the learner feels that "There is no one to tell me that I had passed or failed." That determination is solely up to the learner.

**Validation of the Fundamental Description**

After the fundamental description was written it was sent to the 10 co-researchers with a cover letter and short form for their feedback (See appendix for a copy of the letter and form). The first co-researcher to return the materials wrote comments in the margins of the fundamental description noting his agreement with statements and questioning aspects that he felt were unclear. The second co-researcher also commented throughout the paper. After seeing these two descriptions other co-researchers were called and encouraged to write on the description itself if they thought of relevant observations. One individual had already mailed in the short form, but said she would go over the description and make notes if after reading her comments, it was felt that more feedback would be helpful. The other co-researchers were willing to sit down with the description and make comments they felt were appropriate and return them. Five co-researchers made comments in the margins of the fundamental description and five sent
only the comment sheet. They felt that what they said on the comment sheet was enough, but volunteered to send additional notes if their original notes were not informative enough. Their comments were detailed. No additional comments were necessary. The co-researchers' comments validated the fundamental description.
Chapter Four: Results

At this point in the narrative it is helpful if the transfer is made to first person since my goal is to take the readers through the analysis process so that they may understand the results of this research and how the results evolved.

It is important that the readers not only see the end product of this research - the fundamental description of the experience of learning for the sake of learning in adulthood - but that they understand how those results emerged from the analysis process. The best way to see and understand the resulting description is to experience the process as I did it by following how the analysis was done with one co-researcher's learning experience.

Jason's experience was chosen as the example of the process because his interview and protocol analysis were done fourth. This placement in the process gives the advantage of a beginning foundation having been laid by the analysis of the previous protocols and yet new themes were still emerging since saturation of the phenomenon had not yet been reached.

The Data Collection

Jason is a 40-year old government attorney and a resident of Northern Virginia. He was nominated to be a co-researcher by an educator who knew him as the best Trivial Pursuit player in Northern Virginia and as a "compulsive learner." We had met previously, so when I approached him about an interview he was willing to listen to me and
expressed an interest in seeing if he was "qualified" for the study, which he obviously was. His interest in the subject and discussion of each question at length after giving it thought made him easy to interview. He commented, as did other co-researchers, that this interview was a special opportunity. Most people did not want to hear about his learning.

After each interview the protocol was typed and sent to Jason for editing. After the transcript was returned and the corrections were made, I edited them by removing statements that explained in detail how quarks worked and other interesting details and facts that he had learned and what Jason's family and his childhood were like. Then the two transcripts were combined into one protocol and the analysis began.

The Protocol Analysis

The Emerging Elements

I read and reread the protocol to try to look at the experience through Jason's eyes. After I had read the protocol several times certain statements seemed to be more important than others. They referred to key points of the experience. I began to underline those key points that emerged from the protocol. These underlined statements were the "elements" of the experience. So that the reader may follow the process of the analysis the underlined protocol is presented here.

Jason's Protocol

CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE YOU PICKED. WASN'T IT PALEONTOLOGY?

After I talked to you about that, I thought more about it and I thought "Well, what is it I really do solely for its own sake and why do I do it for its own sake?" It is a combination of both analytical and intellectual, but principally emotional, reasons that generate what I do. To some extent I am a
relentless self-improver. I am a classic obsessive-compulsive personality (which I expect most lawyers tend to be in the self selection process that goes on.) And I have always believed, since I can remember, that education was, practical functional. That it had use, and that one of the ways that I would be able to prosper in a world in which I was only five-eight and 135 pounds for a long time, was to be simply smarter than everybody around me, because I couldn't be bigger. I couldn't be stronger. I couldn't be faster. I was an o.k. athlete, better than average athlete, but I was not good enough to go anywhere with that, and so, in a younger time, where intellectual values are not particularly esteemed or useful, education was what I had.

My nickname, when I was a high school baseball player was "the Professor," because they caught me in the back of the bus telling one of our star pitchers how come his curve broke. And he didn't know, he just threw it. So, I've always believed in the functional value of education. But then as I got older and as I developed the skills which were sort of essential to what I was doing, whatever it might be, one of the things that I found was that in reading, particularly, I found the only true surce from the stimuli and the aggravations of the outside world that I knew. That went all the way back to my youth, and I'll reflect back on that in a minute, but it goes back to other strains in my youth which grew out of this same period of being the smart one vs. the skilled one, the physically skilled one. It was through reading that I was able to find respite from what I considered to be an essentially unfriendly world.

I grew up in a family that was almost like a military family because my father was with Sears Roebuck. He was a merchandiser whose function it was to open new stores and so every three to five years we would be transferred. At the age of... Well, what would happen was that even in the bosom of my own family I would retreat to my room and do such things as, at the age of thirteen read Death of a Salesman all the way through in one night. As a result very early on I began to develop the capability of completely surrendering myself to whatever I was reading or doing. It is a characteristic, which as I look around thinking about it, and now that I am of a more mature intellect thinking about what I do and what I see other people doing, I have concluded is an extraordinarily difficult thing for people to do. Concentration levels are very hard to come by. Mine, of course, grew as I got older, just because you develop better concentration levels, mental discipline, with practice. When you're thirteen you just don't have it. When you're twenty-three you have more of it. When you're thirty-five you have a lot more of it, if you have honed it.

But very early on I began to tune out. I could tune out everything and just become one with what I was reading. And that was how I managed to escape the fact that I didn't have a girl friend and that everybody thought that I was a jerk, or so I perceived. (Now, in looking back at it, it wasn't nearly as bad as I perceived it at the age of fourteen, but given the instability, the insecurity that I always felt, this was where I went.) I went back into my room and into a book more often than not.
That gets me to one of the reasons that I study for the sake of its self. I am a compulsive history student. You name it, the period is of no concern to me, the subject matter is of no concern to me. I'll read history about German finance in World War II just as readily as I'll read about the twelve Caesars. It doesn't matter to me. And I do that for two principle reasons that relate to my initial comments. I learn and satisfy my intellectual curiosities and I satisfy a deeper more personal need. I take extraordinary personal emotional comfort in the notion that time is a continuum. All the perils and pitfalls of my day to day life then pale by comparison with time, and with the whole history of humankind. Some people would, I think, take the precisely opposite tack and say "Oh, I'm just such a little bitty, teeny, tiny cog in all this great big stuff, therefore I don't matter! That doesn't bother me. That really doesn't bother me. I am very comfortable with the notion that I am just one little person living his time, and I'm gonna shuffle off this mortal coil in due course. That doesn't bother me. Rather, it gives me great comfort to see myself in a matrix in a larger structure of life and thought, if for no other reason than that the more of that I understand, the larger I think I am capable of thinking. I like to create a "comfortable" sense of pattern in the chaos about me, and because I had little physical control as a child, I turned to mental tools, with which I was favorably endowed. That leads me to another point. And that is that one of the disappointments of any kind of job like this, one of the disappointments especially in political and social life, is that I think I long ago outstripped most of my contemporaries with respect to the depth with which I can approach most topics that we discuss. That sounds extraordinarily arrogant, I suspect, but my learning is the way that I think I transcend some of the pettiness that I find myself surrounded by all the time and I pay the cost in interaction with others, that no one will discuss it much. Still, I like to think, or try to think, about larger issues than those with which I am besieged every day. Also most people are focused, I think, far too greatly on their own selfish interests. And you add to this my service in Vietnam. My military service and my belief that we are, that our generation, perhaps uniquely in American history, is so damned self-righteous and selfish that it beggars belief. The process of studying history, for me, is the way that I elevate myself above this sense that I am all that matters. Because I don't believe that I am all that matters, I don't believe that my family is all that matters. I really believe that what matters in some larger sense is a social continuum, the ebb and flow of life, seeking greater and more broad spread human happiness on the face of the globe. (That's why I don't get any more upset than I do when I haven't got a certain ordinance ready in time. That's what you have to do, because that's what you're expected to do. But at some level of consciousness, come on, it's just not that important.) The political life of the community often revolves around egos, blows to egos, sops to egos, you name it. Yet, I've never believed that was the function of government or the function of politics. It's all part of this ebb and flow of human history.

Well, to bring it back to learning for its own sake, that's extraordinarily comforting to me, the notion that there are rules. They may be artificial rules, and I have no doubt in my mind that almost all of them are artificial
rules, but they are artificial rules that have proved their efficacy in a human context. Which is very pleasing. There is a social order. It breaks down. It picks up. We find organization. We all are happier, less happy, depending on our ability to deal with the world as we find it. So when I read history I do two things. I provide myself the surcease, I just, damn, turn certain gears in my brain and become an observer in the era, at the time, and I add to my sense of what the world has been and what the world will be.

For me that's a way to deal with very, very high levels of stress under which I think I often operate, and I'm one of those people that thrives on stress. But I think that one of the reasons that I strive on stress is that I have this context into which to put what I'm doing. And I got that, not from formal education. It was later, much after I left school, much after I left law school, and I've been out now since '74, that some of this kicked in. I would consider Vietnam even more important in this regard than education, but the reading has been there since I can remember.

I think I'm a better than average teacher. And one of the reasons I'm a better than average teacher is that, as my wife says, I have a capacity for taking what would otherwise seem to be ancient and dead and making you think that it happened last week and you just hadn't read the paper. And that arose out of my study of the Civil War. Some years ago, I was watching Kenneth Clark's "America" and he flashed up a series of photographs of soldiers from the Civil War, and as I watched the pictures there were just the faces of the soldiers, not even the whole tintype, and I realized that if you picked up the Manassas Park High School Annual today and were to cover all but the eyes, that they would be the same people. That they would not be different. You would see the same eyes. And that's when I had this sudden emotional appreciation for the fact that the guys that fought at Bull Run are now at Manassas Park High School. Couple that with an observation that I got from talking to my wife's father. He's 83. We got to talking about memory, and about how he feels. He's become extremely decrepit but his mind is still sharp. And he was sitting in front of the tv just a couple of weeks ago and he said, "You know, I can hardly move anymore, but inside here I don't feel any different than I did when I was 26 years old." We had talked about this before. It is the idea that the thoughts that I'm thinking now exist in my brain, and there are no separate places in your brain for the past. Do you know what I mean? That every thought, Me at 18, exists contemporaneously in my brain with me at 39. I was talking to my mother-in-law about how her husband felt and I said, "Well, how do you think he sees himself in his mind?" She said, "Oh, when he was a young man." He's right and she's right. His body is dying, but his brain is just the same brain that's always been picking up all this data. You forget details, but you don't forget the sensations that you had when you were much younger. So that led me up to the further thought that the same thing is true of the continuum of history. I remember the time that suddenly I read, I was reading something about the Peloponnesian Wars, and I suddenly began to see them fought in color in my mind. You look at all the movies from World War II and they're all black and white and then say suddenly, "Wow, World War II was fought in color." We don't see the pictures, but it was fought in color. It was hot that
It was cold that day. They had to walk through the mud. The army taught me that. I mean, all armies march through the same earth. And so, I began to think that what was yesterday isn't three thousand years ago, it was just yesterday. I believe that societies and civilizations and even the earth itself work upon rules that are not entirely man made. There are natural rules, there are perhaps even religious rules, theological rules, although I'm not a religious person. There are resonances there are resonances throughout human history. And I don't think people were very different. Barbara Tuchman's theory is that in the 14th century people were different. I'm not sure that I buy that. I'm just not sure that I buy that. I think that their cultures were very different, but I don't think that the people who walked around in them were particularly different, unless you say that different acculturation is difference in substance. They responded because of natural limitations and because of the nature of the earth itself, in very similar ways to what we do today. So, while she says that Enquerrard de Toucy who she wrote about in A Distant Mirror was different, I think he could have prospered today, because he would be the same human being, but in a different time.

This all relates back to my sense of learning for its own sake to the extent that when I read history it does not seem distant. It just seems like how other people faced other problems that we could face today, and resolved them in ways which are perfectly reasonable as resolutions today.

Who was it, the Spaniard Santayana, said, "Who does not remember the past is doomed to repeat it." And I believe that. And I also believe that one of the reasons that you study is so that you can repeat the past. That's a good lawyer talking. A common lawyer. We have learned a lot over time. We resolved things in a different era in different ways that might have clues for today. Particularly since I think that we have a tendency in our current society to resolve things on the basis of whims, spurs of the moment, fads, self interest, and not on the sense that, My God, there are 200 million of us and you don't resolve that problem on Madison Avenue or on tv. You resolve it out of the well spring of daily life.

And daily life has been daily life throughout history, the great marshmallow of history. Sometimes I've seen history as just a rolling thing that moves through time, and periodically pushes to its top people who look around and realize where they are and realize they can't move the marshmallow but degrees, but they looking back say, "Look where I am. Look what I can do." Lenin. He said, I can move this marshmallow a little bit and I can do it. What he chose to do was to rip the fabric of society asunder and rebuild. That's an extraordinarily drastic measure that cost a lot of human life and a lot of blood.

I am convinced that I would equate John Lennon and Paul McCartney with Lenin in the same cultural sense. I think that those guys woke up one day and said, "My God, we're at the absolute top of the cultural heap. What are we gonna do with it? Are we just gonna become another rock band or are we going to somehow make our peculiar genius do something?" I'm wearing a
I think that society is different than it would have been, but for them. I think that other political and cultural leaders throughout time can say the same. It's a melding of historical determinism and great-man-in-history theory. I think they both have to be put together. All of that goes back to "why do I study history?" Why do I do all this stuff? Because everything's o.k. for me emotionally in this world because of this pattern. Another anecdotal way of saying it. When my wife and I fight, like any husband and wife fight about little stuff, we said a long time ago, when we got married things changed from when we weren't married, because in the short run it helps to know there's a long run. It becomes less significant. The problems aren't as big, the struggles aren't as big, and I take that from the level of the home all the way up to the level of nation states. Are there great and terrible things that can happen? Yes, but life itself will march on. Can we avoid those great and terrible things? Perhaps we can through our knowledge of what's happened in the past, But it all is a way for me to think about the world, which is comforting emotionally and satisfying intellectually. Full circle

**HOW DO YOU DO IT? YOU'RE BUSY, YOU HAVE A NEW BABY.**

And it is harder. It has become much more difficult to accomplish it now and that's been the greatest single sense of loss, the greatest difficulty my wife and I have had and that we used to talk about. Her greatest sense of pleasure was being with me and my greatest sense of pleasure was in being alone. Which didn't lend itself to perfect harmony. It is something with which I've struggled because when I got married I couldn't just do what I used to do, which was come home from work and read 'til midnight. Get a sandwich and read 'til midnight. I can't do that anymore. Read. I've always read in the gaps in my life. It is a struggle today that my wife is resistant to my reading at the breakfast table. And I finally just told her that I was going to read the newspaper at the breakfast table if she liked it or not and she's at least satisfied that I'm going to do that, but she doesn't like it. And her position is very fair. I cut the deal that I won't do it at any other meal.

But if she leaves the house and I have to take care of my son, and feel that I can put him near me and he won't fuss, I'll read the minute she's out the door. I will read when I'm sitting in front of the tv, if I can do that, although I have trouble concentrating on the book when I do that. I just, whenever, it's just whenever.

I always have at least one working book and frequently three or four. Right now I probably have four. Next to my bed. I can't go to sleep at night unless I read fifteen minutes. Just try to get a few minutes reading in before I go to bed. And that's been probably the most efficient way to do it because that's the time when I can just crank down. Although my wife wants to talk. We fought about that for awhile. But the way I do it is just whenever there's a moment. Right now I'm reading a book called, *Why Flamingos Smile*. It is a book written by the guy who wrote the paleontology book that I mentioned before, called *Ever Since Darwin*. It's another book of his essays on evolutionary theory and its implications for modern society. I'm reading an American
history book that's James MacGregor Burns' second volume of his three volume History of America. The third one's not out yet. About the period of the Civil War to the 1930's.

I am reading a book called Metamagical Themas. Are you familiar with that one? It's Douglas Hofstadter's book. He's the one who wrote Gödel, Esher, and Bach. In the Mind's I. I gave it to a friend for his birthday, but I picked it up myself because, and this is another way to say what I've been saying earlier, he says in his essays introducing Metamagical Themas that it is, and the subtitle is, The quest for essence and pattern^2. That is another way to say something about what I'm trying to say about this matrix, this notion of context.

I also read books on theoretical physics. Now, I'm no physicist, I'm no mathematician, and I have to read popularized versions of that. But there is an absolutely fascinating book called The Cosmic Code, which is sort of an "o.k. all you dummies out there, this is where theoretical physics is these days." Because my wife says that I'm always wanting to, in my conversations, wanting to say the world the way it is for three reasons. I study history and try to learn this matrix, not simply so I'll know a whole bunch of crazy rules, but so that I can try to distill from them, if not immutable truths, then things which seem truer than not, for longer than not. Physicists, Einstein, for example, thought that the unified theory field, the notion that somehow there was an idea out there which was the source of all things, couldn't be right. He knew he was on the wrong track, because, he says, it was too complex. He says, in the end we are going to say, "Why, it's so obvious how come we never thought of it before? How come we never saw it?" Increasingly physicists are taking the atom, which we used to think was all that was happening, back down in increasingly small functions, back down to what they have now identified as four separate forces: the weak force, the strong force, gravitational force, and electromagnetism. Those are the four forces which they believe are the fundamental building blocks of all things in the universe. They have found that at increasingly higher...Right now in the state of nature as we see it, those four forces seem independent of each other. But if you increase temperatures to a certain level, then you find that electromagnetism and gravity demonstrate similar properties, operate according to similar mathematical rules. If you increase the force yet farther you find that the weak force quits operating according to separate principles and begins to operate under similar mathmatical principles and rules. You can't do that with the fourth, yet. They can't do that with the strong force yet, because they can't generate on earth temperatures and pressures sufficiently high to approximate the Big Bang. Right now they say that they can give us a fairly clear articulation of the history of the universe from some one twenty-five millionth of a second after the Big Bang to today. They don't know what happened inside the Big Bang, when those forces were probably a single force of some kind - the unified field. I mean it's chilling. It almost gives me chills to think that we can distill out of the universe, out of the complexity of life in the universe, that unified field. When Einstein died he was mocked for having wasted the last fifteen years of his life looking for a unified field which everybody thought was silly. And now everybody realizes he was on
to it even then, and his genius transcended any limitation of time and space
and he said, "It's out there somewhere because I just know it is. God may be
subtle, but he is not malicious." And he also said, "There has to be a unifying
principle because God does not roll dice with the universe." And so that's
why *Metamagical Themas* is a book that attracted me. The quest for essence
and pattern. What can we distill from history. What can I as an individual
human being distill from these patterns that I am taught, that I have studied,
that I as a have lawyer studied, that I as a student of history have studied?
That I as a student of other areas of thought, (just so I won't be narrow, so
I can be erudite at cocktail parties), what can I distill out of that. What is
the essence and pattern, because I personally believe that there is. I don't
know that I believe that as a religious matter. (Although, I'll tell you that
more and more theoretical physicists are religious men because they start
thinking, "What if the unified field is a consciousness? What if it originally
was a consciousness?" And you think, my goodness, that would be consistent
with an astonishing array of Biblical references, not sort of an Emmanuel
Velikovsky-like Jupiter-as-a-dead-comet kind of Biblical references, but that in
fact there is a God who is the source of all things. What if that is what
we're tracing back to?) That inquiry to me is so exciting and so stimulating
that I, as just a transient participant in this through whatever book I pick up
at Crown or elsewhere, find it actually thrilling. It is actually a thrilling
process.

That's another thought that I wanted to convey. That this process of
learning for its own sake is not just emotionally gratifying, and calming, it's
also exciting. I remember reading the first couple of chapters of *Ever Since
Darwin*, and thinking "So that's what he meant. So that's what he said." I've
always called that the "Aha" moment of knowledge. When all of a sudden
something happens. It happened to me in the second year of law school,
second semester. I'd struggled for the first year and a half, and then second
year I went, "Aha," because I had learned enough to begin to have under-
standing and I've always said that you have to know a whole lot of law to
know any law at all. You can't just pick up a rule. That's why people who
are lay lawyers don't do well, because there is a way of thinking, a mind set,
a process of thought that occurs and a change that you go through if you
study three years of nothing but this. It's all you think about, talk about and
do. Then suddenly the whole way you see the whole world changes. Well,
that's true of learning for its own sake. The way you see the world changes,
the more you know and the more you learn.

And it's absolutely exciting to me. The first time I ever heard of a
colored quark it made no sense to me at all, and then when I understood more
of that quark, what the relationship a quark had to the nucleus of the atom,
and then understood more of the muons and gluons and all that stuff were
simply ways that these four forces worked inside the atom, and that when you
get down there far enough there is no substance, it's just power, energy, that
what it is, what all matter is, (matter of fact the Cosmic Code says is that all
the things that we can pick up and touch are simply congealed light). Not that
it's true, but, think about it. I don't know anybody else that thinks about
this, Lynne. And it's hard to talk to anybody about it because, you know,
there it is. Maybe that's it. So what. You think that friends will say, "That's
nice. How's the 'skins game?' But I think I can enjoy the 'skins game just as much as anyone else and that's just as intellectually gratifying to me. And it's just an outgrowth of not being able to play baseball as much as I like.

DO YOU FIND IT RELAXING OR STIMULATING?

Extraordinarily stimulating.

AT THE SAME TIME OR AT DIFFERENT TIMES?

It can be both. History, really is more calming. This other reading can be more stimulating. Because it brings me things that I just never knew.

DO YOU SEE THEM BEING RELATED?

Oh sure, essence and pattern.

DO YOU PLAN YOUR READING? HOW DO YOU DO IT?

Random. My receptors are always up. I see something I want to do I just do it. I got the book Ever Since Darwin from a friend who knows my interest, and he and I are soul mates when it comes to this sort of thing. He is also a lawyer, but doesn't lawyer. He is now with a private company. And he just brought me the book one night. The Cosmic Code I just picked up. You know, reading I do will trigger interest in other reading. That's true. But it's not something I plan. I've never had a program of study. That wouldn't be any fun. My program of study is sort of...Well, I just finished reading Napoleon's Russian Campaign, which I had read years and years ago, written by his principal aide, General Segue, which is just a marvelous and clear piece of writing. And now what I will do is I'll pull out again my Will and Ariel Durant's The Age of Napoleon which I read years ago. Because once I get to that, I don't want to read just one thing because I don't remember a lot. Interesting enough, I don't think I remember a great deal of what I read. So I have to redo it. I don't remember the details... I remember the broad brush strokes. I don't remember the names of everyone. And I'll go back and read The Age of Napoleon because Will and Ariel Durant have a theory that Napoleon was the brightest man who ever lived. And I want to just grab hold of that again. So no pattern. It is done for the pure pleasure of it.

