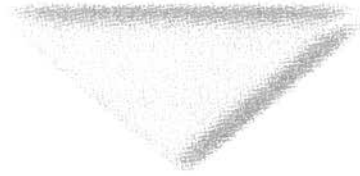


Part 5

CONCLUSIONS



Seeing, Feeling, Daring, Interrelating and Playing: Exploring Themes in Generative Moments¹

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The 40 stories about generativity in this book wake us up to new possibilities – real and imagined – for the life that exists in even the smallest moments of the research process. These moments are rarely grand or planned, rather they are mundane, emergent incidences that expand and enrich trajectories of understanding and propel researchers forward. Karen Golden-Biddle reminds us that if “we blink we often miss them”. Yet with eyes wide open, focused on these moments, we unleash new understanding of the possibilities embedded in small micro-moves in the flux of the research process. As Calvin Morrill notes in his commentary, these stories “take us deeply into everyday practice” and unearth insights that have utility beyond the everyday. The stories open our eyes and reveal patterns rarely noticed. In this noticing we are reminded of the potentiality of imagination and growth unleashed in the research process.

While the stories of generative moments contain each author’s unique signature, they also reveal common threads about how researchers are opened up, enlivened or inspired – all signs of generativity-in-action. We organize the teachings from generative moments into five themes:

1. *Seeing anew*: a mode of imagination in research that is cognitively dominated, mediated by a sense of sight and enabled by new questions, combinations and conversations;

¹ We are grateful to Ann Cunliffe and Carl Rhodes for their thoughtful and helpful comments on this chapter.

2. *Feeling despair and movement*: emotive upheavals of researchers' engagement associated with encountering tensions and activating aesthetic and embodied knowing;
3. *Daring to engage*: forms of agentic behavior in terms of handling uncertainty, entering new worlds, persisting through difficulties, maintaining openness and being receptive to insights and ideas;
4. *Interrelating*: processes of fostering reciprocity, facilitating growth-in-connection, collaboration and co-discovery with others;
5. *Playing with artifacts*: forms of social play centered on materializing data and understanding into various artifacts that are touched, shared, moved and refined.

These themes are patterns revealed in stories that expand and connect the dimensions of experience and skilled practice in doing qualitative research. Our purpose in identifying and exploring them, and indeed the overall purpose in this concluding chapter, is to summarize insights across singular stories and to pave the way for a larger debate on what a focus on generativity in research affords. The five themes shed light on life-giving aspects of the research process that are often ignored or obscured in accounts of "proper" research practice. The themes illuminate how and why certain aspects of the doing of research expand rather than contract possibilities of knowing and learning.

The five themes also mark aspects of experience that researchers describe as forms of forward personal movement or change. Thus the detailing of the themes honors the intertwining of idea change and self change that marks experienced generativity in the doing of qualitative research. Both these dimensions of life are shown to be intensely relational in the stories. Ideas and selves grow as they connect with other ideas and other selves in a myriad of ways. See Table 1 for an overview. Acts of doing research, whether seeing and sensing the life of others, construing new theory or catering to the surprises and embryos of new insights, are often self-constituting acts. They are acts of becoming where researchers put themselves on the line along with their ideas and grow with their ideas, as noticed by Ann Cunliffe in her commentary. People come alive in research when ideas are moving and they are moving, when liminal spaces are encountered, when tensions are built up and released, when new openings are felt and pursued. Movements and openings are not exclusive to early stages of research, as Joanne Martin's reflections clearly reveal. Rather, researchers learn by maintaining a humble stance – what Yanow has insightfully coined "passionate humility" (2009) – and repeatedly subjecting themselves to processes that provide further movement of ideas, further growth of self-in-relationship, further life.

In the table below, we explore how each of the five themes exposes, enriches and animates insights into generativity in the research process. As we

Table 1: Theme summaries and their manifestations in idea change and self change.