DOES YOUR READING TIE TOGETHER?

Yes, in a way I suppose it does and in other ways of course it doesn't. It's hard to equate Napoleon's Russian Campaign to a colored quark, or up quark or down quark. The only place I think it all hangs together, and I see relationships between them, is in this questing for essence and pattern. And that's what you ought to be doing in life.

So I think that the study of physics is ultimately related. All things are related in some way, and I think what is essence in cultural organizations is just a different version of those mathematical principles which govern the
universe. I've never understood, in fact I was listening to something on tv the other night. A mathematician was talking about the origin of the universe. He says it's still amazing him that the universe works according to mathematical principles. I'm not a mathematician. I still can't balance a checkbook without a calculator. I cannot understand those things. But I understood that as you get deeper and deeper into theoretical physics, experimental physics corroborates this theorem of a super unified field. Maybe one day, one of those theories will prove out suggesting that the ultimate answer will be a is equal to b. Something like that. Wow, what a notion. That's a final distillation of essence right there.

DO YOU COME OUT OF YOUR READING WITH MORE ANSWERS OR MORE QUESTIONS?

As I have suggested, I want to answer questions. I want to get something for my effort. I don't have enough discipline, as a matter of fact, to do study for the sake of forming new questions. I don't think I'm smart enough. You know, in a way I think I understand what a mildly retarded person's life is like - just at a different level...

IF I GAVE YOU A PILL THAT WOULD TEACH YOU EVERYTHING YOU'VE BEEN READING, WOULD YOU TAKE IT?

No. No fun. The fun is in the doing of it. And seeing where you can take it and realizing that you're just not taking it very far, but seeing how far you can take it.

I was just going to say that I was raised in a family of readers. Both of my parents are voracious readers.

We have had bookshelves built in the den and I probably have a thousand books in the den. More in my room upstairs, and some in the basement. Not as many, interestingly, as I would think after all these years of buying books. But there are a lot of them there.

But it was a family that honored learning. Her father was a teacher and principal and her mother was a teacher. And they encouraged me years ago. Little things. I remember standing on the porch of my grandparents' home in Birmingham and looking up at the stars and saying, "I know all about the stars. I read a book." And so the next Christmas I got a nice telescope. Which I used. I don't think I got rid of it until about ten years ago. It was a family that believed in learning. A school teacher family. And I only hope that my son, that I can somehow convey to my son an interest in learning. I don't care particularly what he learns. But I'd like for him to share some of what I've had. My wife is not my way and she finds what I do tedious and inexplicable. She is a mental health therapist. She is far more interested in the way the individual brain works, far more interested in the interactions of one person with another, a family's dynamic, than I ever am. Because to me that's too micro. I have more of a "macro" interest.
But I look at my son's eyes, and I don't know how you know these things about your kids, or even if you feel them and therefore convey them to the child and one day he grows up to be somewhat like that, but you look into his eyes when he's in a playful period, (and he's only eight weeks old) and the kid is already checking things out. I'm sure all children do, and yet I look at his eyes and I say "Look at this, look at his inquisitiveness." My wife and I were talking about it last night. We have a sense this kid is already o.k., because when he sits there in his little swing or sits there in your arms, he's got this little "it's all right" look about his face. And his eyes are so bright, so wide. One look at those eyes and I say this kid is going to be my kid. And if I have a gift to give him it is this gift of learning. This gift of learning and studying and thinking. My wife has been afraid that I will be too much. That I will be too much the teacher. But I really don't think.

Rodin said that as a sculptor he did not carve stone, he released the art in the stone. Well, I think that being a parent is being a lot like that. A legal way to say it is that we are mere trustees for his life. He's not us replicated, he's him, and we have got him for a few years. That's everything I know about everything.

**YOU TALKED SOME ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT LEARNING. HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU ARE ACTUALLY READING HISTORY? IS ALL YOUR STUDYING OF HISTORY READING, OR DO YOU GO PLACES AS WELL?**

A little of both. I made a side trip in France four or five years ago. The summer I got married. A friend of mine teaches at Tulane and was running a Junior Year Abroad Program in London and I went over and spent a month in London with him, and two weeks of that trip were a drive through France with an English friend, a week in Paris and a week driving a loop around central France. Which was a really good trip because I speak pretty good French. I wanted to use it and do things. Well, one of the places we stopped was an old Roman fortification and that was the oldest historical place I have knowingly visited. (I have a particular interest, by the way, in military history. That comes, I'm sure, from being a soldier and also because armies are distillations of their societies.) That was the oldest military installation I've even been at. Looking out over the fields and trying to deal with it in my own mind. Why it was there? What it was there for? None of the fortification was left except the hill that I was on. It was just an old Roman camp. There is a scene in Patton, remember Patton? The scene where he talks about the armies that have marched this very plain and says, "I was there. I was an eagle on the stanchions of the Romans." That's very easy for me to do. I can put it all in my brain. I'm not here now, I'm there then. Because, particularly with armies, and particularly with infantry, (I was an infantry officer, wasn't an artilleryman, or cannoneer or rocketeer, I was an infantryman) infantry are nothing today that they weren't then. You still take and hold ground with a man with the weapon. And taking and holding ground with a man with a weapon is a function of the ground itself. The men that marched up that hill 2000 years ago would have to take the same route today. The ground has not changed. So when you look at a military problem a soldier faced 2000 years ago you know, these rules of war haven't changed
much. You know that armies, whether they're trained to or not, take the path of least resistance to an obstacle. Which means that they don't climb over the jagged rocks, they climb over the smooth ones. Which means they don't come up the side of the hill, they come up the little defile. And so how do you as a soldier build your fortifications or place your weaponry to deal with the fact that that's probably where they're coming from. So I sat there on this hill imagining that the "barbarians" were coming up the side of the hill. How would you have disposed your forces? I'll do that here with Civil War battles about which I know a great deal because I've studied them for so long.

I study military history because I've often wondered why it is that men obey under the circumstances that they do. That's a whole 'nother intellectual inquiry. It doesn't have much to do with essence and pattern but with something else. Why those men went through Pickett's Charge. Any fool could see the end. When Pickett survived the charge he wouldn't speak to Lee for the rest of his life. "That man murdered my division," he said. He knew it the minute they went up, but he was a soldier and he did what he was told by General Lee and he went up that hill to what he knew, and said he knew was his doom. Told General Longstreet, before he went up, shook his hand and said, "This is the end. I go to do my duty." Why do people do that. I mean I was a soldier, but, damn, I wasn't that much of a soldier. I pitched a fit when they were going to send me out someplace where I thought I might get hurt. But I'm there in the place card the moment about which I read.

YOU TALKED EARLIER WHEN WE FIRST BEGAN THAT YOU CAN SHUT EVERYTHING OUT AND JUST CONCENTRATE. DO YOU DO THIS WHEN YOU'RE READING AND CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHAT IT'S LIKE?

Transport. It is a sense of transport out of the here and now. Sometimes it's hard to evoke. The external stimuli, the external interruptions are very hard, particularly now with the family to get away from. It has become extraordinarily hard in this job. There was a time when I could think about a problem. This is the longest time I have been left alone to do anything probably in the last six months. But when I can do it, when I can evoke it, when I've got enough time, it doesn't take long. I can sink in ten minutes. It is simply a surrender to a place outside of myself. It is an ability to get outside of my own brain and quit listening to its own cycles replay. The brain has loops and you get caught in a loop and can't break out of the loop. Well, I can break the loops. And I can choose not to focus on my own aggravations. Sometimes when I'm really upset, been under real stress, it's a lot harder and sometimes impossible. I'll look at a page and I'll read it, but I won't hear the words in my brain. But more often than not, if I just say, "Wait a minute, o.k. pay attention now," and then I start reading the words and paying attention to the words, it's no time at all before I'm in the words.

I have an experience when I'm reading novels, particularly. And I read far fewer novels than I used to read. But I will read something and I will have this sense of communion with the author. I will think, Hemingway didn't write this with this blind large public in mind. He wrote it as a story teller. As if he were talking to somebody. And I'll pick up Hemingway and say, "You know
there's a good chance that I'm the only person on earth that's reading Hemingway at this second. And the chances are real good that Hemingway is talking to me and to me only. So it's like, "Hey Ernest, what's the story?" And I'll do it with any book. Particularly with some, you know, like Napoleon's Russian Campaign? I know I'm the only person on earth that was reading that book at that time.

WHEN YOU TRANSPORT YOURSELF ARE YOU OBLIVIOUS TO EVERYTHING ELSE? YOU'RE NOW A FATHER.

If there is an outside stimulus I have to be away from it. I can't use the book to get away from them. And that's troublesome, but I can't. I am a child of the television age. When the tv's on I can't not watch it.

CAN YOU READ WHILE YOU WATCH TV?

No. I can't concentrate. Concentration is concentration.

DO YOU WORK AT CONCENTRATION? IS IT A CONSCIOUS DECISION THAT YOU MAKE?

I have to put aside the garbage. White noise doesn't work for me.

I'VE ASKED ALL THE QUESTIONS THAT I HAVE FOR THE FIRST SESSION. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN THINK OF THAT WE HAVEN'T TALKED ABOUT?

No. I haven't talked about this sort of stuff as much ever. I think this is good for the time. We've covered more than a little.

Second interview:

TODAY I'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT SOME OF THE MORE SPECIFIC, FROM YOUR VIEWPOINT, PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING. ALMOST AS IF YOU CAN GO BACK TO THE EXPERIENCE ITSELF AND GO INTO IT AND THEN RELAY IT TO ME. JUST BE THERE. HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU LEARN?

I think that a way to describe it is to say that I feel transported out of the present. I feel that while, it is an intensely cerebral experience, that is to say that it's all happening inside my own mind, in a very large way it is not happening inside my own mind, in the same way that other thought does or does not happen. By that I mean, as I mentioned the last time we talked, that so many people get caught up in intellectual loops, hearing the same voice saying the same things over and over again. There's always that voice in your mind talking to you. Too many times it's saying the same thing. I find that when that happens to me, when I get in that kind of a mental rut, like everybody does I think, that it can be very disconcerting very emotionally unsatisfying because it's like plowing through mud. You just can't break free from what you're thinking inside your brain. Or even if it's not the loop that you're in, if I spend all my time thinking about what we're going to do with
Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, that's very tiresome and very unsatisfying. When I, particularly say, when I read history, what happens when I do that is I break those loops. I bring in new data, new information, but I also bring in a new atmosphere, a new environment, a new place in my brain. And if you can spend the time reading or if you can spend the time studying something with sufficient intensity, you can put enough concentration into what you're studying, then you lose touch with some of your own internal mental framework. I begin to experience whatever atmosphere, whatever place, whatever event the author of the book is trying to evoke.

O.K. YOU KEEP USING "YOU" DO YOU MEAN "I"?

Me. I mean me. I mean me, and so an example would be reading a book I mentioned to you last time, Napoleon's Russian Campaign. It's a history book that I've finished recently and a good example of it. So much of the history of that campaign, which I had tended to think of as being very long, turns out to not have lasted more than a few months, six months or so. But the bulk of it happened in bitter brutal cold. It was, what do they call it, Mother Russia and Father Winter. And so, the atmosphere that was evoked for me was that I got cold. I'm so completely out of where I am now, that I actually begin to shiver or think cold thoughts. It is not at all hard for me to envision Napoleon, some of the famous photographs of Napoleon hunched over on his horse with frosty breath coming out of his mouth and his horse stomping the way horses do in cold weather. So I get out of the wrap of my daily life and am able to go to a whole 'nother time and place.

YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT COLD AND YOU SAID YOU SHIVER, SO YOU PHYSICALLY FEEL IT?

I physically feel it. It doesn't always happen, but when it's at its peak I physically feel it. And I put myself in the place not simply of the principal actor. When I read these books I'm not just Napoleon making the decisions, although from time to time I am. I'm also Marshall Ney, who got lost. I'm also one of the troops, trying to imagine the horrible things that happened to them. You can read a sentence that says 15,000 men went over the hill and sixty men came back and most of them froze to death, got caught in the mud and froze to death, and you try to imagine, I try to imagine all the time, what it was like to be a survivor. Yet I can never, because of my own military experience, I can never stop imagining what it is like not to have been a survivor. What the last moment must have been like. Why you did what you did. Why you continued to obey. All that stuff filters in. When Moscow burned, Napoleon barely escaped with his life because he managed to run through a burning alleyway. What was it like to have been the guy calling him out, who went to him, who said, "I've found the way. Let's go over here." And so, I don't simply take in the words I'm reading, but I try to imagine what it was like to have physically been there. To have been part of the scene. That relates to what I told you last time we talked, about my realization some years ago that these things didn't happen in the abstract, but in the concrete, that what's being reported is an outline of the fabric of
an actual event. And I try to re-create in my mind the actual event. It is a conscious decision to recreate, though the "feel" of it often is spontaneous.

WE TALKED ABOUT CONCENTRATION LAST TIME, WILL YOU TALK MORE... YOU SAID YOU RE-CREATE IN YOUR MIND THE EVENT AND YOU GO BACK AND YOU IMAGINE WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS. HOW MUCH CONCENTRATION DO YOU PUT INTO THIS?

It is a process of, to some extent, creating the right environment. For example, in this office if I don't close my door I can't do it. It is very difficult for me to study in here or to do work if the door is open. If I close that door it is very quiet in here and we have this white noise. White noise is not generally very effective for me, but this is very quiet, very comforting. It begins to just happen as you start reading. It requires that you actually hear what is being said on the page. I don't even try to interpret it very much as I'm reading it. I try to let myself feel or read what is happening on the page, in the book, in the story. That is, however, I think, an acquired trait. I don't believe that high concentration levels are a God-given characteristic, at least they weren't for me. It took me many years to get to the point where I thought that I had any real concentration level. When you're a young student, when I was at L.S.U., for example, I was far more interested in going over to the LSU union to pick up some coffee than I ever was actually going to the library to read. Were I a student again, a formal student, I think my priorities would be almost 100% reversed. I would be far less interested in seeking the interactions and the coffee and the sociability than I would have been in study, (although I'm still very social). You learn over time, by concentrating, how to concentrate. So it's not something... I don't sit down and say "I'm going to concentrate." I sit down to do what I'm going to do and the concentration comes because of the practice I've had at it and because of the environment I've set up, quiet and lack of distraction.

YOU DELIBERATELY SET UP ...

Try to, yeah. In fact, I can't always control that, but I try to.

DID YOU FIND THAT YOUR READING THE HISTORY AND OTHER MATERIAL ... DID YOU DO IT FOR ESCAPE?

Partially, but not entirely. Remember I told you that I was a relentless self-improver. I do it partially because to do it, I think, better equips me to do what it is that I do - to lawyer. And of course lawyering means a great deal more than simply knowing the law. It means giving advice and solving problems. The more I know about more things the more competent I am at problem solving, the more competent I am at understanding the millions of facts that may relate to something, for example, like the future of transportation in our county. So I do it so that I can know stuff to be able to use that information for practical purposes. But I certainly do it for release, that wasn't the word you used, escape. I mentioned that to you the last time we talked. It is a wonderful way to escape the... I've always loved the French phrase "la vie quotidienne" that means daily life, dailyness. Translated
literally it is the life of each day. You know dailyness is wonderful in many respects, and boring in others. So you can escape from it into other worlds. You can pick up a book, and be transported 2000 years ago, in an exciting time, or yesterday in an exciting time. Sure, it's escape.

READING THE TRANSCRIPT I HAVE THE FEELING THAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING THIS SINCE YOU WERE A CHILD?

Yes.

WOULD YOU EXPAND, AND WHEN DO YOU EXPECT TO FINISH?

Well, I can answer the last perhaps a bit easier to say that there was a time when I thought it would never end. But watching my wife's father at 83, unable to see anymore and can't read, and secondly, not quite as tuned in as he used to be, he has reached a point in his life where he said, to some extent, it's pointless, I'm through. And I wonder whether he's just so old, and knows he's so close to the end, that he really doesn't feel like learning anymore. Now I hope I never get to that stage, but I can envision that actually happening. I can see getting to the point where you think, well you do it for improvement so you can do what you do, and then you quit what you do, you retire, and then does the release we discussed still work? I think maybe it might, so I hope that it's forever. And I've watched it happen to him, that he remains interested and alert. He came to my house and watched C-span when he was up here last, and he watched the debates in Congress. He's always been interested in politics, so he watched that stuff all day. He watched all the debates in Congress from start to finish, gavel to gavel and commented incisively on what he had heard, suggesting that if you find something for him, since he can't read anymore, his mind still desires the same sort of thing. So I think, "yes, I'll do it forever."

It started as early as I can remember for reasons that I touched on before, but I'm not sure about, and that is because we moved around so much and I didn't have a lot of friends. I would get friends and then get jerked out of there to somewhere else. It was a place to go when I was lonely and afraid.

SINCE YOU STARTED LEARNING, READING AND THE OTHER ACTIVITIES, HAS IT BEEN NONSTOP? WHAT HAS BEEN THE PATTERN OF YOUR LEARNING ACTIVITIES?

I'd say it's been virtually nonstop.

EVEN WHILE YOU WERE IN LAW SCHOOL?

Oh, absolutely. Some of law study is just absolutely mind-numbing, and this was all new to me. I thought I wanted to be a lawyer, but when I got to law school I realized that I didn't know anything about it. I'd been in court one time in my life and hardly knew any lawyers. It just seemed like what I wanted to do. I was interested in politics and I thought law was a good way
to get into politics, and I might as well go ahead and do that. So it was all
new to me. I don't know if I mentioned to you the last time we talked about
Thomas Jefferson's statement that the finest form of relaxation is a change in
the form of endeavor. So what I would do is I would read law for six to eight
hours a day, and then I'd pick up a science or a history book and I would find
that I was wholly refreshed. I had just been doing the same thing, sitting in
a chair with a cup of coffee or a beer and reading, but when I would change
what I was reading it would be like I'd done something else, like taken a walk
or something. So sure, I would do it in law school, even though the grind was
just astounding.

WAS IT A DELIBERATE EFFORT YOU MADE TO CONTINUE IT?

No, it's not deliberate. It's almost like a need. It's almost like an addiction. In fact, I doubt that you've heard this word first from me in these
discussions. That is an excellent way to describe it, it's an addiction.

AND YOU CAN SATISFY THIS ADDICTION BY PICKING UP A BOOK?

A fix.

THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE HEARD THAT TERM USED IN THIS WAY.
CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE FEELING OF THIS ADDICTION?

It's a mental restlessness that almost drives you to calm that restlessness
with what my mother-in-law calls "outside input." My friend Mike, who's a
professor of philosophy asserts that this restlessness is often a sign of both
intellectual and emotional disquiet. And it may be.

So most of us who are reasonably bright and have dealt with that phase in
our lives step back a step from the abyss as best we can do so, and don't
look over the edge any more because... There are a lot of people that never
know it's there. They move right along, but if they ever stop to think about
some of the things that one is forced to think about as one is learning and
growing, that abyss is just there. There is chaos, disorder, lack of meaning,
lack of purpose. What's it all about? If you think about it a lot you'll go mad.
What I do is, I've thought about it, and I don't want to think about it much
anymore, so I mask this turmoil with study, which is probably a form of
denial.

YOU'RE USING "WE".

Me. We, in that circumstance actually meant me and Mike because we've
gone through this together. This restlessness is there.

DO YOU FEEL THIS RESTLESSNESS?

Oh sure, you physically feel it, but mostly it's like a rattling in your
brain, sort of a looseness in your brain. Where things don't hold together well.
You don't know what you're thinking about. You're just thinking. Things are
going on. You don’t have any pattern to your thought. You don’t feel right somehow. A good example of it is when I’m in the house and I’m not reading anything. I’m sort of domestic, but I’m not very domestic. So it’s not my style to go cook fudge or vacuum the rug. I’ll rattle around the house, and I’ll rattle in my head unless I have something external on which to focus. I have hundreds of books, as I’ve told you, so I’ll just go and rattle around in front of that bookshelf for thirty minutes looking at the titles, seeing what title strikes my fancy. I’ve read 90% of the books on that bookshelf already. I’ll look over them and I’ll say, “Well what is it I think I’d like to know something about right now that I don’t know something about or I’ve forgotten.” And I’ll get this restlessness and I’ll pick up St. Augustine’s The City of God just because I haven’t read it in a long time and I want to get back into it, because it calms the restlessness. It gives me a focus.

DOES THAT CALM COME JUST OPENING THE FIRST PAGE?

Oh yeah. It is almost instantaneous. Because I just have something to look at, something to read, something to think about, something to digest.

YOU SAID DIGEST. WOULD YOU COMPARE THIS TO BEING HUNGRY?

It’s not a metaphor that I would use. That might be right, but it’s not one that rings true. It’s more. Hunger? I suppose we are addicted to food, but hunger is not the feeling I’ve gotten. It’s more urgent than that. I’ve never been super really hungry, maybe if I’d been so I’d say the same thing, but it’s more nervous and jerky. It’s more urgent. It’s more needful than simply getting something to eat.

DO YOU FIND THE LEARNING A CHALLENGE?

Yes, in different ways than I used to. It used to be difficult for me because I just didn’t understand it. I would put stuff down because it just didn’t make any sense to me. I remember my friend Mike gave me Hegel’s History of Philosophy years ago. I picked that thing up and I managed to get about forty pages into it. It is not one of your smoother tomes. I remember putting a pencil in the page where I closed the book up. And ten years later I opened it up and the pencil was in the same place. It had not been opened in those years because I just hadn’t been able to understand what he was doing. Well, I picked it up and I started reading it again. I couldn’t remember why it had been hard the first time. It was difficult, it is not easy stuff, but it was much easier. Much easier to understand and to get a feel for where he was going. The same thing happens with most of the philosophical readings that I have done. There was a time when it just was gibberish to me. The first philosophy book that I ever got from Mike, The Metaphysics of Being. It’s a little bitty book by Heidegger. Real simple. An outline of being, an outline of metaphysics, according to Heidegger. I didn’t understand a word of that book. The sentences had, as far as I could tell, subjects, verbs and objects, but that was about as far as I could get. Well, ten years later that wasn’t true. It made more sense to me.
So it's a challenge. It was a challenge at one time because I just wasn't smart enough. It seemed to me that I wasn't capable of understanding. Now, it's more of a challenge because while I'm capable of understanding it better, it's the level of understanding that I want to achieve that is hard. One tries to achieve a real level of understanding of what you read. In turn this helps me to understand the patterns and essences that we have talked about. In a more thoroughgoing and satisfying way. That's the challenge.

Much of it is still beyond me. Technical writing in fields beyond me are just that, beyond me.

HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU'VE FIGURED IT OUT?

Satisfied. It's a comfort that this is another thing that I was able to learn, that this is another thing that I was able to master.

FROM WHAT YOU'VE SAID, YOU DON'T PICK THINGS THAT ARE EASY TO LEARN. YOU DON'T CHOOSE THINGS, OR DO YOU?

Well, I don't know that I really pick anything because it's hard. I think a lot of what I read is as simple as a comic book. History is not difficult. At one level, history is just there, in all its voluminous detail. Other things are more difficult. Other things are not things with which I am comfortable. This book I mentioned, Metamagical Themas is a difficult book. The first essay, for example, is on what are known as self referential sentences. This sentence is itself. And other forms of that such as, "This sentence no verb." I've never thought about those before. I had to think hard through what it meant. I'm lazy sometimes, so it took me forever to get a hold of what he was talking about. I'm not the kind who will sit around working up self-referential sentences just for fun, and he is. So that's fine, but a lot of it is really easy. The difficulty in something like history is... perhaps one of the reasons I like it so much is that there is such a wealth of detail to balance, to figure how it might relate to what is going on. Of course the writer that writes history has done that distillation for you. My wife always says to me after I describe what is going on here, she says, "How do you keep all that stuff straight in your mind? How do you remember who's talked to whom about what? How do you remember who's related to whom and how that relates to what's going on on the board?"

And it all is pretty complex. One of the reasons that I'm reasonably good at what I do is I can remember that stuff and figure out how one thing relates to another. And maybe the history study has helped me do that. That's hard, but that's an area in which I'm conversant, and therefore it's easy. The other stuff is not. So it's really no pick between easy and hard, just some is and some isn't.

THAT HAS NO DETERMINATION ON WHAT YOU PICK UP TO STUDY?

No. Unless it's so technical that I'm not going to get anywhere with it.
WE TALKED SOME LAST TIME ABOUT THE PROCESS, AND I THINK YOUR TALKING ABOUT STANDING IN FRONT OF THE BOOKCASE IS A DESCRIPTION OF HOW YOU DO IT. DO YOU EVER PLAN, DO YOU EVER CONSCIOUSLY SIT THERE AND THINK, "I'VE FINISHED THIS NOW I'M GOING TO GO HERE"?

No, except to the extent that I've mentioned to you last time that sometimes when I will read something, it will trigger an interest in following up on that issue. The example that I used was when I finished Napoleon's Russian Campaign I went and got Will and Ariel Durant's Age of Napoleon out, and read more of that.

DO YOU DO THAT OFTEN?


MORE OFTEN YOU JUST GO FROM THING TO THING?

Right. In large areas of interest, history, science, and science is a fairly new, but science and history principally. But within, history is a little broad, so I should say that I love biography and I love military history. And in science, interestingly, the history of science. But by doing that one learns a great deal about what is currently happening in a field or in several fields.

WHEN YOU'VE FINISHED A BOOK, AND I KNOW YOU OFTEN KEEP THREE OR FOUR GOING AT THE SAME TIME, DO YOU AUTOMATICALLY SEEK A REPLACEMENT?

Yes.

HOW DO YOU DO THAT?

I seek a replacement almost at random. It will just, something will catch my eye. I'm a member of the History Book Club, and I will order a book from the History Book Club and forget I've ordered it. I'll finish a book, and I'll go to the post office, and there's the new book I just pick it up and start reading it. Sometimes I will finish a book, and then go back to another book that I have bought but not gotten to yet. And I don't remember why I bought it when I bought it. That's one reason there's no pattern, in that I'll maybe be thinking about something and buy a book six months ago, only to get around to it six months later. It just happens to be the next book on the shelf that I haven't gotten to yet.

DO YOU HAVE ANY GOALS IN WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO LEARN? DO YOU SET GOALS?

Not in any kind of specific way. But I think that I have the goal, that to the extent it is within my reach, that I would like to be "wise". I would like to be competent, and to be thought of as competent, and I would like to be interesting to my family and my friends, to the people I work with. I think that
reading and study and learning tends to make one a richer and deeper personality. Not only within oneself, but if within oneself, then to the outside world as well. And since I would like to be that kind of personality, this study and life preparation is useful.

DO YOU PICK OUT THE BOOK BECAUSE YOU THINK CONSCIOUSLY "THIS WILL MAKE ME INTERESTING OR THIS WILL?"

No. No, it's not the individual book or subject matter, because it's really tough to go to a cocktail party and talk about German finance in WW II, but little tidbits, little illuminating tidbits that might be related to other things that you stumble across. People will be talking about the American economy today and you have more than the headline in today's newspaper to talk about, with regard to similar times in world economies. People don't want to constantly talk to each other about things they've all read in the Washington Post. It's sort of useful and interesting if somebody can say something which will often, in a bright crowd, trigger different responses. If you start talking about the economy in the United States today, at a dinner I might go to with some of the people that I consider my friends, and everybody talking is about how bad it is, "ain't it a bitch" and then you say, "Well, you know, this is a lot similar to the United States in 1920." Well, then all of a sudden the conversation has taken an entirely different tack because these are well-educated, very thoughtful people and such a notion triggers their analytical processes. We know what happened to Calvin Coolidge. We don't have any idea what's happening to us. So, we'll start talking about something else and it's very gratifying in a social environment to be able to kick it into another zone. But I don't pick it for that purpose.

IT'S JUST HOW YOU USE IT?

That's one of the ways.

WHAT OTHER WAYS DO YOU USE IT?

Well, I don't use it outside myself a great deal at all. I really have to say that the specific points of knowledge that I pick up are useful in those rare circumstances when it presents itself, for example in playing Trivial Pursuit, at which I'm a killer. But beyond that it's just what it does to make you who you are. It is all a part of who you are, and if that is socially pleasing or otherwise, it just is. And so I don't do any of this with a conscious effort toward being better at cocktail parties, although what makes you socially graceful at cocktail parties is certainly useful. I do it because I love it, and it just happens to be something that works out. The other night I discovered, for example, that the NBC tones mean something which I had never known before. It's great at cocktail parties. Years ago RCA, which owns NBC, and General Electric were the same company. You know they've just merged again? They used to be the same company until 1933 when antitrust forced them to separate. They still have one link - the NBC chimes are the tones "G" "E" "C," which stand for General Electric Company. Isn't that neat?
DO YOU FIND ANY IMPEDIMENTS TO YOUR LEARNING? ANYTHING THAT STOPS YOU FROM LEARNING?

**Interruption. Lack of time.** Napoleon, one of my heroes, wrote, "You can ask anything of me but my time." The telephone. Family responsibility. Domestic chores. Just doing shopping. The need to manage in the office. I have to spend some portion of my time seeing to it that things happen. Seeing to it that everybody understands what they're doing, what I want, what they need.

BUT NEVER SOMETHING INTERNAL?

No.

HOW DO YOU EXPERIENCE TIME WHEN YOU START LEARNING? ONCE YOU'RE IN THE EXPERIENCE WHAT IS IT LIKE?

Timeless.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT TIME WHEN YOU'RE LEARNING?

It slows. Time slows. I'm unaware of the passage of time. I don't wear a watch. I keep a pocket calculator that's a clock, but I don't wear a watch and haven't worn one since the army, because it's too easy to constantly keep looking at the clock and seeing what time it is, and seeing the day march by. When I get immersed in something, pleasurably immersed in it, that concern ceases. It's like time stands still for the period in which I am able to concentrate and I'm not anxious about what's next to do or anxious about what came before. I would say that sometimes you actually seem to float. The feeling is one of floating. That's both the emotional sense one has when one is doing it and also with respect to time. You're floating along, it's not that you're floating along like a cork in a stream. It's much more fluid than that. It's like you're in a viscous liquid.

SO TIME JUST IS. DOES IT STILL EXIST FOR YOU?

It must. When you say time just is, that's a very Zen-like notion. You know that time still is and that time is moving on, but so much of the rest of your life you spend conscious of the passage of time and conscious of the implications of the passage of time for doing whatever you have to do. I'm not leaving for vacation until Saturday, but I already feel that I'm out of time. And I'm not much of a future planner. I just don't think about packing, but little things like getting a haircut. You just constantly, little chunks of your life - gone. And when I study or read. When I immerse myself behind that closed door or wear the earphones the anxiety about time is gone.

WHEN YOU GET INTO A BOOK AND THEN COME OUT, DO YOU FIND THAT MORE TIME HAS ELAPSED THAN YOU THOUGHT?
Less. It always seems that in some corner of my mind the hours are just dragging on. That the time has slowed down, I realize that I have done so much more than I do when I'm interrupted, when I'm aggravated, or when I can't concentrate, that I think that to have accomplished what I have accomplished should have taken so much more time than it did. To have learned what I did or to have felt what I did or seen what I did normally would take two to three to four times that. It would take me three hours to write a memorandum that if I am left alone to do I can do in an hour, because of the intensity of the concentration. Because the clarity of thought. I don't have a great deal of clarity of thought. It requires a lot of discipline to get it all zipped out writing briefs. I'm a five draft man. But I look up, I'm through with what I've done. I've read it. I've enjoyed it. I look over and it's been fifteen minutes and not an hour. And I'm not anxious.

THAT'S WORK. WHAT ABOUT WHEN YOU'RE READING HISTORY?

I can't think of an experience recently. I can't pin down an experience that meets what I just said except that I know what I just said is the way I feel.

EVEN ABOUT LEARNING?

Oh, yeah! Time slows down. And yet I feel that much more time has passed than actually has.

HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU PUT INTO LEARNING IF YOU HAD A WEEKEND, WITH YOUR WIFE AND SON GONE?

If I had a weekend with my wife and son gone I'd probably spend almost the entire weekend reading.

HOW WOULD TIME SEEM?

Well, eventually I'd wear out, but it would seem like it went pretty quickly. Let me ask you this, "When you go to movies are you the kind of person that when you go to a movies completely surrender to the story?"

IT DEPENDS ON THE STORY.

I go beyond that. I would say that when I go to a movie, I don't care how bad it is, I'm completely lost in it. I heard a friend once describe that as the capacity to suspend one's systems of disbelief. I don't disbelieve. I just believe. And that's sort of the same experience. That's why I love movies and will go to a movie at the drop of a hat, because when the movie starts the same thing happens, you're going out of your own mind into the story. The same thing happens to me in a book that happens to some people in movies.

I HAVE A STATEMENT YOU MADE HERE TALKING ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF TALKING TO PEOPLE AND YOU SAY THAT 'I THINK I CAN ENJOY THE
SKINS GAME JUST AS MUCH AS ANYONE ELSE AND THAT'S JUST AN INTELLECTUALLY GRATIFYING TO ME. DO YOU FIND WATCHING A FOOTBALL GAME AS INTELLECTUALLY GRATIFYING AS READING HISTORY?

In a different way, but yes, I'd stand by that statement. Maybe I said intellectually gratifying when I really mean emotionally gratifying. I do not think that I am an intellectual, a true intellectual. I do not believe that I am somehow touched from above with a peculiarly bright mind. It's a very functional, very useful, very adequate mind. But I enjoy those things which are part of the fabric of everyday life as well. I can get just as much out of my mind and into a football game on tv as I can into the other things that we've talked about. I am not constantly immersed in a book. Although I certainly am a lot of the time. It is not something that I look down on. I used to have a professor in undergraduate school who thought that anyone who would watch a football game was a dolt. I don't believe that.

I THINK THAT THE LAST TOPIC I WANT TO TOUCH ON IS EMOTIONS. WE TOUCHED ON THAT LIGHTLY. WHAT EMOTIONS DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU'RE LEARNING?

Comfort. Tranquility. Stimulation. All at the same time. I told you when we started, before you turned the tape recorder on, that I had taken my last transcript of the and distilled from it three thoughts which go right to the question of emotion. In thinking about what I do I told you in a lot more language than needed to be used, that I attempt to distill essence and pattern from the physical and mental world that I inhabit. I do that for two principle reasons. One is the intellectual stimulation of practical value of it and the other is the emotional sustenance that I find that gives me. The emotional sustenance comes from the proposition that despite our living on the edge of the abyss we are capable of constructing a framework of thought and life within which we can live and live successfully. And by successfully I mean happily, contentedly, and productively in a world in which the only order and meaning that exists is that which we give it. And so for me the process I go through, the learning for its own sake is done for what I end up with when I'm through with it, which is is this greater sense of acceptable order and also for the way I feel while I'm doing it which is stimulating to me. I learn things which seem to be part and parcel of this larger framework of the world and life. The physical world, science, it seems to me obvious that my inclinations have begun to focus on those as I get older because I have begun to see or need to see the relationships between the order that nature is and the order that society and life can be, recognizing that in both the physical and intellectual worlds all of this order rides on top of chaos. And it is how to find the line that is stimulating to me. How to find the difference between order and chaos. The emotional sustenance is that I think that one of the reasons that I consider myself fairly emotionally stable is that I can feel this framework. I can sense it. It's a part of me. And it's only a part of me because I have devoted so much of my life to learning about those kind of things. If poorly, I understand what I am doing more as I do it and quite frankly this process of talking to you has make me think about what it is that
I am doing more than I ever did before. But I think that is a fair distillation of it.

DO YOU HAVE ANY FEELINGS OF EXCITEMENT?

That's the stimulation that I was talking about. And I mentioned this last time. I will learn things that excite me. That make me think, "Wow, can you imagine that this is so, or might be so?"

JOY?

That's not a word I would use. This learning for its own sake, and I recognize, Lynne, that you're interested in, I think you're interested in two dimensions of this, and certainly I've been talking about two dimensions of this. One is the process and what you feel like in the process the other is why. Why one does it. I think, and God knows, I could be wrong and my wife who is a therapist would tell me I am wrong, that I am more at peace with myself in the world than I think I have any right to be. While at the same time I recognize that peace and tranquility are fragile. I do not believe that if I were not as inclined to learn and to study and to think as I do, that I would be that way. Maybe I would and maybe I wouldn't. That's what I think. The longer term benefit of learning for its own sake is this emotional tranquility and the immediate benefits of actually being in the process are this timelessness, this transportation coupled with the nugget or moment of stimulation which is like fishing. You fish for hours and don't get a bite and you get tired and want to go home and then suddenly there is a nibble and you're good for another three or four hours. Study could be the same way.

THIS NOTION OF TRANQUILITY YOU'VE SPOKEN ABOUT, IS THIS YOUR GOAL, IS THIS WHAT YOU'RE WORKING FOR, OR IS THIS SOMETHING THAT JUST HAPPENS BY ITSELF?

I don't think it's possible any longer to answer that question because the two are so wrapped up in each other now that who said, "who came first," I don't know. It works and therefore I do it. I do it and therefore it works.

I'VE COVERED EVERYTHING I'VE GOT. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING I HAVEN'T TOUCHED ON OR ANYTHING YOU CAN THINK OF THAT'S RELEVANT TO WHAT I'M LOOKING AT? ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO EXPAND ON?

I guess I have wondered more than once whether what I do is not a mask of the underlying turbulence. And I wonder, I suppose, what it would be like to stop. If I were suddenly to quit doing it or lose interest or something. What would bubble up if anything? That really was just another thought. That's it.

EVER TRIED STOPPING?

Fortunately there's no need to. This is all legal.
The Common Themes

The initial elements that stood out were those relating to Jason's emotions about his learning experience, how he experienced time, how he experienced failure in learning, and the influence his family had on his learning. The first three themes were also present in the first three protocols I had analyzed. As one can see from reading the protocol above, the three themes were given in the material that Jason provided.

Labeling the Elements

After all the elements had emerged from the experience, I applied labels to each element statement I had underlined. Those that related how he felt about the learning experience were called "emotion." Elements that referred to his failures were labeled "failure." When all of the statements were labeled I made a list of all the elements as they had appeared in the transcript and their label. This list is presented below.

Table 2
The List of Elements from Jason's Learning Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>reasons</th>
<th>It is a combination of both analytical and intellectual, but principally emotional, reasons that generate what I do.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>reasons</td>
<td>To some extent I am a relentless self-improver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>life interests</td>
<td>I've always believed in the functional value of education.</td>
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<td>payback</td>
<td>In reading, particularly, I found the only true reasure surcease from the stimuli and the aggravations of the</td>
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<td>reasons</td>
<td>outside world that I knew.</td>
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Very early on I began to develop the capability of completely surrendering myself to whatever I was reading or doing.

Concentration levels are very hard to come learning by. Mine, of course, grew as I got older, just because you develop better concentration levels, mental discipline, with practice.

Very early on I began to tune out, I could tune out everything and just become one with what I was reading.

That gets me to one of the reasons that I study for the sake of its self. I am a compulsive history student. You name it, the period is of no concern to me, the subject matter is of no concern to me.

I'll read history about German finance in World War II just as readily as I'll read about the twelve Caesars. It doesn't matter to me.

And I do learn and satisfy my intellectual curiosities and I satisfy a deeper more personal need. I take extraordinary personal emotional comfort in the notion that time is a continuum.

All the perils and pitfalls of my day to day life then pale by comparison with time, and with the whole history of humankind.

Some people would, I think, take the precisely opposite tack and say "Oh, I'm just such a little bitty, teeny, tiny cog in all this great big stuff, therefore I don't matter! That doesn't bother me. That really doesn't bother me. I am very comfortable with the notion that I am just one little person living his time, and I'm gonna shuffle off this mortal coil in due course. That doesn't bother me. Rather, it gives me great comfort to see myself in a matrix, in a larger structure of life and thought, if for no other reason than that the

more of that I understand, the larger I think I am capable of thinking.

I like to create a "comfortable" sense of pattern in the chaos about me.

My learning is the way that I think I transcend some of
the pettiness that I find myself surrounded by all the time.

The process of studying history, for me, is the way that I elevate myself above this sense that I am all that matters. Because I don't believe that I am all that matters. I don't I really believe that what matters in some larger sense is a social continuum, the ebb and flow of life, seeking greater and more broadspread human happiness on the face of the globe.

To bring it back to learning for its own sake, that's extraordinarily comforting to me, the notion that there are rules.

So when I read history I do two things. I provide myself the surcease, I just, damn, turn certain gears in my brain and become an observer in the era, at the time. And I add to my sense of what the world has been and what the world will be.

For me that's a way to deal with very very high levels of stress under which I think I often operate, and I'm one of those people that thrives on stress.

But I think that one of the reasons that I strive on stress is that I have this context into which to put what I'm doing. And I got that, not from formal education. It was later, much after I left school, much after I left law school... that some of this kicked in. But the reading has been there since I can remember.

Some years ago, I was watching Kenneth Clark's "America" and he flashed up a series of photographs of soldiers from the Civil War, and as I watched the pictures there were just the faces of the soldiers, not even the whole tintype, and I realized that if you picked up the Manassas Park High School Annual today and were to cover all but the eyes, that they would be the same people. That they would not be different. You would see the same eyes. And that's when I had this sudden emotional appreciation for the fact that the guys that fought at Bull Run are now at Manassas Park High School.

But I also believe that one of the reasons that you study is so that you can repeat the past.

All of that goes back to "why do I study history?" Why
impediments
doi do all this stuff? Because everything's o.k. for me emotionally in this world because of this pattern.

impediments
In the short run it helps to know there's a long run. It becomes less significant. The problems aren't as big, the struggles aren't as big.

impediments
It has become much more difficult to accomplish it now and that's been the greatest single sense of loss, the greatest difficulty my wife and I have had and that we used to talk about. Her greatest sense of pleasure was being with me and my greatest sense of pleasure was in being alone. Which didn't lend lend itself to perfect harmony.

process
I used to come home from work and read 'til midnight. Get a sandwich and read 'til midnight. I can't do that anymore.

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Read. I've always read in the gaps in my life.

impediments
If she leaves the house and I have to take care of my son, and feel that I can put him near me and he won't fuss, I'll read the minute she's out the door.

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I will read when I'm sitting in front of the tv, if I can do that, although I have trouble concentrating on the book when I do that.

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I just, whenever, it's just whenever.

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I always have at least one working book and frequently three or four. Right now I probably have four. Next to my bed.

process
I can't go to sleep at night unless I read fifteen minutes. Just try to get a few minutes reading in before I go to bed. And that's been probably the most efficient way to do it because that's the time when I can just crank down.

others
Although my wife wants to talk.

others
I gave it to a friend for his birthday, but I picked it up myself because, and this is another way to say what I've been saying earlier, he says in his essays introducing Metamagical Themas that it is, and the subtitle is, The quest for essence and pattern. That is another way to say something about what I'm trying to say about this matrix, this notion of context.
I also read books on theoretical physics. Now, I'm no physicist, I'm no mathematician, and I have to read popularized versions of that.

But there is an absolutely fascinating book called *The Cosmic Code*, which is sort of an "o.k. all you dummies out there, this is where theoretical physics is these days."

Because my wife says that I'm always wanting to, in my conversations, wanting to say the world the way it is for three reasons.

I study history and try to learn this matrix, not simply so I'll know a whole bunch of crazy rules, but so that I can try to distill from them, if not immutable truths, then things which seem truer than not, for longer than not.

What can we distill from history. What can I as an individual human being distill from these patterns that I am taught, that I have studied, that I as a have lawyer studied, that I as a student of history have studied? That I as a student of other areas of thought, (just so I won't be narrow, so I can be erudite at cocktail parties), what can I distill out of that. What is the essence and pattern?

That inquiry to me is so exciting and so stimulating that I, as just a transient participant in this through whatever book I pick up at Crown or elsewhere, find it actually thrilling. It is actually a thrilling process.