Core story themes	Threads in each theme...	Manifest in Idea Change	Manifest in Self-Change
Seeing with new eyes	<p>Receiving new insights and intuition</p> <p>Accessing new worlds and research areas</p> <p>Expanding opportunities for knowing and deepening engagement</p> <p>Reimagining self and roles</p>	<p>Seeing anew through new combinations of knowledge, questions that open up and analogical reasoning</p> <p>Seeing possibilities for new research areas, trajectories and phenomena</p> <p>Seeing as intertwined with movement and transportation; cascading of insights and actions</p>	<p>Seeing anew and engaging in conversation as deeply meaningful and self-constitutive activities</p> <p>Seeing new and expanding opportunities for knowing, engaging and growing</p> <p>Re-imagining/seeing new researcher roles and engagement, e.g. as entering wonderland, sailing-adventure and cricket match</p>
Feeling despair and movement	<p>Co-existence of positive and negative emotions in generative moments</p> <p>Feeling as marking tension that unlocks movement in ideas and self</p> <p>Feeling as indicating activation of embodied and aesthetic knowing</p>	<p>Feeling tension, with elements of bewilderment, dread and despair prior to idea generation</p> <p>Receiving new insights through aesthetic experiences of wonder, either as gifts from the world or a sense of alignment and temporal coherence prior to elaboration of new patterns</p> <p>Registering embodied feelings of surprise, doubt, resistance and awe as cues to new searching</p>	<p>Feeling tension and movement as upheavals of researcher engagement with elements of despair and hope</p> <p>Feeling shifts in engagement and desire to connect (love, possession, enchanted mysteries) through experiencing of wonder: combinations of surprise and awe when encountering beauty, wisdom and oddities</p> <p>Feeling energy, happiness and excitement in interactions as self-rewarding flow-like experiences</p>
Daring to engage	<p>Daring to engage opens up vistas for interacting and understanding</p> <p>Preparing and persisting in the research process</p> <p>Daring to engage through maintaining openness, receptivity and following one's own passions</p>	<p>Daring to initiate, opens up, expands or deepens access to world of inquiry</p> <p>Daring to immerse in repeated bouts of data analysis and persist through sledging and standstill</p> <p>Daring to engage through modes of listening and receiving and habits of humility fosters receptivity and sensitivity to insights and ideas</p>	<p>Daring to put oneself on the line in relation and being confirmed</p> <p>In the role as researcher, daring to face resistance generates self-efficacy and hope through experiences of mastery</p> <p>Daring to let go of self, forego objective distancing and receive insights and help from the field</p>
Interrelating	<p>Conversations as launching points and creating seeds of insight</p> <p>Reciprocity spawns motivation and openings</p> <p>Co-creation and co-discovery, sometimes in full-blown partnerships</p> <p>Working through collaboration challenges opens up knowing and growing</p>	<p>Using conversations with others and non-understanding of others as launching points for ideas</p> <p>Reciprocity and the motivation to help and be helped open up new possibilities for data and interacting</p> <p>Processes of co-creation and co-discovery with outsiders and people in the field to generate ideas and establish new research trajectories</p>	<p>Strengthening researchers through establishing quality connections that support, and safe holding spaces for growth</p> <p>Discovering inherent reciprocity that feeds learning, growing and prosocial identity motives</p> <p>Experiencing growth in connection: enrichment of life, revitalized and reinforced humanity</p>
Playing with artifacts	<p>Playing with physical objects enacts and enables generative moments</p> <p>Artifacts are symbols that store insights and contain seeds of wondering that propel understanding and growth</p> <p>Artifacts facilitate cross-boundary understanding</p>	<p>Playing with artifacts liberates researcher from tension and unlocks new understanding</p> <p>Artifacts encode, represent and store snapshots of understanding that can be revisited and reused</p> <p>Playing with artifacts facilitates cross-boundary interaction and understanding</p>	<p>Playing becomes a distinct mode of understanding and experimenting for researchers</p> <p>Using artifacts strengthens researcher's capability through mediating a broader use of sensory repertoire</p> <p>Through play, researchers lose themselves to the life of groups and relations, thus bridging worlds</p>

will see in the next chapter, these insights open up distinctive pathways that researchers can explore to enliven their own research process, as well as means of elevating the research engagement of others. The first three themes – *Seeing with new eyes*, *Feeling despair and movement* and *Daring to engage* – tap into different dimensions of the generative research experience that are clearly interrelated, even though, for analytical purposes, we treat them separately. Just as Bruner (1986) has argued, in the case of human behavior, cognition, feeling and action are part of a unified whole. Similarly, seeing, feeling and engaging are interdependent elements in the holism of a generative research moment.