That's another thought that I wanted to convey. That this process of learning for its own sake is not just emotionally gratifying, and calming, it's also exciting.

I remember reading the first couple of chapters of *Ever Since Darwin*, and thinking "So that's what he meant. So that's what he said."

I've always called that the "Aha" moment of knowledge. When all of a sudden something happens. It happened to me...I went, "Aha," because I had learned enough to begin to have understanding.... Then suddenly the whole way you see the whole world changes.

Well, that's true of learning for its own sake. The way
you see the world changes, the more you know and the more you learn.

And it's hard to talk to anybody about it because, you know, there it is. Maybe that's it. So what. You think that friends will say, "That's nice. How's the 'skins game?" But I think I can enjoy the 'skins game just as much as anyone else and that's just as intellectually gratifying to me.

Extraordinarily stimulating. It can be both. History, really is more calming. This other reading can be more stimulating. Because it brings me things that I just never knew.

My receptors are always up. I see something I want to do I just do it. I got the book *Ever Since Darwin* from a friend who knows my interest, and he and I are soulmates when it comes to this sort of thing. He is And he just brought me the book one night.

You know, reading I do will trigger interest in other reading. That's true. But it's not something I plan. I've never had a program of study. That wouldn't be any fun.

My program of study is sort of...Well, I just finished reading *Napoleon's Russian Campaign*, which I had read years and years ago....

And now what I will do is I'll pull out again my Will and Ariel Durant's *The Age of Napoleon* which I read years ago.

Because once I get to that, I don't want to read just one thing because I don't remember a lot. Interesting enough, I don't think I remember a great deal of what I read. So I have to redo it.

I don't remember the details,. I remember the broad brush strokes. I don't remember the names of everyone.

And I'll go back and read *The Age of Napoleon* because Will and Ariel Durant have a theory that Napoleon was the brightest man who ever lived. And I want to just grab hold of that again. So no pattern.

It is done for the pure pleasure of it.
DOES YOUR READING TIE TOGETHER?
Yes, in a way I suppose it does and in other ways of course it doesn't.

I have suggested, I want to answer questions. I want to get something for my effort.

I don't have enough discipline, as a matter of fact, to do study for the sake of forming new questions. I don't think I'm smart enough. You know, in a way I think I understand what a mildly retarded person's life is like—just at a different level...

No. No fun. The fun is in the doing of it. And seeing where you can take it and realizing that you're just not taking it very far, but seeing how far you can take it.

I was just going to say that I was raised in a family of readers. Both of my parents are voracious readers.

We have had bookshelves built in the den and I probably have a thousand books in the den. More in my room upstairs, and some in the basement. Not as many, interestingly, as I would think after all these years of buying books. But there are a lot of them there.

But it was a family that honored learning. Her father was a teacher and principal and her mother was a teacher. And they encouraged me years ago. Little things. I remember standing on the porch of my grandparents' home in Birmingham and looking up at the stars and saying, "I know all about the stars. I read a book." And so the next Christmas I got a nice telescope. Which I used. I don't think I got rid of it until about ten years ago.

It was a family that believed in learning.

I have more of a "macro" interest.

A little of both. I made a side trip in France four or five years ago,... a drive through France with an English friend. Well, one of the places we stopped was an old Roman fortification and that was the oldest historical place I have knowingly visited.

(I have a particular interest, by the way, in military history. That comes, I'm sure, from being a soldier and also because armies are distillations of their societies.)
That was the oldest military installation I've ever been at. Looking out over the fields and trying to deal with it in my own mind. Why it was there? What it was there for? None of the fortification was left except the hill that I was on. It was just an old Roman camp.

There is a scene in Patton, remember Patton? The scene where he talks about the armies that have marched this very plain and says, "I was there. I was an eagle on the stanchions of the Romans." That's very easy for me to do. I can put it all in my brain. I'm not here now, I'm there then.

So I sat there on this hill imagining that the that the "barbarians" were coming up the side of the hill. How would you have disposed your forces?

I'll do that here with Civil War battles about which I know a great deal because I've studied them for so long.

I study military history because I've often wondered why it is that men obey under the circumstances that they do.

Transport. It is a sense of transport out of the here and now.

Sometimes it's hard to evoke. The external stimuli, the external interruptions are very hard, particularly now with the family to get away from. It has become extraordinarily hard in this job.

It is simply a surrender to a place outside of myself. It is an ability to get outside of my own brain and quit listening to its own cycles replay. The brain has loops and you get caught in a loop and can't break out of the loop. Well, I can break the loops. And I can choose not to focus on my own aggravations.

Sometimes when I'm really upset, been under real stress, it's a lot harder and sometimes impossible. I'll look at a page and I'll read it, but I won't hear the words in my brain. But more often than not, if I just say, "Wait a minute, o.k., pay attention now," and then I start reading the words and paying attention to the words, it's no time at all before I'm in the words.

But I will read something and I will have this sense of communion with the author. I will think, Hemingway didn't write this with this blind large public in mind. He
wrote it as a story teller. As if he were talking to somebody. And I'll pick up Hemingway and say, "You know there's a good chance that I'm the only person on earth that's reading Hemingway at this second. And the chances are real good that Hemingway is talking to me and to me only.

If there is an outside stimulus I have to be away from it. I can't use the book to get away from them. And that's troublesome.

No. I can't concentrate [when the tv is on.] Concentration is concentration.

DO YOU WORK AT CONCENTRATION?
I have to put aside the garbage. White noise doesn't work for me.

I feel transported out of the present.

I feel that while, it is an intensely cerebral experience, that is to say that it's all happening inside my own mind, in a very large way it is not happening inside my own mind, in the same way that other thought does or does not happen.

When I read history, what happens when I do that is.... bring in new data, new information, but I also bring in a new atmosphere, a new environment, a new place in my brain. And if you can spend the time reading or if you can spend the time studying something with sufficient intensity, you can put enough concentration into what you're studying, then you lose touch with some of your own internal mental framework. I begin to experience whatever atmosphere, whatever place, whatever event the author of the book is trying to evoke.

And so, the atmosphere that was evoked for me was that I got cold. I'm so completely out of where I am now, that I actually begin to shiver or think cold thoughts.

I get out of the wrap of my daily life and am able to go to a whole 'nother time and place.

I physically feel it. It doesn't always happen, but when it's at its peak I physically feel it. And I put myself in, the place not simply of the principal actor.
I don't simply take in the words I'm reading, but I try to imagine what it was like to have physically have been there. To have been part of the scene.

I try to re-create in my mind the actual event. It is a conscious decision to recreate, though the "feel" of it often is spontaneous.

It is a process of, to some extent, creating the right environment.

It begins to just happen as you start reading. It requires that you actually hear what is being said on the page. I don't even try to interpret it very much as I'm reading it. I try to let myself feel or read what is happening on the page, in the book, in the story. That is, however, I think, an acquired trait. I don't believe that high concentration levels are a God-given characteristic, at least they weren't for me. It took me many years to get to the point where I thought that I had any real concentration level.

I don't sit down and say "I'm going to concentrate." I sit down to do what I'm going to do and the concentration comes because of the practice I've had at it and because of the environment I've set up, quiet and lack of distraction.

DO YOU DO IT FOR ESCAPE?

Partially, but not entirely. Remember I told you that I was a relentless self-improver.... The more I know about more things the more competent I am at problem solving, the more competent I am at understanding the millions of facts that may relate to something.

I do it so that I can know stuff, to be able to use that information for practical purposes. But I certainly do it for release, that wasn't the word you used, escape.

It is a wonderful way to escape the... I've always loved the French phrase "la vie quotidienne" that means daily life, dailyness.

You can escape from it into other worlds. You can pick up a book, and be transported 2000 years ago, in an exciting time, or yesterday in an exciting time.

I think, "yes, I'll do it forever."
Thomas Jefferson's statement that the finest form of relaxation is a change in the form of endeavor. So what I would do is I would read law for six to eight hours a day, and then I'd pick up a science or a history book and I would find that I was wholly refreshed.

When I would change what I was reading it would be like I'd done something else, like taken a walk or something.

It's almost like a need. It's almost like an addiction.

This is an excellent way to describe it, it's an addiction.

YOU CAN SATISFY THIS ADDICTION BY PICKING UP A BOOK?

A fix.

It's a mental restlessness that almost drives you to calm that restlessness with what my mother-in-law calls "outside input."

You physically feel it, but mostly it's like a rattling in your brain, sort of a looseness in your brain. Where things don't hold together well. You don't know what you're thinking about. You're just thinking. Things are going on. You don't have any pattern to your thought. You don't feel right somehow.

I'll rattle in my head unless I have something external on which to focus. I have hundreds of books, as I've told you, so I'll just go and rattle around in front of that book-shelf for thirty minutes looking at the titles, seeing what title strikes my fancy.

I'll get this restlessness and I'll pick up St. Augustine's *The City of God* just because I haven't read it in a long time and I want to get back into it, because it calms the restlessness. It gives me a focus.

It is almost instantaneous. Because I just have something to look at, something to read, something to think about, something to digest.

But hunger is not the feeling I've gotten. It's more urgent than that. I've never been super *really* hungry, maybe if I'd been so I'd say the same thing, but it's more nervous and jerky. It's more urgent. It's more needful than simply getting something to eat.
It used to be difficult for me because I just didn't understand it. I would put stuff down because it just didn't make any sense to me. I remember my friend Mike gave me Hegel's *History of Philosophy* years ago. I picked that thing up and I managed to get about forty pages into it. It is not one of your smoother tomes. I remember putting a pencil in the page where I closed the book up. And ten years later... I picked it up and I started reading it again. I couldn't remember why it had been hard the first time. It was difficult, it is not easy stuff, but it was much easier. Much easier to understand and to get a feel for where he was going.

It's a challenge. It was a challenge at one time because I just wasn't smart enough. It seemed to me that I wasn't capable of understanding. Now, it's more of a challenge because while I'm capable of understanding it better, it's the level of understanding that I want to achieve that is hard. One tries to achieve a real level of understanding of what you read.

Satisfied. It's a comfort that this is another thing that I was able to learn, that this is another thing that I was able to master.

The difficulty in something like history is... perhaps one of the reasons I like it so much is that there is such a wealth of detail to balance, to figure how it might relate to what is going on.

That's hard, but that's an area in which I'm conversant, and therefore it's easy. The other stuff is not. So it's really no pick between easy and hard, just some is and some isn't.

THAT HAS NO DETERMINATION ON WHAT YOU PICK UP TO STUDY?
No. Unless it's so technical that I'm not going to get anywhere with it.

Sometimes when I will read something it will trigger an interest in following up on that issue.

I seek a replacement almost at random. It will just, something will catch my eye.

Sometimes I will finish a book, and then go back to another book that I have bought but not gotten to yet. And I don't remember why I bought it when I bought it.
goal

Not in any kind of specific way. But I think that I have the goal, that to the extent it is within my reach, that I would like to be "wise". I would like to be competent, and to be thought of as competent, and I would like to be interesting to my family and my friends, to the people I work with. I think that reading and study and learning tends to make one a richer and deeper personality. Not only within oneself, but if within oneself, then to the outside world as well. And since I would like to be that kind of personality, this study and life preparation is useful.

payback

I don't use it outside myself a great deal at all. I really have to say that the specific points of knowledge that I pick up are useful in those rare circumstances when it presents itself, for example in playing Trivial Pursuit, at which I'm a killer. But beyond that it's just what it does to make you who you are. It is all a part of who you are, and if that is socially pleasing or otherwise, it just is. And so I don't do any of this with a conscious effort toward being (not) better at cocktail parties, although what makes you socially graceful at cocktail parties is certainly useful. I do it because I love it, and it just happens to be something that works out.

impediments

Interruption. Lack of time. Napoleon, one of my heroes, wrote, "You can ask anything of me but my time." The telephone. Family responsibility. Domestic chores. Just doing shopping. The need to manage in the office.

time

It slows. Time slows. I'm unaware of the passage of time.

When I get immersed in something, pleasurably immersed in it, that concern ceases. It's like time stands still for the period in which I am able to concentrate and I'm not anxious about time. I'm not anxious about what's next to do or anxious about what came before. I would say that sometimes you actually seem to float. The feeling is one of floating. That's both the emotional sense one has when one is doing it and also with respect to time. You're floating along, It's like you're in a viscous liquid.

time

You know that time still is and that time is moving on, but so much of the rest of your life you spend conscious of the passage of time and conscious of the implications of the passage of time for doing whatever you have to do.
When I study or read. When I immerse myself behind that closed door or wear the earphones the anxiety about time is gone.

It always seems that in some corner of my mind the hours are just dragging on. That the time has slowed down. I realize that I have done so much more than I do when I'm interrupted, when I'm aggravated, or when I can't concentrate, that I think that to have accomplished what I have accomplished should have taken so much more time than it did. To have learned what I did or to have felt what I did or seen what I did normally would take two to three to four times that.

Time slows down. And yet I feel that much more time has passed than actually has.

Well, eventually I'd wear out, but it would seem like it went pretty quickly.

I am not constantly immersed in a book. Although I certainly am a lot of the time.

WHAT EMOTIONS DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU'RE LEARNING?

Comfort. Tranquility. Stimulation. All at the same time.

I attempt to distill essence and pattern from the payback physical and mental world that I inhabit. I do that for two principle reasons. One is the intellectual stimulation of practical value of it and the other is the emotional sustenance that I find that gives me.

The learning for its own sake is done for what I end up with when I'm through with it, which is this greater sense of acceptable order and also for the way I feel while I'm doing it which is stimulating to me. I learn things which seem to be part and parcel of this larger framework of the world and life.

I will learn things that excite me. That make me think, "Wow, can you imagine that this is so, or might be so?"

I could be wrong and my wife who is a therapist would tell me I am wrong, that I am more at peace with myself in the world than I think I have any right to be. While at the same time I recognize that peace and tranquility are fragile. I do not believe that if I were not as inclined to learn and to study and to think as I do, that
payback

I would be that way. Maybe I would and maybe I wouldn't. That's what I think.

The longer term benefit of learning for its own sake is this emotional tranquility and the immediate benefits of actually being in the process are this timelessness, this transportation coupled with the nugget or moment of stimulation which is like fishing. You fish for hours and don't get a bite and you get tired and want to go home and then suddenly there is a nibble and you're good for another three or four hours. Study could be the same way.

This listing still followed Jason's structuring of the learning experience. It was prepared in the order he presented his experience to me and the statements were quotations from his protocol. At this point I began to superimpose my structure on his experience as I began to group and regroup the elements by their labels. This began the process of developing the themes of the experience.

All of the elements bearing one label were grouped together on a table bearing that theme title. As they were grouped I noticed that some themes appeared to have components. These components dealt with an aspect of the larger theme, but were not separate from the overall theme that titled the table. The table of the Emotion Theme is printed below in its preliminary form.

Table 3
The Process in Learning for the Sake of Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Element Statements</th>
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(I have a particular interest, by the way, in military history. That comes, I'm sure, from being a soldier and also because armies are distillations of their societies.)

That was the oldest military installation I've even been at. Looking out over the fields and trying to deal with it in my own mind. Why it was there? What it was there for? None of the fortification was left except the hill that I was on. It was just an old Roman camp.

There is a scene in Patton, remember Patton? The scene where he talks about the armies that have marched this very plain and says, "I was there. I was an eagle on the stanchions of the Romans." That's very easy for me to do. I can put it all in my brain. I'm not here now, I'm there then.

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just not taking it very far, but seeing how far you can take it.

DOES YOUR READING TIE TOGETHER?

Yes, in a way I suppose it does and in other ways of course it doesn't.

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And I'll go back and read *The Age of Napoleon* because Will and Ariel Durant have a theory that Napoleon was the brightest man who ever lived. And I want to just grab hold of that again. So no pattern.

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I seek a replacement almost at random. It will just, something will catch my eye.
Sometimes I will finish a book, and then go back to another book that I have bought but not gotten to yet. And I don't remember why I bought it when I bought it. When I read history, what happens when I do that is… I bring in new data, new information, but I also bring in a new atmosphere, a new environment, a new place in my brain. And if you can spend the time reading or if you can spend the time studying something with sufficient intensity, you can put enough concentration into what you're studying, then you lose touch with some of your own internal mental framework. I begin to experience whatever atmosphere, whatever place, whatever event the author of the book is trying to evoke.

I grouped the components within the theme tables and continued to think about the structure of this aspect of the analysis. When I began the analysis of the first two protocols I saw the themes as separate and equal. I mentally placed each theme in separate sections of an egg carton. As each significant element emerged from the protocol I popped it into the appropriate theme pocket in the carton. As the analysis progressed I rearranged the placement of some of the theme locations because it seemed more appropriate that they be placed close to each other. As I added the third and forth analysis to the process I saw that the structure was not linear, but global. There was no beginning point or ending point to the structure and no theme that was more important than another. The themes overlapped, interacted, and blended with one another. How Jason experiences time while in his learning experience related to how he felt about the experience and how he concentrated while learning. While I separated them to put them on different tables, in reality they were inseparable.

As the theme components emerged and were grouped together on each table I edited the redundant statements from the tables. Jason had said similar things about the same theme component several times while relating his experience to me. I read the statements supporting each component of each theme's elements for Jason's clearest and most
explicit statement about that component and selected that one to represent the others on the final theme table. When all the redundant component elements had been eliminated, the table was prepared. All the elements were listed and a brief description of the theme was written and added to the table. This description tied the components together and explained that particular theme of the learning experience in my words and took the experience, for the first time, from Jason's structure to my restructuring.

As I looked at one group of elements - those that related to his family's influence - I decided that they pertained to the time before this learning experience and were not a part of the learning experience itself. They are important in discussing why Jason learns for the sake of learning, but this is a study of the learning for the sake of learning experience itself, not the individual who does the learning. So those elements were no longer considered a part of the experience. Jason's theme tables are presented below.

Table 4
The Challenge of Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Element Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The learner experiences a challenge in learning. When he has met the first challenge he works on another he has found at another level.</td>
<td>It's a challenge. It was a challenge at one time because I just wasn't smart enough. It seemed to me that I wasn't capable of understanding. Now, it's more of a challenge because while I'm capable of understanding it better, it's the level of understanding that I want to achieve that is hard. One tries to achieve a real level of understanding of what you read.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5  
The Learner's Level of Concentration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Element Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The learner does not find it easy to concentrate when reading history, but once he has shut out the external stimuli he is &quot;transported&quot; into the event he is reading about.</td>
<td>Sometimes it's hard to evoke. The external stimuli, the external interruptions are very hard, particularly now with the family to get away from. It has become extraordinarily hard in this job. Transport. It is a sense of transport out of the here and now. When I read history.... I bring in new data, new information, but I also bring in a new atmosphere, a new environment, a new place in my brain. And if you can spend the time reading or if you can spend the time studying something with sufficient intensity, you can put enough concentration into what you're studying, then you lose touch with some of your own internal mental framework. I begin to experience whatever atmosphere, whatever place, whatever event the author of the book is trying to evoke.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6  
The Importance of Curiosity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Element Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The learner questions what can be learned from history. He looks for answers to his questions, he does not look for questions to ask, yet his readings lead to other readings.</td>
<td>But there is an absolutely fascinating book called The Cosmic Code, which is sort of an &quot;o.k. all you dummies out there, this is where theoretical physics is these days.&quot; What can we distill from history. What can I as an individual human being distill from these patterns that I am taught, that I have studies, that I as a lawyer have studies, that I as a student of history have studied? That I as a student of other areas of thought, (just so I won't be narrow, so I can be erudite at cocktail parties), what can I distill out of that. What is the essence and pattern? I gave [a book] to a friend for his birthday, but I picked it up myself because, and this is another way to say what I've been saying earlier, he says in his</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
essays introducing Metamagical Themas that it is, and the subtitle is, the quest for essence and patter. That is another way to say something about this matrix, this notion of context.

Table 7
The Ease of Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Element Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ease of learning history is not inherent in the subject, but lies in the learner's knowledge and interest in the subject. As he learns more he is able to tackle more difficult readings.</td>
<td>That's hard, but that's an area in which I'm conversant, and therefore it's easy. The other stuff is not. So it's really no pick between easy and hard, just some is and some isn't.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It used to be difficult for me because I just didn't understand it. I would put stuff down because it just didn't make any sense to me. I remember my friend Mike gave me Hegel's History of Philosophy years ago. I picked that thing up and I managed to get about forty pages into it. It is not one of your smoother tomes. I remember putting a pencil in the page where I closed the book up. And ten years later... I picked it up and I started reading it again. I couldn't remember why it had been hard the first time. It was difficult, it was not easy stuff, but it was much easier. Much easier to understand and to get a feel for where he was going.

Table 8
How It Feels While Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Element Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jason has positive feelings about his learning experience. He feels comfortable, tranquil, stimulated, and excited at the same time. The experience transports him out of the present into what he is learning about.</td>
<td>That inquiry to me is so exciting and so stimulating that I, as just a transient participant in this through whatever book I pick up at Crown or elsewhere, find it actually thrilling. It is actually a thrilling process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I feel transported out of the present. 

[I feel] comfort. Tranquillity. Stimulation. All at the same time. I will learn things that excite me. That make me think, "Wow, can you imagine that this is so, or might be so?"
It's almost like a need. It's almost like an addiction.

I feel that while, it is an intensely cerebral experience, that is to say that it's all happening inside my own mind, in a very large way it is not happening inside my own mind, in the same way that other thought does or does not happen.

You physically feel it, but mostly it's like a rattling in your brain, sort of a looseness in your brain. Where things don't hold together well. You don't know what you're thinking about. You're just thinking. Things are going on. You don't have any pattern to your thought. You don't feel right somehow.

Table 9
The Learning Experience is Infinite

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Element Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jason views his learning as something he will continue to do.</td>
<td>I think, &quot;yes, I'll do it forever.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10
The Goals within the Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Element Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jason's goals are global and deal with his development as a person.</td>
<td>Not in any kind of specific way. But I think that I have the goal, that to the extent it is within my reach, that I would like to be &quot;wise.&quot; I would like to be competent, and I would like to be interesting to my family and my friends, to the people I work with.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11
The Impediments of Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Element Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The obligations of daily living impinge on Jason's time for</td>
<td>Interruption. Lack of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The telephone. Family responsibility. Domestic chores. Just doing shopping. The need to manage in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another impediment to learning is his wife's wish to spend time with him. It has become much more difficult to accomplish it now and that's been the greatest single sense of loss, the greatest difficulty my wife and I have had and that we used to talk about. Her greatest sense of pleasure was being with me and my greatest sense of pleasure was in being alone. Which didn't lend itself to perfect harmony.

Table 12
How Learning is Reflected in the Learner's Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Element Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning was highly valued in Jason's family. He continues to value it.</td>
<td>I've always believed in the functional value of education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It was a family that honored learning. [My mother's] father was a teacher and principal and her mother was a teacher. And they encouraged me years ago. Little things. I remember standing on the porch of my grandparents' home in Birmingham and looking up at the stars and saying, &quot;I know all about the stars. I read a book.&quot; And so the next Christmas I got a nice telescope. Which I used. I don't think I got rid of it until about ten years ago.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13
How the Learner Relates to Others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Element Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Others&quot; come in two types: those who support the co-researcher's learning and those who do not. The former group is small and made up of &quot;soul mates&quot; who learn with Jason and give him books. Non-learners do not understand the need for solitude and relationships can be damaged.</td>
<td>I got the book Ever Since Darwin from a friend who knows my interest, and he and I are soul mates when it comes to this sort of thing. He just brought me the book one night. And it's hard to talk to anybody about it because, you know, there it is. Maybe that's it. So what? You think that friends will say, &quot;That's nice. How's the 'skins game?&quot; But I think I can enjoy the 'skins game just as much as anyone else and that's just as intellectually gratifying to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[It is] the greatest difficulty my wife and I have had and that we used to talk about. Her greatest sense</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme

The payback Jason experiences from reading history is not financial or "useful" except in being a "killer" at Trivial Pursuit. He divides the payback into long term and short term rewards. The long term come in the new perspective he gains of the world and the resultant emotional tranquility. Short term reward is found in the enjoyment of the experience.

Element Statements

So when I read history I do two things. I provide myself the surcease, I just, damn, turn certain gears in my brain and become an observer in the era, at the time. And I add to my sense of what the world has been and what the world will be.

I've always called that the "Aha" moment of knowledge. When all of a sudden something happens. It happened to me... I went, "Aha," because I had learned enough to begin to have understanding... Then suddenly the whole way you see the whole world changes.

I could be wrong and my wife, who is a therapist would tell me I am wrong, that I am more at peace with myself in the world than I think I have any right to be. While at the same time I recognize that peace and tranquility are fragile. The longer term benefit of learning for its own sake is this emotional tranquility and the immediate benefits of actually being in the process are this timelessness, this transportation coupled with the nugget or moment of stimulation which is like fishing. You fish for hours and don't get a bite and you get tired and want to go home and then suddenly there is a nibble and you're good for another three or four hours.

I really have to say that the specific points of knowledge that I pick up are useful in those rare circumstances when it presents itself, for example in playing Trivial Pursuit, at which I am a "killer."
Table 15
The Process of Learning for the Sake of Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Element Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The co-researcher learns by reading, watching television and visiting historical sites. He &quot;puts himself&quot; into the scenario to see the event from the characters' points of view. He has no plan for his study. His current reading usually will trigger the next book he will pick up. The enjoyment is found in the learning process itself, not in the knowledge possessed.</td>
<td>But I will read something and I will have this since of communion with the author. I will think, Hemingway didn't write this with this blind, large public in mind. He wrote it as a story teller. As if he were telling to somebody. And I'll pick up Hemingway and say, &quot;You know, there's a good chance that I'm the only person on earth that's reading Hemingway at this second. And the chances are real good that Hemingway is talking to me and to me only. So I sat there on this hill imagining that the &quot;barbarians&quot; were coming up the side of the hill. How would I have disposed my forces? The fun is in the doing of it. And seeing where you can take it and realizing that you're just not taking it very far, but seeing how far you can take it. Reading I do will trigger interest in other reading. That's true. But it's not something I plan. I've never had a program of study. That wouldn't be any fun. I don't remember the details. I remember the broad brush strokes. I don't remember the names of everyone. I used to come home from work and read 'til midnight. I can't do that anymore. I always have at least one working book and frequently three or four. Right now I probably have four next to my bed. I physically feel it. It doesn't always happen, but when it's at its peak I physically feel it. And I put myself in the place not simply of the principal actor. Sometimes when I will read something it will trigger an interest in following up on that issue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16  
The Reasons for Learning  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Element Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The learner reads history for pleasure and to escape the &quot;dailyness&quot; of life. He considers himself a compulsive history student and a relentless self-improver. The knowledge gives him a place to stand in time and the process provides a surcease for his stress. Learning is the &quot;fix&quot; for his addiction.</td>
<td>It is a combination of both analytical and intellectual, but principally emotional, reasons that generate what I do. To some extent I am a relentless self-improver. That gets me to one of the reasons that I study for the sake of its self. I am a compulsive history student. You name it, the period is of no concern to me, the subject matter is of no concern to me. And I do learn and satisfy my intellectual curiosities and I satisfy a deeper more personal need. I take extraordinary personal emotional comfort in the notion that time is a continuum. For me that's a way to deal with very, very high levels of stress under which I think I often operate, and I'm one of those people that thrives on stress. It is done for the pure pleasure of it. It is a wonderful way to escape the... I have always loved the French phrase &quot;la vie quotidienne&quot; that means daily life, dailyness. Thomas Jefferson's statement that the finest form of relaxation is a change in the form of endeavor. So what I would do is I would read law for six to eight hours a day, and then I'd pick up a science or a history book and I would find that I was wholly refreshed. It's almost like a need. It's almost like an addiction. I don't use it outside myself a great deal at all. I really have to say that the specific points of knowledge that I pick up are useful to those rare circumstances when it presents itself, for example in playing Trivial Pursuit, at which I'm a killer. But beyond that it's just what it does to make you who you are. It is all a part of who you are, and if that is socially pleasing or otherwise, it just is. And so I don't do any of this with conscious effort toward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
don't do any of this with conscious effort toward being better at cocktail parties, although what makes you socially graceful at cocktail parties is certainly useful. I do it because I love it, and it just happens to be something that works out.

Table 17
The Learner's View of Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Element Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The learner views time in a different way. Rather than being conscious of time passing and what that means to him, he is not aware of its passage. It seems to move slowly and he is not anxious about its passage.</td>
<td>You know that time still is and that time is moving on, but so much of the rest of your life you spend conscious of the passage of time and conscious of the implications of the passage of time for doing whatever you have to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time slows. I'm unaware of the passage of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When I study or read, when I immerse myself behind that closed door or wear the earphones the anxiety about time is gone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When I get immersed in something, pleaurably immersed in it, that concern ceases. It's like time stands still for the period in which I am able to concentrate and I'm not anxious about time. I'm not anxious about what next to do or anxious about what came before. I would say that sometimes you actually seem to float. The feeling is one of floating. That's both the emotional sense one has when one is doing it and also with respect to time. You're floating along. It's like you're in a viscous liquid.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Development of Jason's Individual Description

With the tables before me I was ready to begin to develop the description of Jason's experience of learning for the sake of learning. I had been enmeshed in it since the beginning of the analysis, so, for me, the tables were just an orderly presentation of the themes of the experience. Finding a beginning of the experience was the most
difficult part of the development of the description. I knew what it was like, but there really wasn't a formal beginning. I started with the aspect that was different from the other descriptions so far - the fact that Jason had been studying history for many years. From there I went to the reward he found in the learning. This description developed from the tables using Jason's statements to augment my explanation. It was important to support my statements with quotations from his protocol so that the reader could see how the case was built. Although I intuited this analysis - the elements and themes - they were not imagined or constructed. The description was developed from the actual experience Jason had related to me. The quotations included in the description did not need to be attributed "he said" since it was obvious who was being quoted and the narration flowed more smoothly. The description of Jason's experience of learning for the sake of learning is presented below.

"Reading History"

While other co-researchers spoke of recent learning experiences, Jason discussed his long-standing study of history. He has been a student of history since childhood and has made time for it throughout his life - as an undergraduate, in Vietnam, during law school and now, while a government attorney. He has continued this long term learning because he finds it rewarding.

The reward comes from two aspects of the experience: how he feels while learning, and what he gets after the learning. Learning is an enjoyable experience for him. While reading he leaves the present and is "transported" to the place and time he is reading about and becomes a participant in the event. This process, anomalously, brings him both tranquility and stimulation. "Inquiry to me is so exciting and so stimulating that I, as just a transient participant in this through whatever book I pick up... find it actually thrilling."

The second payback comes after the immediate experience concludes. When we look beyond the public "usefulness" of the knowledge helping him become a killer at Trivial Pursuit, two levels of reward are present--short and long term. The short term payback is in the present enjoyment he finds in the learning experience. "This process of learning for its own sake is not just emotionally gratifying and calming, it's also exciting." The long term rewards come in the new perspective he gains of the world, and a resultant emotional tranquility. "All of a sudden something happens. It happened to me... I went,
'Aha!' because I had learned enough to begin to have understanding... Then suddenly the whole way you see the whole world changes." "The knowledge provides a framework within which to find order in chaos, and by which to guide practical and moral choice" for him.

He does not have a learning plan. He picks up books that interest him, and this initial reading may send him to other books on the same subject for additional information to fill in the gaps left by the first book. He often goes back and rereads portions of books he has read before to refresh his memory. "I don't want to read just one thing because I don't remember a lot... I don't think I remember a great deal of what I read. So I have to redo it."

While reading he puts himself in the place of the people he is reading about. He tries to understand why they acted as they did. "I sat there on this hill imagining that the barbarians were coming up the side of the hill. How would I have disposed my forces?" He emphasizes that the primary enjoyment comes not from amassing all this information, and retaining it in his head, but in the searching for the data, in finding out some thing new. "The fun is in the doing of it, and seeing where you can take it, and realizing, alas, that you're not taking it very far."

Other people impact on Jason's learning. A small group of people support his activities by learning, sharing books and visiting historical places with him. "I got the book... from a friend who knows my interest. He and I are soul mates when it comes to this sort of thing." It is difficult to communicate with non-learners about what he finds exciting. They do not understand what he is trying to say. "It's hard to talk to anybody about it because so few share the almost mystical experience. Maybe that's it, that it is mystical and essentially a non-cognitive way of experiencing a wholly cognitive process."

Learning also affects his relationship with people he is close to. He prefers the solitude of study and that impacts on his relationship with his wife. "Her greatest sense of pleasure is being with me and mine is in being alone. We have succeeded in our marriage at the cost of compromise."

Time is felt differently by Jason when he is learning. Rather than being rushed, and having time fly by as it does in the rest of his life, he becomes unaware of the passage of time. His anxiety about the lack of time to do all that he must do disintegrates. "It's like time stands still... sometimes you actually seem to float."

When Jason runs into difficulty understanding, he does not regard it as failure as he might if he is preparing to try a case in court. "This is an intensely private experience. I am not tested. There is no risk of public humiliation." He doesn't often find the material difficult, but when he does he puts it aside to pick up later and pursues some other reading in the meantime. "I remember putting a pencil in the page when I closed [The History of Philosophy] up. And ten years later... I picked it up and... I couldn't remember why it had been hard the first time."
This learning has been going on for a long time. Jason does not see it ending, but rather as something that he will continue to do. "I think, 'Yes, I'll do it forever'." It is something that leads him on. "Reading I do will trigger interest in other reading.... It's not something I plan." "It is an addiction, never satiated, not satiable, but completely compelling.... Without the experience of learning, I would be lost."

The Validation of Jason's Individual Description

After Jason's description was written it was sent to him for validation. He, as the individual who experienced this phenomenon, was asked to review the results of my analysis and tell me if I had interpreted his experience correctly. After he had validated the description by suggesting editorial changes and adding "it is an 'addiction,' never satiated, not satiable, but completely compelling" I began the same process of analysis with protocol number five and continued through protocol number ten.

The Co-researchers' Individual Descriptions

Vanya

To aid the reader in understanding the development of the fundamental description from the individual descriptions, a short summary of each co-researcher's analysis and the resultant individual description is presented here. Vanya was the first co-researcher I interviewed. He is a 44-year old male working full time on a doctorate in counseling at a local university. His learning for the sake of learning experience was to learn Japanese, which he began at the University of Wurtzburg in Germany. The initial themes that emerged from his protocol were his "curiosity," "concentration," "emotions," and the "learning process." He presented the latter theme of the phenomenon in one sentence, although I didn't realize it until I had read more protocols, when he said, 'It's the 'climbing,' the 'hunt,' the experience that is important." This statement was to be repeated in many of the following protocols. His joy and fun with learning were obvious throughout the interview. This ability to hear Vanya's voice inflection and to see his
facial expressions were an additional advantage of using taped interviews rather than co-researcher written protocols. Some additional themes that were not so dominate were the "challenge" within the experience, the infiniteness of the experience, the roles of others, the goals within the experience, the reasons for learning and the payback for learning. How learning was reflected in Vanya's life was a theme that was later discarded after additional protocols were analyzed.

"Learning Japanese"

Although the preconditions for learning for the sake of learning might appear to be serendipitous, that Vanya just "happened" to find a Japanese course, on closer examination we see an area of his life developing a vacuum. "I was doing pretty much the same thing [at work] so I had more time and energy." Just as "nature abhors a vacuum," Vanya felt a need to do something with the time. This awakened his long standing but dormant interest in Japanese and led him to decide "I will do it."

It is the experience of learning Japanese that is important to Vanya. "It's the journey rather than the getting to the destination" - not in "how much" Japanese is learned, but how the process is experienced. "I enjoy the process of learning something, of mastering something. Maybe mastering isn't the right word. I'm far from mastering these things, but acquiring some knowledge." The learning is viewed as something that the learner wants to learn ("I'm freely doing it and for no other reason than itself."), not as something he has to learn ("Nobody gives a good God damn whether I ever learn Japanese.").

While other learning experiences may be viewed as odious, this learning is experienced as "an intellectual orgasm..." even as others in his life say "You're crazy. Why would you [learn Japanese] when you can drink beer and barbecue?"

Fellow learners are viewed as travelers on the same journey. Friendships develop as commonalities are perceived. "We did things other than the Japanese. He was more like me. Wonder of wonders." Some of the fellow learners felt the same way about learning Japanese, he could "understand what I was doing there."

The learner experiences the world differently when learning than when doing other things. Time is perceived differently, he is "not conscious of the passage of time." Rather than begrudging the time, time is made joyfully for learning as Vanya "fights for time to do this." Significant differences exist between traditional learning and learning for the sake of learning. In the
latter case Vanya constructs his own goals and imposes them upon himself, unlike a traditional course where the learning objectives are determined by the teacher. "The challenge increases. The more I learn the more I realize the complexities of the language, how much is there."

A second major difference is that in learning for the sake of learning a problem is not viewed as something to be endured, but a challenge to be met. The experience is enjoyed "regardless of the difficulty." Interestingly enough, Vanya's experience did not encompass failure. "I just always was enjoying it... even when we didn't know the word or had it wrong." The difficulty is neither an obstacle to nor a cause of his enjoyment, it is irrelevant to the pleasure of this experience. This is in direct contrast to the feeling of a student who is trying to learn vocabulary for an exam where failure is measured by a certain number of words forgotten.

While the specific course ended, the experience of learning for the sake of learning continued for Vanya. Rather it continues to unfold, exposing other areas to be explored as Vanya becomes "painfully aware of how much more there is." He started learning other aspects of Japanese culture and moreover took that same learning attitude into other studies.

In essence, by learning, Vanya becomes a learner. The experience impacts on his whole life. "It seems stimulating and sedative at the same time." The implication of the learning is that Vanya expands his awareness into wider, adjacent areas. "I got real interested in Oriental religion, philosophy and literature. I got books and books on Japanese Haiku poetry, and different kinds of poetry."

At another level, Vanya perceived a change in himself, "One of the things that I picked up from studying their culture is, maybe, to be more now, present and process oriented rather than goal oriented." This "present and process" orientation can be see in his philosophy. "It's a philosophical tenet of mine to do what brings me pleasure. And... while I'm in it I'm going with the flow."

Thomas

While Vanya's protocol was being prepared and analyzed I was beginning the interview process with Thomas and Sara. Thomas is a 47-year old, upper level government administrator. He, too, learned a language - Spanish - for the sake of learning. In addition to the themes that were in Vanya's experience, Thomas spoke about the ease and difficulty of learning Spanish. When this theme surfaced I returned to Vanya's protocol and saw elements that referred to the ease and difficulty theme, but he did not
speak about the "commitment" as Thomas had. Although the two protocols had been analyzed separately, I was seeing threads linking the themes in the experiences. The reader will see the beginnings of those themes when reading Thomas' experience of learning Spanish, having already read Vanya's and Jason's individual descriptions.

"Learning Spanish"

Thomas's experience of learning Spanish began in a way that appears "lucky" to an observer. He accepted a job with a new company and "found" that they offered an on-duty Spanish class to employees. Actually, this course was not something he stumbled upon, but one he had been actively seeking for six months. "I had contacted the community college looking to start a course, but finding none that matched my schedule, I was somewhat frustrated." His finding this on duty Spanish class was a outgrowth of his quiescent attraction toward foreign languages.

This learning is something that Thomas wants to do, not something he is directed to do by an outside force. He is "called" to do this by something within himself; as he says, "education is an addiction." He learns for the same reason Sir Edmund Hillary climbs mountains: "because it's there." Thomas enjoys learning Spanish. He is learning "not because it is job related nor an academic requirement...but for the fun of it." This is in clear distinction to other experiences that people have that are job related, short term or done for other reasons. For Thomas, learning Spanish is "purely an uncomplicated, self-initiated, self-sustaining challenge."

Others inhabit his learning world as fellow learners who are offered help in class, if needed, or after class met with "a few words in Spanish, a few in English, and a lot of laughter." He works with his son who is taking Spanish in high school. "I get better at Spanish if I'm able to teach it."

Learning Spanish is experienced as a low pressure activity. "Nothing's at stake. Nobody else's life is involved." Frustration or learning difficulties were taken in stride. "We muddled along and usually got it under control... setbacks were inconsequential." Engaging in this experience changes the learner's world in several aspects. When engaged in learning time moves differently than in his daily world. Time passes quickly as the learner becomes absorbed with the subject. "The Spanish class itself is a very fast hour." This is in clear distinction from studying something we don't want to learn, when an hour of study seems like four or five hours and we check the clock to make sure the hands are moving. In the learning for the sake of learning experience, time disappears. It flows out as the learner becomes
immersed in his learning. "I can sit down and spend hours and hours without feeling particularly distressed or tired."

Time is also a factor in impediments that keep the learner from engaging in the learning activity. "How many things are getting in the way of my learning process? The answer to that is: A great many," but he admits that "is a copout. I could have sat down and spent 15 or 20 minutes learning."

There is a sense of satisfaction that comes in immersing oneself totally in the subject matter unlike goal directed learning, in which a sense of threat can predominate. ("Will I learn the material? Will I get a good grade? Will I be able to perform the task successfully?") The experience of learning for the sake of learning is satisfying exactly because no threat is present. "I could afford to make mistakes." As a result, the experience is exhilarating, enjoyable, and interesting. The Spanish class "was a Christmas bonus."

Thomas regards this learning as something he does for himself. He is learning to please himself, to satisfy ^his^ curiosity. The reward is personal. He regards the experience as "a. selfish, b. a private, inner satisfaction, and c. having no external, social impetus." Any additional payoff for the learning, in his job or his social life, is an unanticipated benefit.

In one sense, learning for the sake of learning does not end. Thomas plans "to pursue the study of Spanish indefinitely." In a more pragmatic sense, however, it does. Each session comes to an end as the person leaves his studying and returns to his everyday existence. This can happen through interruption or when other responsibilities intrude on the learning sessions and halt them for a period. "I have job-driven objectives...and they take away from some of my learning time" Sometimes the "job-driven objectives" have interfered with learning for several weeks, but the Thomas regards this halt as "temporary." Feelings of frustration and annoyance surface when learning is interrupted. "I find [being away from studying Spanish] kind of annoying" and "it's a little bit frustrating not to be able to study." In any case, he leaves with the knowledge that this special world of learning for the sake of learning will call him back to it and he will again immerse himself in the experience. This continuation is based on the feeling of infiniteness of the experience. The learner could never learn everything but if he could, "then I would be challenged to sustain my skill." He believes "there aren't any ultimates" when it comes to learning, there is always something more to learn. The challenge of learning exists for the length of the learning and maybe beyond. It is like getting "a hole in one on the golf course or [bowling) a 300 game, you try to do that the next time and you realize that the challenge is still there."

Sara

Sara was interviewed next. She is a 40-year old, executive with a large automobile company. The themes that emerged from her protocol followed those in Vanya and
Thomas' protocols. In addition to referring to the challenge and feelings about learning, she also spoke about the ease of learning and how important her curiosity was to the experience. Her experience in a class of women learning auto mechanics introduced another theme, "the learning atmosphere." She said, "It wasn't embarrassing to admit you didn't know anything. It wasn't embarrassing to ask a question. It was fun. And we helped each other... It was the environment, the camaraderie." This statement belonged in the "others" theme, but there was also another dimension to it. It encompassed how she and others formed a positive learning environment. She said that "It was like we all got on the same wave length and here for once were a group of women, that we all had the same common interest, and it was so exciting to be around other people that felt the same way." These statements became the core of the "learning atmosphere" theme, and I went back to Vanya and Thomas' protocols to see if they had referred to anything similar. Both had made statements that related to the learning atmosphere in their classes. Thomas felt that he "could afford to make mistakes" in class and that it "was not competitive." Vanya stated that the professor "made us all feel pretty relaxed, even when we said it totally wrong." So I established this theme in these two experiences.

"Learning Auto Mechanics"

The initial pre-conditions for learning about car mechanics included two factors. The first was an unforeseen precipitating incident--Sara received a second hand car as a gift. She found her curiosity piqued while driving it and assuming responsibility for it, although it was in good condition and did not need repair "I didn't know enough to know what was costly and what was really important." This curiosity was not directed from herself outward--it is not as if she said, "I wonder what I can learn about today?" It came almost as if by surprise--the car was attractive to her--it attracted her curiosity.