The next two themes – *Interrelating* and *Playing with artifacts* – situate generative moments in a social context with others and in a physical world of symbols and artifacts. These themes emphasize the situatedness of generative moments, with each moment anchored in a specific time, place and material world that becomes the stage on which it unfolds. In the telling of the stories, researchers chose to highlight some aspects of these situations more than others. The pervasiveness of themes of interrelating with others and playing with artifacts suggest these forms of situatedness may be particularly conducive to the experience of generativity, making them worthy of further deliberation.

While drawn from the world of qualitative research, our sense is that most of the lessons of generativity from the 40 stories have relevance to all forms of research. Moreover, few of the stories touch upon questions of validity that mark the truth discourses of science. The stories' lessons have a bearing on all forms of "idea work" (Coldevin et al., 2010): work dealing with generating, prioritizing, heralding, rejecting and furthering ideas based on ambiguous input and unspecified deliverables.

Theme 1: Seeing with new eyes

Generativity shows up in many stories as "seeing differently" – a mode of imagination that is talked of as predominantly cognitive but primarily mediated by a "sense of sight" (Bronowski, 1978) rather than words or metaphors alone. Seeing differently opens up possibilities that expand opportunities of knowing and experiencing self and others in research. In many stories it is as if seeing anew spawns acting anew. Sometimes possibilities emerge within well-tilled domains of research, while others represent totally new trajectories of investigation or new fields of discovery. Mary Ann Glynn describes her moment of seeing possibilities through studying Martha Stewart as a moment of recognition – a type of aha that prompts a commitment to both a new field of research and a particular way of studying her research topic. For Glynn, the generative moment is what she calls a Martha

Moment, when she captures a glimpse that allows her to see the world of “Martha Stewart living” with its charismatic protagonist and ardent followers. In seeing this world, Glynn sees new domains of inquiry but also new possibilities along her scholarly path. It is a world that calls to her and ends up renewing her engagement as a researcher; a transition from studying people in the lab to venturing passionately into qualitative inquiry.

Several contributors’ tales of generativity draw on this theme of accessing new worlds. For some, new worlds are accessed through the types of questions put to people they are studying. For example, Katherine DeCelles describes using counter-typical questions in her study of prison guards and the questions reveal new worlds of understanding that she experiences as generative. In her words:

This particular line of questioning in my own research opened my eyes toward understanding the people I researched in an entirely new way, and in the process, forever changed the way I will approach qualitative research forever – always looking to shed more light on the bright spots that always exist despite being enveloped in dark places.

For Elena Antonacopoulou, putting a question about complexity and complicatedness to a practitioner group unleashes new waves of understanding about both theory and practice in organizational life. Her account documents the energizing effects of a single question in generating new ways of seeing that can “enrich, sustain and allow ideas to grow without controlling their destiny”. In both cases we note the duality of finding a new way to “see” and the transformational effects of this seeing in terms of shaping the engagement of both the researcher and the research participant.

Barbara Czarniawska’s illustrated account of the power of the metaphor to represent and unlock new seeing has many layers to it. Her story describes and takes us through pictures in order to learn how she encountered Reuters’ corporate headquarters, speaking of how physical objects such as buildings-in-context carry and reveal, to us as researchers, new ways to understand, represent, and know what we are engaging as research topics. When coupled with powerful and evocative metaphors like the Matrix, researchers open up new lines of sight through a process of “bi-sociation”; the radical combination of insights brought about when ideas are made to answer two sets of seemingly incompatible frames of reference. Here the experiencing of self-in-research is more implicit, being expressed in an embracement of bisociation as what makes us creative researchers. Georg Von Krogh’s story strikes a similar chord. He describes his personal journey, of coming alive as a researcher of “knowledge” in organizations, as stemming from a series of moments where puzzling empirical observations were coupled with theoretical insights in new ways. These leaps in seeing constituted a career turning point.