The car's mystery was not sufficient, however, for Sara to learn more about it. She also needed to believe that it was possible to do so. This possibility for Sara surfaced when she noticed a course description from a community college brochure. Before seeing this description, without ever
consciously realizing it, learning auto mechanics did not seem like a possibility for her as a woman of the 50's. In retrospect, she recalled scoring high on mechanics and accounting in high school abilities tests, but "did not view it as a real possibility." It is important to realize, however, that without an attraction, she wouldn't have "happened to" notice the course description. It is the combination of the two incidents that makes learning a possibility.

The acquisition of car mechanic skills was not important per se. The importance lay in "experiencing" the process. Sara experienced learning car mechanics as not only something she wanted to do, but as something that there was time to do. If time had to be made (i.e., a long drive or cancelling other things), this was experienced as a "want to" rather than a "have to". She never "had to" learn car mechanics. She never "didn't have time" to learn car mechanics. Time appeared—even if other things had to give. "I was there by choice. A two hour drive, total time, to get there and that was after I had worked physically hard for eight hours outside." The learning experience was eagerly anticipated. "I just couldn't wait to get there."

The way the learner feels while learning appears to impact on both the learner and the experience. Her feelings while in the experience were very positive. "[I felt] totally happy. Totally happy in every way, physically, mentally. You might call it a high on happiness. It was a thorough, total, wonderful feeling."

Her relationships with fellow learners increased these good feelings. "It was like we all got on the same wave-length and here for once were a group of women that all had the same common interest, and it was so exciting to be around other people that felt the same way." The others helped to provide an encouraging learning environment. "It wasn't embarrassing to admit you didn't know anything. It wasn't embarrassing to ask a question. It was fun. And we helped each other. We learned as individuals and we learned together. It was the environment, the camaraderie."

While engaging in this learning experience, Sara's world was changed in several ways. For instance, time was experienced in a new way. It passed more quickly than it does in the everyday world. Time "flew. There was never enough time."

It did not drag as it does when we are studying something we don't want to study. The control belonged to the student, not to others as it may in a work situation. "You have to get out so many jobs in a day."

The knowledge that is not possessed is not viewed as an enemy to be conquered, but as something that draws her. The challenge of this experience was in the exploration of the unknown. "The challenge never decreased. Because it was always learning something new... in some ways [the challenge] was greater." The frustration and difficulty encountered were not viewed as discouraging in the experience as quite often happens to us when we learn something new. Instead, in this experience, these were viewed as normal components of the learning experience. Difficulties are interpreted as challenges in the experience. Sara felt "frustrated when I couldn't do something, but
that's part of learning it." The physical difficulties of learning auto mechanics were overlooked. "It was brutally cold because the building really didn't have heat... it didn't really make any difference."

The experience of learning for the sake of learning is not one that has a definite end. Rather, it expands so as to encompass greater areas of the Sara's whole life. As she succeeds in learning more about cars, she feels more competent in general. "I felt that secure after taking that class that I knew I could hold my own and succeed in automotive school." This feeling of competence flows over to her whole life. "It's one more little step in my development as a person and... once you realize that, 'Hey, you can do it' your potential is unlimited."

This learning experience also had an unanticipated instrumental effect. Sara made a career change into a male dominated field--she trained for and became a car mechanic. "I'm in a job now that women traditionally don't do and I have no hesitation and I have no problems doing the job, but before I ever took those courses I could never have done it." If Sara had gone into the initial courses for this purpose this would not have been learning for the sake of learning. The fact, however, that she derived unanticipated instrumental benefits does not detract from the fact that this was, in fact, learning for the sake of learning. "At the time I didn't plan that at all. I found a great love and then I was good at it and it just kind of kept leading me on."

Amanda

Amanda's interview and analysis followed Jason's. It was during this analysis of this mid-seventy-year old, retired teacher's interview that I became aware of the statements that were almost the same. "I think learning is fun" and "it's the acquiring of it that is exciting" were statements that sounded familiar. When I checked previous protocols I found Vanya had said "It's fun to be able to decipher it" and "it's the climbing, the hunt in the experience that is important." Sara had said "it was fun." I used this sensitivity to the similarity of word phrases when I analyzed the next protocols. Amanda stated bluntly a theme that I thought was new to the experience when she said, "I was doing it simply for me. Well, that's a selfish attitude, isn't it? It was simply a desire to do something that I wanted to do." I had originally put this element into the "reasons for learning" theme, but I wondered if "selfishness" wasn't a theme in itself. I found direct statements relating to it in two of the previous four protocols.
Thomas had said that learning for fun is "(a) selfish, (b) a private inner satisfaction, and (c) has no external, social impetus." Vanya had said "I study Japanese when I decide I'm going to take some time for me to do something just for me and not for any other reason." I decided to see if this theme continued to appear in the rest of the protocols and added it to the interview guide sheet. After completing the tables of Amanda's experience of learning about the theatre I prepared the description of her experience.

"Studying the Theatre"

Learning for the sake of learning occurred for Amanda when the right combination - the what, the when and the how much - occurred in her life. A long abiding curiosity about theatre combined with a new found freedom from family obligations and information about free tuition gave Amanda a chance to pursue a new learning activity. It is significant to note that none of these elements alone would have been enough to lead her into this learning experience. Together they provided the necessary preconditions for her learning to begin. She originally enrolled to audit, but felt like a second class citizen. Her attitude changed when she learned about free tuition for senior citizens. "When I found out that you could get tuition free and credit if you were poor enough I went back in the office to qualify," Changing the subject would have changed the experience. "I looked at accounting. I would go out of my mind if I had a row of figures to work with." She wanted to do more than keep herself busy, she wanted to learn about something she cared about.

The theatre was something she wanted to learn about, and she wanted to experience the learning herself. "You try until you get a sound and you know [when it is right].... That was really a great experience--sound design, not to watch it being done, but to do it. He did it and I watched and that was no fun." She enjoyed the learning: "I think learning is fun," and experienced challenges in accomplishing many of the assignments. Some of the challenges were caused by her age. When the class learned to do Restoration curtsies she found herself stuck 12 inches from the floor and had to admit, "There aren't enough muscles to get me up." Amanda felt it was necessary to accomplish the tasks her classmates completed. "If it kills me I will do that curtsy. You can't pass me if I can't do what everybody else does."

Besides challenging herself to do what her classmates did, Amanda experienced others in the learning activity as people to teach or people to learn from. Her professors gave her information and guided her learning. Her fellow students were people she could teach. "There was so much that was of such interest that I didn't know. And believe me, if I didn't, none of the rest of the kids in class did, either. And then I could bring in all this stuff that was great for all of us."
Just as she experienced others differently, ordinary things such as time and problems were experienced differently while she was learning. Time was different. She would spend hours preparing for class or doing research and discover that time had flown by. "I didn't know that I had taken half a night to [write] it."

She experienced problems as things that could be and would be overcome. While the experience may have its frustrations ("Frustrating! I was in tears!") working through the difficulties changes the emotion to "exhilarating and you're using something you didn't have two months before. You acquired something."

This classroom experience ended when Amanda had completed all the courses she wanted and felt she was being pushed. "When they began talking in terms of a degree they lost me, because I'm not about to really drive myself." She made a learning transition from theater to art. "I had done everything... There was nothing I wanted to do." She continues her learning by attending the theatre. "My main interest is theatre and I will never know what I want to know about it." She has also picked up a quiescent interest--art. "I thought, great, I'll go to the Corcoran. I'll get into the art side."

Even after leaving the University, the theatre experience has provided her with unplanned tangible rewards for her learning. She has had theatre jobs. "Can you believe that I do television? It never occurred to me that I would and that this would ever lead to anything." But her learning was not predicated on these jobs. She learned because she was curious. "I was so fascinated." She also used a course to work through a personal problem. "Think of the time it would have taken me to work with a professional to work this problem through." The experience also enriched her self-image. She increased her self understanding. "I expanded my understanding of what I could do."

Mary

The next interview was conducted with the woman who provided the example of learning for the sake of learning while I was growing up. As the mother of my childhood best friend, I had watched her continue to learn and study when "she didn't have to." Although Mary had been learning for over 40 years, an invitation to parents from the local mid-western high school to join the students in their regular class piqued her curiosity. When assured that grandparents were included she enrolled in astronomy. Her experience paralleled the previous co-researchers' experiences. I found no new themes emerging from her protocol, just reinforcement of those I had already, found. Her curiosity and awareness of the continuity of her learning were her most significant themes. She had difficulty speaking only about astronomy. She would refer back to
previous learning twenty or more years ago and it's effect on her present learning. She also thought about what her present learning was leading toward - not practical application but new learning opportunities. "You never would finish [astronomy.] It's over a year since I took it and the newspapers are filled with new advances, new knowledge I'm clipping."

Mary experienced no external payback for this learning. She did not accumulate reserve military qualifications as Thomas had or short term employment in television commercials as Amanda had. This discrepancy caused me to wonder if the paybacks were a necessary theme for this phenomenon. While paybacks had been present in the earlier protocol analysis, the co-researchers had stated that they were not the reason for or important to the learning. Paybacks just occurred during or after the learning. I continued to watch the presence of paybacks emerge from other protocols and I continued to develope that theme, but I also weighed it carefully so that at the conclusion of analysis I felt that external paybacks were not necessary for the phenomenon to occur. The internal paybacks of increased knowledge and better self-image were integral parts of the experience.

"Studying Astronomy"

Mary has been learning for the past forty years. She began with The Great Books program when her older children entered school, continued by learning about the government and world affairs with the League of Women Voters and recently took a course in astronomy. While she regards most of these activities as learning for the sake of learning, she selected her astronomy course as the one to explore.

For Mary learning is a continuous activity. Her interest in astronomy began years ago when she took a book, flashlight and glasses down to the lake shore to view the stars and "the wind came along and blew the book into the lake. That was the end of my first course in astronomy." While that ended her "first course" it did not end her learning. She continued her learning about the sky by reading and watching television until she saw an announcement for an astronomy course at the local high school. This out-of-
the-blue opportunity would not have been noticed if she had not been curious about the stars.

Learning pervades Mary's life. "It's such a natural function. Learning is, to me, a lifelong affair." She learns because her curiosity must be satisfied. Her curiosity arises as she reads for pleasure. Reading in one area leads her to one or several areas that she wants to know more about. Astronomy "was my original black hole because I didn't understand." She began her study by reading popular science books and decided, when she saw a course offered, attending a class would be helpful.

Curiosity is the impetus to her learning. "I read for pleasure and if you read for pleasure your curiosity will take you into astronomy or whatever, world affairs." While her interest in astronomy developed several years ago from her reading, it was only last year that she had the opportunity to take an astronomy course. "I didn't plan to go and take that course in astronomy. I just happened to catch it in the newspaper." If she hadn't been curious about astronomy she would probably not have noticed the announcement. The course provided the possibility for further study and her curiosity was the precipitating incident.

Returning to a high school class after more than 50 years brought Mary into a new learning environment. She was not uncomfortable with students her grandson's age.

Learning is a continuous experience for Mary. She has found that "you learn so much by the time you're through [learning] that it's led you to something else." She does not end the first learning experience when she begins another. It is more like one experience emerges, and others submerge just below the surface, for a time. The submerged interest is not dormant, merely secondary. While Mary was studying astronomy she continued to collect, read and file material about the middle east, Star Wars, and Resolving Crisis in International Law.

Learning is a pleasant exercise for Mary. She enjoys the experience. It is fun. "I wouldn't do it otherwise. I have never done any of these things without almost euphoria." Her reward is not only in the joy she gets from the experience but in the fulfillment she finds in learning. The actual learning is not hard. While some things are difficult, her love and enjoyment of it prevent her from viewing it as hard. "I love what I'm doing so it isn't hard work."

Time moves quickly while she is learning, it does not drag as when doing a boring chore. "The whole semester moved like fire, fast!"

She feels that her learning difficulties center in two areas: her physical and mental capabilities. The physical impediments are set by her aging body. She isn't as agile and her eyes don't adjust to the dark as quickly as they used to. She also found it took "longer to dredge up things" from her memory.
and that her math background was weak. "I said I'd have to go back to third grade and start math all over."

Mary interacts with others as students and non-students. Her fellow students didn't interact much with her or the teacher in class. They didn't ask questions. "It got so I could see [the teacher] looking in my direction once in awhile hoping I'd start things because they just sat there." Members of her family provided technical assistance and company. Her grandsons tutored her in the math necessary to solve her astronomy problems and one granddaughter sat with her when she did her star gazing homework. Outside her small support group she reported, "I didn't know many people that wanted to talk to me about it."

Mary began this study on her own, selecting books and articles to read and television programs to watch. She went down to the lake to view the stars. When a course was offered she enrolled because she thought, "This course will help me understand." After the course she continued the learning on her own. She continued to read, collected learning materials: a sky chart, a celestial globe, and a plotter for following Halley's Comet. "I wanted things in the house that I could touch to answer a few questions. The sky changes all the time." The process itself is important to Mary. "I feel I have to learn it myself and not just accept pi squared or whatever."

Michael

Michael, a 50-year old school administrator with a doctorate in education, studied the history of education for the sake of learning. The previous learners had expressed passion when they spoke about their learning experiences. Michael found the learning experience "intellectual fun. It's like doing an acrostic. It gives you a kind of intellectual satisfaction. I don't think you would equate it with a night out on the town." Vanya, on the other hand, said "it's a high most of the time." He described it as "an intellectual orgasm." Thomas had said, "So it was an upper, generally, through the course." Michael's digression was explained when he told me that his son called him the "Tom Landry" of education, a low-key, unemotional person. His protocol was the best explanation of the previously identified theme "the infiniteness of the experience." He explained how he moved from subject to subject and where he thought he was going next. "What this interest has sparked me to do is now I want to read more in anthropology. I want
to know how people lived, actually lived during these times. What was a typical day like?

"Reading History"

Reading education history, Michael's experience of learning for the sake of learning, grew out of an instrumental learning experience, a Philosophy of Education course, which was a requirement for his EdD. In the midst of this he became curious about how education had evolved. He is learning just to satisfy this curiosity. As he explained, "It certainly will neither advance me professionally nor help me toward any immediate reward that I can think of."

The reward, for him, is not material. Michael's payback comes in the personal arena. His learning increases his personal growth, self confidence and intellectual understanding. "It gives me assurance and confidence and adds to my ego strength." The feeling of empowerment he receives from the experience is a tremendous incentive to continue this learning. It is not the reason he learns, but a very important side effect of the experience. This knowledge gives him a new perspective on history. That "all of history, all of time is a seamless, unbroken fabric and I am a part of this history."

The structure of this experience had several interesting elements. A vital element is the spontaneity of the experience. He didn't have a plan. He went where his curiosity took him. "It was simply a matter of decisions made at certain decision points." He has been reading backwards through the history of education. After completing a book he would wonder what happened before that time and search for a book on the earlier time or a different place. "I said, 'My God, what were they doing in China? How did they educate children in China?'" and he began to find out. He sees this curiosity as leading him on into this infinite learning. He does not see this experience ending even if he moves into another area for a while. "I'll come back to it again, so I don't think it will ever end." His curiosity has begun to spread beyond education into anthropology. Now he wonders not only about how man was educated in earlier years but how he lived.

Others are present during this learning in two ways: as supporters for his learning and as impediments to the learning. Supporters encourage his learning and discuss it with him. They share their learning experiences with him. "She's never bored by anything that I say to her. She's always interested." The impediments are caused by people who interrupt his studying. "There are times when I'm involved in reading and my son will come into my den... and he will want to talk."

One other impediment to learning is outside demands on his time. Michael's job and the demands of daily living take away from the time that he would like to spend learning. "Having a job that requires you to be at certain places at certain times" allows him "only a limited amount of time" for learning.
Michael's learning world is different from his everyday world in several respects. He experiences time and failure differently. Time moves quickly when Michael is learning. It "is absolutely fleeting. There is never enough." His study of the history of education does not have failure as a possibility. Since there was nothing he was trying to accomplish, no predetermined end planned, there is no way not to succeed. "I don't think I've experienced failure, but it's because, by definition, failure is not accomplishing something and I wasn't really trying to accomplish anything except to know more than I did."

Michael regards his learning about the history of education as a continuing process. He is constantly finding new areas that are voids in his knowledge. It is "like the black hole that just keeps opening up and you realize that you will never get to the end of it." As he looks ahead he sees his interest growing to encompass other learning--he wants to read anthropology. "I want to know how people lived... What a typical day was like." If he pursues the new interest in anthropology he knows he will eventually return to studying the history of education. "I'll stay interested in something for five years then I will discontinue it. I'll get busy with something else and I might be busy for two years, but I'll come back to it again, so I don't think it will ever end." He will continue to learn because "every time I learn something it just reminds me how much more I've got to learn."

Corey

Corey, a 40-year old part-time second grade teacher, had the most eclectic learning experiences of the ten co-researchers. When previous co-researchers had spoken of different learning topics, the topics had been integrated to the primary learning experience they were discussing. Vanya spoke about learning "Kanji" (picture writing), Haiku, and Japanese history and philosophy, but these related closely to learning the Japanese language. It was difficult to keep Corey on one subject because, although her learning subjects varied greatly, she saw a pattern as she moved from Zen to near-death experiences to physics. We centered on physics as the primary learning experience, but other topics were discussed. Her protocol affirmed the themes that had emerged in the previous interviews. One new one - "Mistakes while learning" - emerged as a theme in her protocol. She stated that she believes "that there are no mistakes, that everything serves a purpose - to learn from it." At this point in the analysis I was consciously
aware of the need to "bracket my natural attitude" toward these protocols. I had read enough of them and had seen such similarities that I made a conscious effort to view each new protocol with new eyes so that the previous analyses would not color this analysis.

Corey was the only learner to have to deal with a great deal of negative comments about her learning. Other learners had been subject to indifference or some negative comments or helpful fellow learners. This variation in degree led me to wonder if others were really a necessity to the phenomenon or something that made the experience more or less fun. The question of the importance of goals to this learning experience surfaced at this time also. I looked back at previous analyses and saw that the goals the co-researchers listed detailed specific learning tasks to accomplish, such as, read this book or memorize this vocabulary. But they also stated that these goals weren't important. I felt that these goals were determined retrospectively, not before the learning experience began. I continued to label these elements as I analyzed the next protocols, but I debated with myself whether or not they were necessary for the phenomenon to exist. My description of Corey's learning about physics is very similar to the previous descriptions except for the topic of the learning.

"Learning Physics"

Corey considers herself an eclectic learner. In the past twenty years she has read in the areas of Rebirthing, near-death experiences, The Course of Miracles, furniture refinishing, and physics. She learns because it brings her pleasure. She likes to learn new things, not to use them, just to satisfy a need within herself to learn. Learning seems to be a natural outgrowth of this need, this curiosity. She is a curious woman. Her husband says she is like an eight year old--always asking questions. Areas that she doesn't understand are intriguing to her. She is happily surprised when she discovers that she can learn something that she had thought too difficult for her to comprehend.

She experiences other emotions besides happy surprise when learning. She also feels exhilarated, thrilled and content. These feeling overshadow any
feelings of resentment that arise when her learning is threatened by others and her frustration when she confronts a difficult concept. When she is excited about what she is reading she reads faster and faster and sometimes her reading causes her head to spin.

Reading is only one way Corey learns. She also listens to tapes, watches videos and television, attends lectures and learns from friends. She doesn't recall how she was led to her first physics book ten years ago, but that started her on a trail of learning. She saw *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* on her roommate's bookshelf and "saw that it was about the same thing--physics" and read it. She does not make sharp transitions from one area to another. When she's "ready to learn something new it seems like the right person comes into [her] life, the right book or event" and she's off learning.

The "right" person and the "wrong" person have a great deal of impact on her learning. The people who share their material, knowledge and opinions help her learn. She finds it to be "a very exciting feeling to share with someone who has that same type of mentality or interest." Those without the interest voice disapproval of her activities and suggest she learn something more practical and "we have fights over" her learning subjects. Learning for the sake of learning is so important to her that she continues it, even when confronted with this disapproval from an intimate other. My husband "doesn't want me to be reading these books that don't lead to a goal." Despite this disapproval she finds ways of coping and doing it in secret.

Practicality is not a factor when Corey picks a learning experience, but she does manage to get some pragmatic use from her knowledge. When she is confronted with a problem to be solved she uses her knowledge to help her deal with it. This problem solving assistance is viewed as a minor reward. Her major payback comes in the pleasure she feels while in a learning experience.

This pleasure is not diminished when she makes a mistake while learning. Mistakes do not exist in this learning for Corey. She believes "that everything serves a purpose - to learn from it" and therefore regards "errors" as learning opportunities. This attitude does not mean that learning is easy for her. She often has difficulty grasping concepts and sometimes the struggle makes her head hurt.

Time stops while Corey is learning - she is not concerned with the past or future. It is the way Corey remembers smoking marijuana. She is "right there in the moment." While she is unaware of the future during her learning, she is very conscious of the fact that her learning will project far into the infinite future. She does not see an end to her learning. She doesn't "think there could ever be knowing it all. There is always more to learn." And she wants to learn it.
Elizabeth

Elizabeth was a 44-year old member of a State Board of Education. She had spent the past 20 years as a volunteer with local, state, and national education groups. She has been learning about school issues for the sake of learning during this time. I questioned her about the reason for her learning. I wanted assurance that her leaning wasn't goal-oriented - to make her a more effective volunteer. She said that she learned because she was curious. "I was like a sponge just gathering information and sucking it in. Thinking to myself, when will any of this be useful." The increased responsibility of her volunteer tasks came as a result of her learning. It was not the cause of her learning. Elizabeth's themes were the same as those I had previously found. She, too, talked about the learning mistakes she had made and viewed them the same way Corey did. "I've learned from all of them. If I had to go back and do them over again I would ask to have all the mistakes again." When reading the individual description of Elizabeth's learning experience the reader will see the similarity to the previous descriptions.

"Education Policy"

Originally Elizabeth began her learning as a way to serve her community, but found that it enriched her soul and fascinated her mind. The learning that she began as a curious citizen eventually led to her current appointment on the state school board. Her original goal was to learn. As she learned and assumed leadership positions she felt it was important that she be a role model, do her best and satisfy her curiosity. She does not have career goals to satisfy through her learning. As she has learned more and more about policy making she has become a better policy and decision maker. She has tried learning in other areas but returned to education time after time because she "found it to be most fascinating of all."