The self-constituting character of seeing anew is further exposed in Haridimos Tsoukas' story. Tsoukas vividly describes the experience of new seeing as a self-constituting activity, a series of moments that become part of who he is, manifest as being engaged in "Sparkling conversations": "I connect with the ideas that make me literally see the world differently; only then am I *moved*, abducted, taken by an other or otherness to a place I've never been before." In Tsoukas' account, new seeing is intertwined with movement and transportation, reminding us of the connection between seeing and possibilities of action. It is also seeing that is relational in the sense of being enabled through co-participation with another. Sometimes "the other" is a person, but as his story suggests, it can also be a text or an idea.

Seeing with new eyes is also apparent in how researchers re-imagine their roles in the research process. These re-imaginings open up possibilities and invite new forms of engagement and possibilities of seeing one's researcher role anew in the process. We see this pattern in Michelle Barton's depiction of herself as Alice, opening the door to the garden in Wonderland and then feeling that "same sense of breathless excitement and wonder when she first glimpsed it". Seeing new possibilities by seeing oneself as a sailor, tacking between data and theory was a core idea in Victoria Johnson's story of a generative approach in her dissertation research journey. A colleague's suggestion to frame her research experience as a form of sailing adventure, gave her the eyes to see that being lost in the data could be remedied through tacking, which gave her new winds as a researcher. Stewart Clegg depicts his generative moment as having the properties of an Aussie cricket match where he is sledged by his cricket partners (colleagues). However, the sledging enables him "to see the paper through other eyes" spawning revisions and conversations that "generate and sustain the writing". Finally, in Natalie Cotton's story, she authors herself as a type of explorer on a maiden voyage, looking for and playing with maps, dropping anchor and "reimagining the voyage".

Farzad Rafi Khan opens us up to a different way of new seeing by illustrating and describing, through his own adventurous research journey, the power of being open to the intuition's eye. He reminds us of the insightfulness of the Sufi idea of *Ishq*, "a burning all-consuming love that stiffens your intention to not surrender". It is this love, this sacrifice, the losing ourselves in the work that opens us up to "receive the illuminations" that weave "our fieldwork stories and experiences into meaning". This way of seeing reminds us that generativity cannot be prescribed nor made to happen but comes as a "gift received by the human intuition". His story urges you to "keep struggling to find (y)our voice till the grace of a generative moment arrives" – a moment which the stories in this book, remind us are both opening and life-giving.

In summary, the thread of new seeing is a dominant theme across the full range of stories. New ways of seeing often propel researchers into inquiry and action that bring forth additional lines of sight. This cascading of insights and actions helps to explain some of the momentum felt in the research process as researchers open and explore new worlds or are prompted to take new directions in their lines of inquiry. While the stories of generative moments are simply snapshots along moving paths of a researcher's becoming, new lines of sight instigate trajectories of engagement and growth.

Theme 2: Feeling despair and movement

Generative moments in research speak of emerging insights and shifts in engagement that are felt as much as they are thought. The stories in this book are saturated with references to feelings as integral to research. More often than not, threads of feelings about and from generative moments are more complex than the experience of felt positive sensations alone. One insight we draw from this observation is that people come alive in their research when it is somehow charged, and that charging is necessary to activate somatic and aesthetic knowing. Two of the primary poles of such charging seem to be one of despair and one of movement.

Feelings of despair, with their cousin feelings of bewilderment, dread and doubt, are seldom discussed in accounts of qualitative research (for an exception, see Locke, Golden-Biddle & Feldman, 2008). This absence contrasts with the prevalence of shades of despair in stories of generative moments. It takes many forms. The stories by Tord Mortensen, Victoria Johnson and Saku Mantere describe situations where researchers are overwhelmed by data and experience doubt regarding how to proceed with analysis and/or further data collection. The stories by Michael Pratt, Jane Dutton and Kjersti Bjørkeng tell of moments of frustration and despair during efforts to analyze and write. The stories by Julka Almquist, Grete Håkonsen Coldevin, Julia Balogun and John Paul Stephens convey initial doubts and uncertainties when relating to people in the field. Thus, there are numerous stories where generativity is felt through a sense of tension, discomfort, doubt, or confusion that is later eliminated, relieved or transformed through some action or circumstance. It is as though the experience of generativity springs forth from the resolution of tensions or the release from anxiety that has plagued the researcher. This pattern is evident in Michael Pratt's story of his research team's frustration in toiling through multiple framings and analyses in a quest to produce a publishable paper. Their frustration is transformed through attention to an idea that a dissertation chair had offered that proved prophetic when the paper received a helpful journal review. The review contained a single idea that transformed their frustration into hope,

re-energized the researchers and motivated a successful re-crafting of the paper. Jane Dutton's story of collaboration when analyzing and writing up research offers a parallel example. An initial feeling of standstill, dread and despair combined with time pressure charges the moment with a sense of no return. For many months ahead, this is the team's last chance to interact and move the research forward. The tension is eventually released by means of feeling movement and mastery in playful co-creation.