This fascination is enhanced by her control over the learning situation. She determines what will be learned, when the learning is done and how well she has done. "There is no one who tells me that I passed or failed. I hate those things. And that's what makes it fun."
She feels other emotions besides fun while she is learning about education policy - excitement, satisfaction, fascination, challenge and stimulation as well as fatigue, frustration and anger. When balancing the two types of feeling she thinks that learning is 90% fun and 10% not. She doesn't know "if you can find any thing else that has that degree of greatness. Much of that feeling of greatness came from the challenge which she determined.

The challenge she set was to learn more, analyzing enormously complex problems, and improve her public speaking. She likes to test and push herself. The challenges change all the time. She is "not content in sitting idly by."

Sitting and reading is not Elizabeth's favorite way to learn. She learns by observing and doing. She gathers information by questioning people, listening to the media and practicing what she has seen and learned. As she has advanced in her study of education policy she has had to increase the amount of reading she needs to do. She feels that reading Socrates adds a dimension to her learning. The reading of Socrates is an example of the unintentional branching of her learning. As something piques her interest she pursues it.

Elizabeth has a curious mind. While she is learning she feels "like a sponge just gathering information and sucking it in." She has a voracious appetite to learn. She tries to figure out why things are happening. Learning is an intriguing thing to her.

Elizabeth learns from others by asking them for information and observing them in action. Her learning began with a mentorship with an elementary school principal who introduced her to public education and education policy. She has found that others can also hamper her learning by being obstreperous, overly verbal or angry. She has "learned to tell them that they are not being helpful to me and then it is their problem to decide what they want to do."

Learning for the sake of learning is not always easy for Elizabeth. She has encountered difficulty, but since her learning is a self imposed task she feels she can surmount any problems she encounters. "It may be difficult, but the difficulty is surmountable because of your desire."

Problems that might be labeled "mistakes" in goal oriented learning are viewed differently by Elizabeth. "Mistakes" occurred when she felt embarrassed or felt she had failed, but if she had to repeat the learning she "would ask to have all the mistakes again, 'cause I've learned from them all."

She evaluates learning problems differently. "Mistakes were when I felt embarrassed or when I had failed, but I learned from them, so whether they were mistakes or not, I'm not sure." She is willing to repeat each mistake.

Her payback for learning is not tangible. While she has used her learning in service on the State Board of Education, that service came as a result of her learning, not as the cause of it. She finds her reward in a greater self understanding and an enriched soul. "I feel enriched more than I'll ever know." She does not view this reward as making the learning selfish. While
this is something she wants to do and it satisfies her curiosity, it is not selfish because ultimately she gives to her community and her learning contributes to a better world.

Time passes quickly when Elizabeth is learning something she enjoys. She feels that there is much to learn and not enough time in which to learn it all. Although she feels there is not enough time in which to learn everything, she feels that her learning will not end. After sixteen years she has just begun to scratch the surface of knowledge. As she learns she uncovers more to be learned. "It was like a small snowball gathering momentum as it rolls down a hill." This lack of closure does not depress her. She views it as an exciting opportunity.

Will

Will was the final interview and analysis. He is a word processor in his mid 30's who studies literature for the sake of learning. I had asked him if he felt he made any mistakes while learning about literature and he responded similarly, but with a slightly different outlook from Corey and Elizabeth, "I don't think in this area there's anything to do wrong." So I began to think that "mistakes" was not a separate theme, but one that might be incorporated into a larger theme, perhaps "challenge." When I developed his individual description I was not sure about the relocation, so I kept it as a separate theme. Will's description was the final individual description developed.

"Reading Literature"

Will's family did not encourage his learning experiences while he was growing up although he was very successful in school. "It was not okay to be smart. It was not okay to work to go beyond where you are." Even now he balances two opposing emotions when he learns: the familiar fear and terror of learning and the joy and excitement he feels when learning. He compares learning to a sexual climax, it's nice to think about, but better to experience. Learning is exciting to Will. He experiences "the excitement at the physical level in my chest. It's a tingling sensation... At the emotional level it's a feeling of lightness and a feeling associated with joy." Learning is "80% pleasant and 20% unpleasant."

The impediments to Will's reading literature seem to fall in the 20% unpleasant part. They are internal. His fear and self image hinder his quest for learning. "Fear slows me down. It slows me down in the sense that I
read more slowly" and "I will only go so far in the assimilation process before I get frightened and want to quit." Although he does not feel that he is smart, "I don't grasp things quickly and it's difficult for me to assimilate and synthesize" material, learning is an important aspect of his life.

His life centers about his learning activities. "To a large degree my life is about learning in the sense that that is far more important to me than anything else that I do." He has not sought or found success in his job. Instead he feels that learning is what he should be doing now. It is only recently that he has been able to attend a family function and skip his daily "fix" of learning without guilt.

Some members of his family and a few friends share in the knowledge Will learns. He loaned several books to his sister but found he couldn't "just leave the books. I have to tell you about them." The others in the world just form a comfortable background noise for his nightly reading and studying at Roy Roger's restaurant.

Aside from his usual reading every morning and evening while eating breakfast and dinner, Will does not plan how or what he is going to learn. It appears as if he is on a quest. "I would be reading something and then by reading footnotes... I would discover I had to read Milton" or other pre-Romantic writers. He did not pre-plan the steps of his learning to reach some predetermined goal. He "would just follow the flow of it. Whatever comes up next is what I would do."

He usually reads in genres - poetry for several weeks and then an interval of prose followed by literary criticism. He often feels pulled toward the next book as though it was selected for him instead of by him. Will is usually reading 3 or 4 books at a time, juggling them as the spirit moves him. "I'm usually reading three or four books at the same time and frequently I don't finish a book. Frequently I will not finish a book and pick it up a week later, two months later, years later and finish it."

While Will's learning takes place over years, he does not view time as flying by. Time moves slowly for him as he reads. The passage of time was Will's primary reason for learning. He made a conscious decision to learn as he entered mid-life. He felt he had to do something or he would become stagnant - and his choice of learning over athletics or music was made because "for me it seems like the natural thing is to learn." He does not learn "to be able to spit it back to somebody," make money or get a degree. He feels "it's compulsive in the way that an addiction is compulsive."

Will has not used his learning of literature for any financial gain. His payback has come from an enhanced self esteem "A lot of people look up to me. They think I'm smart." and the emotional kick he gets from the learning experience. He finds it rewarding to share his knowledge with someone who is interested, but laments that few people want to discuss the Romantics.
Even though he has found no "practical" use for his learning he sees it continuing into the future. "One of the reasons that I continue to learn is just some innate feeling that this is what I'm supposed to do and one day ultimately it will all come together and that I will have some kind of a soaring, going beyond experience... a big Aha!"

**Validation of the Individual Descriptions**

As the descriptions were developed they were sent to the co-researchers for validation. I asked them to read their description and tell me where it differed from their actual learning experience (See appendix for a copy of the letter).

Every description was in fact validated by its learner. The validations fell into two groups: Those who made no or few comments on the description, but enthusiastically accepted the description of their experience and those who made extensive comments. Will, in the first group, felt it was important that it be noted that his terror of learning was "associated with disapproval." With that addition he wrote, "You got it!... You... have taken me in - integrated me/my experience - and I feel re-created." Elizabeth suggested no changes and wrote, "What a nice job of condensing you've done." Corey merely wrote "just fine" at the top of the first page. Mary also wrote on the top of the first page "I shall now refer to [Lynne] as my Distant Mirror. I consider the following an accurate description." Sara wrote at the end of the description, "You really hit the nail on the head! I can't believe how well you zeroed in on my thoughts and feelings." Amanda changed two words in the description. She felt that "synthesis" was better than "combination," "occurred" better than "happened" and other similar changes. She extended two of her quotes to make them read more smoothly and then wrote at the end, "Excellent - I am impressed - I could not have summed up my experiences with such clarity, empathy and understanding."
The rest of the co-researchers made more extensive additions or comments to their descriptions, but none argued that I had misrepresented their learning experience. Vanya added that learning difficulties are "neither [an] obstacle to nor cause of the enjoyment; it is simply irrelevant to the pleasure of the learning experience." He asked if the fact that the learning is stimulating and sedative at the same time "is related to the "total immersion" in the learning process; i.e. when completely focused on the moment and the task at hand, one has both pleasure and stress reduction simultaneously." He also related this last point to the closing line of his description, "while I'm in it I'm going with the flow." Then he wrote "I think you've captured the essence of the experience exactly."

Thomas, after changing verb tenses in his own quotes and making other minor corrections, suggested that I "may wish to note that this attitude of 'learning' carries into other areas and becomes a mixture of personal enthusiasm with the mystery and challenge of a subject. Otherwise, I believe you have captured the essence of an escapist's thoughts who is otherwise trapped in the demands of the twentieth century social and economic maelstrom--"

Michael noted two areas of the description that he felt were redundant and then said that the "feeling of empowerment is a tremendous incentive. It goes beyond ego strength, but is not the reason I still [learn] but is a side effect of the experience." With this noted, he concurred with the description of his learning about the history of education.

Jason did the most extensive editing and rewriting of the co-researchers. He changed nouns to pronouns, added adjectives, eliminated adjectives, crossed out his own quotes and added new ones. These additions and changes did not alter the meaning of his experience. They added additional things he had thought of since we last talked. It was as though he felt I had sent him a draft for revision. He added three reflective
comments. The first dealing with his use of knowledge, the second with experiencing the process, "it is mystical and essentially a non-cognitive way of experiencing a wholly cognitive process," and a closing statement, "It is an addiction never satiated, not satiable, but completely compelling. I am a person of internal worlds, even as I present a gregarious exterior. Without the experience of learning, I would be lost."

Some of the comments made by the co-researchers were incorporated into the final descriptions of their experiences, others, while important to them, were not relevant to the phenomenon of learning for the sake of learning and the descriptions were not changed. With the validation of the individual descriptions completed, the next step was the development of the fundamental description of the experience of learning for the sake of learning in adulthood.

Development of the Fundamental Description

The purpose of this Fundamental Description is to give the reader an understanding of the experience of learning for the sake of learning in adulthood. The Fundamental Description began to develop as I analyzed and wrote the individual descriptions of the last few protocols since no new themes had emerged in protocols seven through ten. As I wrote those individual descriptions I found very few differences except in the subjects they studied.

I distrusted this evolution and began an analysis of the themes to construct the Fundamental Description. Basically, I faced two possibilities. Either I had reached saturation or I was falling into a natural attitude of familiarity and getting lost as a researcher. To check either of these possibilities I grouped the paragraphs from the individual descriptions by theme and read each theme group several times. This group
analysis confirmed my earlier thought that an expansion of the last few individual
descriptions would result in the Fundamental Description of the Phenomenon.

A Fundamental Description
of the Experience of Learning for the Sake
of Learning in Adulthood

While the experience of learning for the sake of learning has facets that
can be explicated individually, it is best understood as the whole in which it is
lived. The Gestalt of this experience can best be seen by metaphor. Learning
for the sake of learning is like an afternoon stroll, not a commute from home
to work. This can be seen in its non-linear, non-goal directed nature. Whatever
pretty thing comes up on the stroll is what is investigated. "It's the
journey rather than the getting to the destination" that is important.

In examining this experience as a stroll we can see four components to
explore in greater depth: the horizon of the experience, the experience itself,
the paybacks of the experience, and the resolution of the experience.

The Horizon of the Experience

The horizon is the backdrop against which the form of an observed
object takes shape. It is the context--temporal, spatial, interpersonal, and
intra-personal--that allows for and gives meaning to the experience. There are
three elements of the horizon of learning for the sake of learning of import to
explicate: The opportunity, the interest, and the desire.

1. The opportunity to learn. This opportunity might appear to be seren-
dipitous, but it is really the combination of the availability of time
and an interest in a subject which makes the learning experience
possible. The learners either "find" that time is available for
learning because something else has been completed or they deliber-
ately rearrange their schedules so that time is freed for learning
because they are curious about something.

2. The interest to learn about. The "something" that the learner is
curious about is often a curiosity that has developed from a previous
learning project or has been an interest of long standing. The topic
intrigues the learner and rather than say "so what?" to their "I
wonder..." they pursue answers.

3. A desire to learn. Many people have an opportunity and an interest
to learn but do not pursue the chance as these co-researchers do.
The reasons these individuals follow through with their learning
interests is central to the study of learning for the sake of learning.

One of the reasons the co-researchers learned was "just the basic reason
of doing it for fun." Another reason for learning is the learners' curiosity
about specific things around them and their desire to satisfy that curiosity. Learning is a natural outgrowth of this curiosity. The third is slightly more complex and interesting. It is that the learners feel called to learn by something within themselves. As one co-researcher put it, the learning experience is "compulsive in the way that an addiction is compulsive." Many times in this experience the learners feel that learning must take place or each will suffer the consequences. They feel addicted to learning.

This availability of time, subject area and reasons for learning make the learner sensitive to a learning opportunity. This sensitivity is similar to having a crush on someone who drives a yellow convertible. Prior to this a yellow convertible was rarely seen, but now they seem to pop up all over. Just as the yellow convertible doesn't really pop up "coincidentally" to the person with the crush there is no coincidence that the interesting course pops up to the learner. The "just happened" we can now see has its ground in the ongoing interest that the co-researcher had but never "had the opportunity for before." The serendipity is not coincidence but the final manifestation of a long submerged interest. This learning is not generated from the person outward, "I wonder what I can learn today," but comes from some topic that intrigues and pulls the learner.

While it might seem on first reading that opportunity and subjects are "outer" elements, and that reasons, is an "inner" element, further investigation shows that the inner is the outer and the outer is the inner. The subject learned is that which is assimilated, and becomes "inner." Time, which the learner thinks of as something that happens, something that becomes available, an outer in the background, on further investigation is quite often something that is made available, an "inner." The reason, which on first reading may seem like an "inner," is quite often experienced as an addiction, which is the "outer" pulling the learner. These three elements do not constitute a causal relationship of subject to object, but constitute a holistic framework which allows the experience to emerge.

The Experience Itself

If we understand the horizon as the initial decision to take a stroll, the second element is the experience of the stroll itself. An explanation of the following four aspects will assist the reader in understanding the learning experience: (a) the learners' feelings, (b) the learning process, (c) the learners' interactions with others, and (d) how time is experienced.

The Learners' Feelings. How learners feel while learning is shaped by and helps to shape the experience itself. Learners report that the experience is exhilarating, stimulating, and fascinating. It is "an intellectual orgasm." What is important is what is so orgasmic about the experience. It is not, as with much learning, the results of the learning - having the knowledge or new skill or getting the grade - it is the process of learning. The primary enjoyment comes from searching for information, not from amassing and retaining it.
This searching is not viewed as Sisyphus viewed his surroundings - more hills to struggle up with his rock, but as a mountain climber views his environment - more wonderful peaks to challenge.

**The Learning Process.** As it is the process rather than the goal that is important, it is easy to understand that the process rarely proceeds forward in an organized, linear manner. The learners most often "follow the flow of it. Whatever comes up next is what I would do." In short it is like the stroll, it is done for the intrinsic pleasure of it.

This afternoon stroll is not without its obstacles, but since the object is the stroll and not the destination a whole new meaning is given to encountering an obstacle. It may be viewed as a large boulder to be scaled after several exciting attempts or skirted for the present because the stroller is not prepared for this level of rock climbing. What in instrumental learning is often judged as failures, mistakes, or risks acquire new meanings in the process of learning for the sake of learning. Difficulties are viewed not as potential failures, but as challenges to be worked through or material the learner is not yet ready to deal with which may be approached after more background has been achieved. Mistakes rather than being shameful failures to be hidden, are evaluated as incomplete learning and mastered on the second or third attempt. If mastery is not reached they are set aside until the learners have the skills necessary for mastery. Risks, rather than being potential pits on the way to a predefined goal, become adrenaline raising parts of the experience. No matter how much the learners accomplish, the challenge always exists because there is always new territory to explore. It is like getting "a hole in one on the golf course or bowling a 300 game, you try to do that the next time and you realize that the challenge is still there."

The difference from instrumental learning is that in learning for the sake of learning even the challenge is internally intentioned. As the challenge starts to decrease a new level of challenge is sought by the learners. This challenge is an act of intentionality. They work to sustain it rather than work to reduce the challenge. In regular learning the reduction of challenge is seen as satisfying while in learning for the sake of learning satisfaction is found in the maintenance of challenge.

**Interactions with Others.** Other people can be important, but they are not essential. They can either help or hinder the learners. Fellow learners and empathic others are viewed as comrades in this learning experience. The meaning of the comrade is seen by extending our metaphor. A stroll can be more fun when shared. Fellow strollers can show the learner a new flower that had been overlooked or suggest a new path to take that had been hidden by the trees. They will listen to a new discovery being explained and share in the excitement new knowledge brings. They can extend the learning.

The hinderers affect the strollers by wanting them to jog through the woods and by turning the stroll into a commute from place A to place B in the shortest possible time. They find no pleasure in the stroll and see only wasted time and wasted opportunities to "accomplish something." They thus
become true obstacles which the learners must deal with either by removing themselves, becoming assertive, or jogging on occasion to satisfy the hinderers' needs. These people try to impose their learning needs on this learning experience and turn it from learning for the sake of learning to goal directed learning.

**The Experience of Time.** Time is experienced differently when learning something for the sake of learning than when learning because one is told to learn. It flows out as the learners become immersed in their learning. The learners do not feel rushed. They become unaware of the passage of time. "While I'm in it I'm going with the flow." The significance of this comes in the analogy to the Gestalt notion of being here and now or present centered. As the learners are lost in the moment they are not worried about the future. They are not remembering the past. They are learning here and now. All of them are learning here and now. Unlike their everydayness, in which part of their minds is worried about the future, part is thinking about the past and some portion is dealing with the present, in this learning experience they are all there. And in this sense it becomes intrinsically rewarding. It is a peak experience in which one gives oneself totally to the situation.

**The Paybacks of the Learning Experience**

The major payback in an experience of learning for the sake of learning is not instrumental, but intrinsic. As the individuals give themselves totally to the moment and devote their full energy to the here and now of learning for the sake of learning they report themselves as having greater self understanding and emotional tranquility and better understanding of the world around them.

While this is not the intention for which the learning experience is entered, sometimes instrumental effects result from the new knowledge and skills that are acquired. These secondary paybacks do not change this, however, from an experience of learning for the sake of learning to instrumental learning, just as finding wild strawberries and eating them does not change the metaphoric stroll into a food gathering venture.

**The Resolution of the Experience**

Just as time seems to go on endlessly, so does the learning experience. This experience does not end when goals are met because there are no finite goals. The stroll doesn't end at the journey's end because the purpose is to stroll, not to arrive somewhere. The experience is open-ended. It expands to encompass more questions as the learner learns.

The way in which the learners structure the experience offers temporary satiation but no real closure. This is an evolving experience and as it evolves it grows. There is rarely a confined mass of material to be learned. More often the learners are faced with an expanding universe of unknowns to seek out and explore. Each bit of new knowledge exposes more unknowns to the learners.
Thus the structure of learning for the sake of learning becomes a spiral rather than a straight line. The resolution, in its indefinite nature coupled with the rewards constitute the background for the next experience of learning for the sake of learning. And thus, the process repeats itself.

Conclusion

In essence, by learning for the sake of learning the individual has the opportunity to become a learner. What does it mean to become a learner? Wheelus (1973) makes a good analogy in the following description. "A young man who learns to drive a car thinks differently thereby, feels differently; when he meets a pretty girl who lives fifty miles away, the encounter carries implications he could not have felt as a bus rider. We may say, then, that he not only drives a car but has become a driver" (p. 12). Then new situations offer possibilities to him that they would not have before he was a driver. People who habitually learn for the sake of learning enjoy it and get into the spiral where the internal reward becomes a reason which, in turn, becomes part of the ground for the next experience. When this happens repetitively individuals may become learners. The significance of learning for the sake of learning, thus, is that upon repetition the individual becomes a learner. New situations hold forth the possibility of taking another stroll.

The experience, by definition, lends itself to repetition. Repetition of the experience lends itself to becoming a learner. The existential significance of learning for the sake of learning is that it offers the possibility that the person experiencing it will become more and more, as time goes on, a learner unless called by more important calls. These calls can be either a negative, i.e. a famine, a more attractive activity, or something of greater instrumental value, i.e. completing a doctoral dissertation. As the inner becomes the outer and the outer become the inner through this repetition the person may become a learner. Then new areas will offer opportunities for exploration that non-learners do not see. The query "why" becomes the beginning of an unending exciting stroll instead of a dreary task.

Additional Factors in the Experience

After developing the fundamental description, I noticed that technically some of the aspects of the fundamental description were not essential to the description. The experience would still be the experience of learning for the sake of learning without those themes, however, the inclusion of those themes added a dimension of vitality and aliveness to the fundamental description. The reader should note some points about the following themes: others, paybacks, and goals.
By using imaginative variation I saw that "others" was not a necessary aspect of the phenomenon. I could imagine how Thomas' experience could have gone on if he hadn't helped his son with his high school Spanish. Amanda would have had a great deal more difficulty with some of her theatre sound work, but she would have completed her learning without her son's assistance. Corey would have learned if her husband had been supportive instead of his being so negative about her learning. This analysis led me to the conclusion that the phenomenon did not need "others" to make it learning for the sake of learning. However, the role of others in helping and hindering people seems valuable to educators and counselors who will be working with adult educators.

Similarly external paybacks of the learning experience varied from the accumulation of reserve military qualifications for language proficiency to short term employment in television commercials. This type of payback is not required for the phenomenon to exist. The learners asserted that these factors were not important to the experience. Thomas said that the reserve qualifications "along with the incentive pay that may be available from my company are incidental.... I didn't really consider that when I took the course."

The internal paybacks are the increased knowledge and the increased feeling of self worth the learner gains by participating in the learning experience. Using imaginative variation helped me determine that the phenomenon would be different if the learners developed a lower self worth after the learning or felt they knew less than when they began the learning experience. However, both external and internal paybacks are important to note because if we don't understand how paybacks occur in learning for the sake of learning we may confuse this experience with instrumental learning.

The goals the co-researchers listed were either "to know the whole universe" or "to learn "100 words or five tenses." Thomas followed his listing of goals with "the
obvious thing is I don’t want to" set a firm proficiency level goal. Jason followed this first idea by wishing "to be wise" and Elizabeth’s "major goal was to learn." She followed this by saying "there is no real goal out there of more pay, or advancement in a career or a calculated white light at the end of the tunnel to me." Goals were not important to the learning experience. Except in the case of short term "finish this chapter" or "learn to change the oil" the goals were not formulated by the learners. These positive results to the learning activity "just happened" and were put into words in retrospect. They were not the reasons the co-researchers began or continued their learning. It is important to understand this aspect of the experience so that learning facilitators will not impose or require learners who begin this type of learning experience to set and reach goals.

Validation of the Fundamental Description

The fundamental description was sent to the co-researchers for their validation. All of them supported the statements as representing their personal learning experience. Will wrote, "The metaphor of the stroller strolling is right on target and expresses the open-endedness of my pursuit better than I could have myself." Mary said, "I read and reread your paper... and felt joy because you proved to me that others share my experiences. 'Habit forming,' 'Closing Gaps,' 'Curiosity,' 'Time Flying,' 'Expanding Universe,' and 'Order in Chaos' are very familiar and important in my life." "You've captured the essence of the experience," came in Vanya's response. Corey's short response was, "I enjoyed the paper very much. Thank you. It was accurate for me." Michael wrote, "For the most part, I am in agreement with your description. Where I do not, you will find that I have made marginal notes." He objected to pleasure and enjoyment as being
reasons for and reward for the learning, but as mentioned earlier when his individual description was discussed, he was not an emotional man. Amanda said, "You have amplified my experience for me." Sara noted, "It was interesting to see the 'common thread' we all had without even knowing the other people." Thomas felt that the description encompassed his experience. Elizabeth was not clear if she had felt the same intensity of the learning addiction but then said that I had "captured the sense of the experience very well." Jason, the co-researcher we have been following through the analysis process wrote, "I have been amazed at the extent to which you have found common themes in us all. I absolutely concur with the general observations and find no fault with the particular."
Chapter Five
Implications and Significance

Introduction

This research has proven to be a learning for the sake of learning stroll of my own. In making it I have found, like my co-researchers, that it is not a finite process. Instead of this study bringing closure to the question “What is the experience of learning for the sake of learning in adulthood?” this research has opened up new areas for exploration. The structure of learning for the sake of learning is clearly defined. There are specific aspects of it that identify it as a particular type of learning experience. It is this structure of the situation that makes it learning for the sake of learning and not another kind of learning. The definition developed from this research makes it possible to continue the study of this experience and of the people who engage in this type of learning. This chapter presents the relationships of this study to previous research and the implications of this study for future strolls which have developed in several areas for adult educators, society, learners, and further research.

Relationship of this Study to Previous Research

This study has provided additional support for earlier research. It expands the understanding of one of Houle’s learning orientations. While it does not delineate a learning oriented learner, it does define and describe the experience of learning for the sake of learning. This description shows that this learning stance is practiced by adults.
People do learn for non-goal and non-activity reasons. They do learn for the sheer enjoyment of the process of learning and not only to directly apply the newly gained knowledge to an immediate problem. They find the reward for the experience within the experience itself.

Many of the individuals who engage in this learning do so habitually. When this activity is repeated and repeated the participants internalize it and move from being individuals who use this modality to learn, to learners who learn for the sake of learning. They may be increasingly better able to transform their non-learning oriented experiences into learning oriented experiences.

Learning for the sake of learning is an active learning mode which fully enmeshes the learner in the experience. These individuals should not be thought of as dilettantes who fritter away spare moments learning esoteric subjects or useless trivia. Learning for the sake of learning is experienced as an enveloping, peak experience by the learners. A comparison can be made between learning for the sake of learning and autotelic work and play experiences.

Csikszentmihalyi (1975) listed six characteristics that were present in the autotelic work and play experiences he studied. There are four points of correspondence between the experience of learning for the sake of learning and an autotelic experience.

1. Csikszentmihalyi reported a "flow" experience in which the participants do not evaluate their activity, they just do it. They are not separate from their activity, but are a part of it. The learners in the present study reported "going with the flow" and going with the current of their learning activity. They did not plan their next area of learning. They learned what "called" to them. Instead of analyzing their proposed progress they simply moved forward, sideward, or backward.
2. The players and workers reported being oblivious to the world around them. The learners reported similar feelings. They would be roused by their children crying with pain or the smoke alarm going off, but minor disturbances did not pull them from their work. They did not feel hungry until they left the learning experience. They were often unaware of the time that had passed - they were in their own world.

3. The players and workers reported being in control of their actions and environment. The learners also reported this control of their situation. They determined what was to be learned and how it was to be learned. The learners decided how to deal with learning difficulties and when they had accomplished their tasks. This control extended to deciding what to do about their "failures." This was their project and they made the decisions. If they were in a class and following the teacher's syllabus, they still decided how much they were going to learn. Nobody had told them to take this course, it was their decision to enroll.

4. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) found that the reward was within the play and work activity itself. The process of learning also provided the reward for the learners. It was not the completion of the learning that was rewarding, but the learning activity itself. The individuals enjoyed and valued the searching for and the organizing of the information. The results, the knowledge, were of secondary importance.

This learning experience also fits Csikszentmihalyi's (1982) model of the flow experience. Flow occurs when the individuals' skills match the opportunities presented in the activity. In this learning stance the individuals set the challenge to meet or just exceed their skills. If the challenge was too difficult and the learners could not meet it, the learners reset the challenge rather than abandon the learning experience. This setting and meeting the challenge went on until the learners were called to something else.
This learning experience also supports Deci and Ryan's statement that a central motivator for learning is the "desire to explore, discover, understand, and know" (1985, p. 245). These desires are satisfied with the experience of learning for the sake of learning. Exploring, discovering, understanding, and knowing are primary parts of this experience.

This experience supplies all four levels Wlodkowski (1985) says are needed for adult motivation, success plus volition plus value plus enjoyment. The learners have many choices in the learning and feel successful as they are learning. They also value the learning which is meaningful and worthwhile to them. This experience enhances their self esteem. The fourth level is the enjoyment which they obviously gain from the learning experience. Since it meets the four criteria, this learning experience should enhance self-motivation for additional learning, and, in fact, it does.

**Implications for Adult Educators**

The information resulting from this study has many implications for adult educators. While all of these suggestions may not be applied in all adult learning situations, it is suggested that they be studied and modified as necessary. This section presents the implications of the horizon and of the process for the adult educator and the implications for assumptions about adult learners.

**Implications of the horizon for adult educators**

The horizon of the experience comprises three factors, the opportunity to learn, area of interest, and the desire to learn. Using these results, adults educators may help more adult learners develop experiences of learning for the sake of learning.
Adult educators can help learners find "an opportunity to learn" by helping them create time away from the everyday busyness that encroaches on adults. Perhaps this can be done in time management courses or counseling aimed at helping adults value and make time for this learning.

It may be more difficult to determine the "area of interest" of the experience. When asked what they want to learn, adults may think of what they need to learn, not art history or Victorian literature. A more effective question might be, "What three things would you like to learn about if you were on a desert island with full resources at your disposal?" A second technique would be to discuss what the individuals are doing now even though they might not perceive these activities as learning. The individuals' current interests are an excellent place to start looking for avenues of exploration.

The third area, the "desire to learn," should develop as the individuals find satisfaction and enjoyment in the learning experience. Initial interest may come from helping the learners identify unrecognized learning activities which have provided satisfaction and leading them into related explorations.

**Implications of the process for adult educators**

The findings about the process of learning also have implications for adult educators. The fact that it is a stroll with no goal indicates that educators who are trying to encourage this experience should refrain from evaluating the learners, if possible. The learner has the responsibility for this task. The fact that the learner goes off on tangents indicates that learning facilitators should encourage this behavior by helping adult learners to find connections between what they have learned, what they are learning, and what they want to learn.
Program planners and learning facilitators should recognize this learning mode and encourage its use in their programs and classes. Learning for the sake of learning can be encouraged by program planners who structure courses to nurture and facilitate this type of learning experience. Facilitators who model this way of learning and who take the learners for strolls would also encourage this learning mode.

The facilitator's attitude toward this learning experience is important. These learners should be recognized in class as individuals who learn for the sake of learning and are not lazy daydreamers who are mentally somewhere else or always asking irrelevant questions. The teacher should recognize the breadth of their interest and not restrict their wanderings. They should be allowed time and freedom to take their learning into new areas and to new depths. In classes which are instrumentally oriented, open ended assignments could be substituted for others to allow the learners to explore in depth or breadth a course segment that catches their interest.

Since this learning experience does not entail goals and plans, these learners should be encouraged and assisted in setting their own broad "goals" in classes. If they enroll in a class, they obviously see it satisfying some felt learning need. They may not have the same needs as the other students or the same ones the facilitator planned to meet so they should be given the freedom to take from the class what they need and to give to the group what they can.

By understanding the nature of the experience facilitators can help the learners restructure a learning experience to bring it closer to learning for the sake of learning. The learners can be given complete control of the experiences and encouragement or "permission" to wander through the subject as their curiosity directs them. Assistance may be needed to encourage the learners to see difficulties as challenges within the learning instead of traps to keep them from learning.
Additional ideas that might be investigated include summer exploration programs that can be developed to allow learners to delve into new curiosities and delve deeper into old ones. Facilitators who can answer questions or point learners at new and unusual resources could guide the learners in discovering what ever they want to explore. A resource bank that individuals in learning experiences can use for help when they need more than the books or materials they usually use could be established. Industry can use this learning stance by allowing employees to enroll in courses that don't directly relate to their job. The learner will find ways to "use" the new information. The payback will be there for both employer and employee.

Since all motivation is self-motivation (Wlodkowski, 1985) adults should be encouraged to accept the responsibility to motivate themselves to learn. Learning for the sake of learning is a self-motivational experience. As the learners engage in this type of learning they are seduced to continue their learning, either in the same area or in another area. The enjoyment felt while learning pulls the participants to continue the activity or begin another.

**Implications for assumptions about adult learners**

This research will expand the assumptions adult educators have of why adults learn. The current belief is that most learning is done for immediate or future use. People learn to do their taxes, fix their cars, or be better parents. This study shows that adults do learn for the sake of learning and implement this stance effectively in a wide variety of learning experiences. Most motivational theorists have concentrated more on the deficiency motivation in Maslow's sense or on the adolescent and prior stages of development in Erikson's sense. Learning for the sake of learning offers examples of
other motivational "pulls" which may be explored. Motivational theories explaining reasons adults learn ought to be expanded to encompass this important form of learning.

Further research is necessary to determine how prevalent this experience is among adult learners. The popularity or unpopularity of this experience will not mitigate its usefulness to the individuals who engage in it and will not decrease or increase their usage of this learning stance. If a goal of adult education is to develop lifelong learners, this learning stance is one to encourage.

**Implications for Society**

It is important to our society that people learn for the sake of learning. Our society has made radical transformations in the last century. Toffler (1981) describes moving from an agricultural society through the industrial society to the service society. These successive transformations have given individuals increased leisure time (Toffler, 1981).

In examining how leisure time is spent by the average American, it is significant to note the essentially passive nature of much of it, from sitting at RFK Stadium watching the Redskins play football to sitting at home continually viewing television. Television, in fact, is worthy of further examination. Manders (1978) notes that the average network television show is geared for a sixth grade audience. He also states that in the average American home the television is on eight hours a day.

Learning for the sake of learning, on the other hand, is essentially an active process. By fully engaging the learners it utilizes their potential and provides a peak experience that enhances their self esteem. This experience captures them in a learning
spiral which lures them to learn again. In so doing it helps people to cope with the increasing complexity of technology in a more active way and can prepare them for the increasingly frequent transitions in adult development, such as career transitions. This experience provides enjoyment and satisfaction at a low cost to individuals and society. It is a perpetual learning machine which doesn’t pollute the environment or deplete irreplaceable natural resources.

The money that is spent to develop learning activities in which the learners experience learning for the sake of learning and join the ranks of those who learn for the sake of learning should be regarded as seed money which may produce a new group of people who are better able to cope with the complexity of their lives.

**Implications for Learners**

Learning can be a way to find happiness -- happiness, not in that passive sense, but active in a peak experience, actualization sense. Learning for the sake of learning is experienced much as Maslow describes the peak experiences of self-actualizing individuals. The active nature of the process, the full participation of the individual, the feeling of joy, satisfaction, and creativity are all aspects of a peak experience. In these modern times, when fewer people find peak experiences through religion, when artistic expression may be a modality that is not open to everyone, learning for the sake of learning may provide an avenue through which increasingly self actualizing individuals can manifest themselves. They get caught up in the spiral of learning and may move from one learning experience to another or advance in the same one for several years. If this type of learning can be taught to other people and they practice this learning mode, perhaps they can be "hooked" on learning. If they become hooked on learning
they may seek out learning experiences that will promote their growth as human beings. This learning experience leads to an enhanced self-esteem for the learners. A society in which the members learn and develop themselves becomes stronger as its members interact and take part in developing that society.

This study has shown that the co-researchers viewed their learning activities as valuable, anxiety-free, and emotionally satisfying. If people understand that this type of learning is an enjoyable way to use their leisure time, more individuals may engage in learning. The description of this learning experience provides a starting point for developing ways to help adults learn for the sake of learning.

**Implications for Further Research**

My stroll in the woods with this project often led me off onto small trails which I was enticed to follow. Whether I told myself to return to the main trail or was dragged back to it by well meaning "others" I felt that these side trips were research possibilities that should be pursued at a later date. Some of these side trails are discussed below.

Research in adult education has dealt with the demographics of participants in adult learning activities, the reasons for their participation, the individual differences of adult learners and other areas, but few studies have been done in the area of learning for the sake of learning. This area has not been regarded as an important area for research and has been largely ignored. The present study which has defined and described the experience of learning for the sake of learning can serve as a basis for further research. As stated in chapter two the fundamental description of this experience can provide a base for additional research in the area of adult discovery learning. The question of the "goodness of fit" of the experience to this and to other learning theory provides an area
of exploration for the future. Such research would bring conceptual clarity to these different concepts.

Research coming directly from this present research may be concentrated in two areas: a further delineation of this learning experience and an exploration of the individuals for whom this is the primary learning mode. Although these areas overlap and cannot be understood in isolation, the groundwork has been laid for them to be studied as separate, but related entities.

**Additional exploration of the experience**

There are several concerns that can be researched that would provide useful information for adult educators and adult learners. These areas deal with the frequency of the experience, the limitations of the experience, and its integration with other learning orientations.

The first, knowledge about the frequency of the experience, is useful to assist us in determining the prevalence of it in current adult learning. It would be useful to know how often an individual learns for this reason and how prevalent it is among adult learners.

The experience's limitations are another area worthy of research. An understanding of the learners' use of this learning mode would be helpful to learners and facilitators. It may be used exclusively for one learning experience and another mode for another experience or the same experience may move from goal directed to learning oriented and then include some activity orientation. If this is determined we will know if it is possible to make goal directed learning more enjoyable and re-motivating by incorporating aspects of learning for the sake of learning into goal-oriented learning. It would
be interesting to try to turn a goal oriented learning experience into a learning for the sake of learning experience.

The third aspect of the experience to explore is the integration of the experience of learning for the sake of learning with other learning orientations. It would be useful to know if it is possible to change people's learning orientation. Research into how this learning orientation can be taught to other learners and non-learners would be a beginning for this task.

**Exploration of the learners**

In concert with an expanded understanding of the experience of learning for the sake of learning should be a better understanding of the individual who engages in this type of learning. Adult educators need to determine if these learners are a special group with specific characteristics or a "personality type" or if their only similarity is their style of learning. An understanding of these learners would give us an opportunity to determine if they are significantly different from the rest of the population in age, income, sex, intelligence, education level and other demographic details.

Another concern is where these learners come from. Research to determine if this learning orientation is learned or genetically determined would be worthwhile. If this learning orientation is learned, it would be useful to know if it is learned in the home, school, or elsewhere. Studies in this area would expand our understanding of this experience.

While this study dealt with adulthood, explorations of this experience can be expanded to include other ages. Perhaps this orientation, this curiosity and zeal for learning is present in every baby at birth, only to be lost later in life. Studies of be
how early in life, individuals begin to learn for the sake of learning and how they utilize it throughout their development will expand our knowledge of why and how people learn. If this experience is "lost" by some, a study to determine how that happens would be interesting and useful.

This further research which has been suggested here will provide additional knowledge of why and how adults learn. This expansion will provide adult educators with valuable tools to assist them in improving their services to adult learners.
Endnotes

1 Technically phenomenology is differentiated from existential phenomenology. Pure phenomenology is distinct from existential phenomenology. Existential phenomenology incorporates central facts of human existence such as authenticity, inauthenticity and the like. Technically Husserl as a pure phenomenologist supplied the basis for the later existential phenomenologists Heidegger and Merleu-Ponty and the existential phenomenological psychology of Amedeo Giorgi. In this dissertation the type of phenomenology talked about is existential phenomenology, but for simplicity it will be referred to as phenomenology.

2 One lawyer was highly recommended by a co-researcher. He expressed interest at the initial telephone contact, but additional calls to make an appointment for an interview elicited the information that he was out of town for several weeks. After three attempts to reach him and leaving messages with his secretary, it was decided that if he was that busy and hard to reach before the process began, it might be difficult to follow up and complete the interview and validation process, so when he did not return the third phone call he was not pursued further.

Initial interviews were conducted with two individuals who were not included in this study. In the first case a retired teacher was recommended because she was always taking classes and attended Elderhostel each summer. Part way into the interview the researcher began to feel that her learning was activity oriented. Although she didn't learn just anything, her primary reason for learning was to be with people, and get out of the retirement home in which she lived. She had found learning to be an economical
and nice way to meet and develop friendships with people. The interview was completed and she had many interesting stories to share, but she remembered the people she met, not the details of the learning experience.

The second woman who was interviewed once for this project and not included in further interviews was not excluded because her learning was activity oriented. This learner did most of her learning for the sake of learning, but the experiences she selected to discuss occurred so long ago that she wasn't able to recall many of the details. She was interested in discussing why she thought she did certain things, but a retrospective analysis would not provide the data needed for phenomenological research so a second interview was not pursued.
References


Appendix

Letter of Consent

I, ________________________, agree to participate in Lynne Asmuth’s study of the experience of learning for the sake of learning. The purpose of this research is to develop an in-depth understanding of this learning experience.

I understand that my role in the study will consist of no more than three taped interviews, conducted by the researcher and myself as co-researcher, at mutually agreed upon times. In these interviews I will be asked to report on and discuss one of my experiences of learning for the sake of learning. I will receive a transcribed copy of the taped interview, which I will read and comment on before the next interview meeting.

All names will be changed in the transcriptions by the researcher before data is given to members of the dissertation committee or disseminated in any form. I also understand that my name will not appear anywhere in the study. My name will be replaced by another name. The taped interviews will be left intact and kept in confidence by the researcher, unless I specifically request that my tapes be destroyed.

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

signature _______________________

date ______________________

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Interview Guide

1. Please tell me about an experience in which you learned for the sake of learning. I would like you to go back into the experience and describe it to me as it happened so that I will be able to understand your experience as you experienced it.

2. What was the process for this experience? What did you do first? Did you plan out what you were going to do, how you were going to do it?

3. What was the catalyst for this learning experience?

4. What type(s) of concentration is used in your learning experience?

5. What were you feelings when you were engaged in learning? Were they different at different points of the experience?

6. How did you experience time while learning for the sake of learning?

7. How do you experience the world when you are learning?

8. How did you experience other people while learning for the sake of learning?

9. Did your learning experience involve other people or did you learn alone? How did you interact with other learners? With "learning facilitators"?

10. Were there any impediments to learning?

11. Did you make any "mistakes" in this learning experience? How did you deal with these "mistakes"?

12. Are there rewards for this learning?

13. What brought the learning experience to an end? Did it really come to an end?

14. If you could take a pill and learn everything you learned in this learning experience, would you take it?
Dear Jason,

Thanks for helping me with my dissertation. I appreciate your willingness to participate in the two interviews we taped and to edit the transcripts. I am now at the second stage. I have analyzed your transcript and written a short description of what I feel are the major points of your learning experience. Would you please read this description and give your comments on it? I would like you to verify that this is a description of your experience. If you think I have missed something or emphasized a wrong area, please let me know. I would like to talk to you about it by phone or in person when you have finished it.

If you have any suggestions for the description feel free to tell me about them. I want these few pages to accurately portray your experience of learning auto mechanics for the sake of learning without going into great detail.

When you and the other nine co-researchers have returned the descriptions I will develop and write a general description of the experience of learning for the sake of learning. I will ask you to comment on this last description, also. Then I will write up the results, finish the other parts of the dissertation, and defend my research. I'm on my way. Thanks for your continued help.

Sincerely yours,

Lynne Asmuth
Letter Accompanying Fundamental Description

September 29, 1986

Dear Jason,

The fundamental description of learning for the sake of learning has been completed. Your copy is enclosed with this letter. It has taken much longer to develop and write this document than I had anticipated. Your interviews and those of the other nine co-researchers provided a wealth of material from which I distilled the common themes of this learning experience.

Please read this description carefully and see if your personal learning for the sake of learning experience fits within this description. Since this is a general description I don't expect an exact match, point for point. I would like to know your reaction to this description. I have enclosed a very general feedback sheet for your use, but would welcome and appreciate any additional comments about the description you are willing to share with me. I have enclosed a stamped, self-addressed envelope for its return. I would also be glad to discuss any or all aspects of it in person or by phone.

I will consider this description a success, if in reading it you say, "Aha, yes, that's what I experience." I will consider if a great success if, after reading it not only do you say, "Aha" but somehow your understanding of your own experience is deepened.

Thank you for your assistance in this research. I could not have done this study without your complete cooperation and willingness to share your time and learning experience.

Sincerely yours,

Lynne Asmuth
Dear Co-researcher,

I would like your reactions to the fundamental description of the experience of learning for the sake of learning. Please use this sheet to tell me what you think. Does this description encompass your own experience of learning for the sake of learning? Is there any point on which your experience differs greatly from this fundamental description? I would also be glad to read or listen to any other thoughts you have about this description.

Thanks,
The vita has been removed from the scanned document