In the stories by Michael Pratt, Jane Dutton and Jane Lé & Paula Jarzabkowski, negative emotions contribute to the build up of tensions, while positive emotions contribute to their release. At other times, positive emotions are cast as more dominating and seemingly without a counterpart, like the happiness, energy and inspiration in conversations that move, as described by John Paul Stephens and Haridimos Tsoukas. Feelings can also be related to profound shifts in researcher engagement, ranging from holistic sensations of being moved and possessed by ideas (Liisa Välikangas, Haridimos Tsoukas), feeling surprised (Marlys Christianson) and encountering wisdom (Arne Carlsen) to feeling enlivened by new research directions (Sally Maitlis) or being drawn to the world of others (Michelle Barton, Mary Ann Glynn). Such positive charging can be regarded as the specific kind of movement associated with feeling wonder (Fisher, 1998; Nussbaum, 2001) in research, where wonder can be understood as experiencing a self-transcending appreciation of beauty, wisdom and surprise on the one hand, and the birthing of curiosity, search and emphatic immersion in new worlds and mysteries on the other (Carlsen & Sandelands, 2011). This combination of "wondering at" and "wondering about" is particularly evident in the accounts of Michelle Barton, Arne Carlsen, Katherine DeCelles, Mary Ann Glynn and Liisa Välikangas, who all report feeling awe when reading about, interviewing and getting glimpses through the door into others' worlds. All five researchers describe a felt impetus to explore new openings, a heated search that is set up by a moment of awe that again seeds expansion in thought and engagement.

The felt movements of wonder in generative moments also include the combining of explanations and breakthroughs from complex input into unifying and beautiful new wholes. In Michael Pratt's story, bewilderment gives way to a positive feeling of harmonious alignment, of past, present and future coming together when empirical data suddenly matches a certain theoretical pathway. To Carl Rhodes such explanatory breakthroughs are gifts from the world. Voices from the empirical fields and ideas, from the intellectual traditions he is immersed in, come to him and work through him almost without his conscious awareness that he is doing the writing. The knowing described in these stories is intensely aesthetic and embodied. The experience of wonder also seems to imply a paradoxical, non-eudaimonic form of self-development. The seeding of deep engagement beyond self-interest, and

the emphatic receptive stretching towards others, are in turn what enables the growth of ideas and of self.

Summing up this section, feeling is a mode of sensing and enabling generativity in research. As Calvin Morrill notes, feelings of and in generative moments are indicators of the aliveness of the researcher. The telling of feelings of despair and movement in generative moments convey upheavals of engagement and the charging of research. This theme also highlights the activation of embodied and aesthetic knowing in generative moments. The feeling side of generativity is experienced complexly, incorporating more than positive sensations. Rather, uncomfortable or disquieting feelings of being overwhelmed, challenged, or taking risks invite new modes of seeing, acting or being in the research process that are experienced as generative. Paradoxically then, a turning to life in qualitative research is also a turning towards despair and bewilderment as not only signals of tensions to explore but also resources that can foster generativity.

Theme 3: Daring to engage

The stories in this book underline the fact that research is a deeply personal endeavor fraught with uncertainties. In principle, as with any act of creation, the generation of ideas and self-change in research thrives on belief in the open-ended possibilities of existence and the constitutive character of self (James, 1890/1950). In this book we hear researchers tell stories of how, when standing on the brink of the unknown, they mobilize agency to pursue dreams, face resistance and overcome setbacks in venturing forth. There is great variation in how such daring to engage the field is framed, reflecting not only variations in practice but also researchers exercising choice when narrating their agency during generative moments. Three modes of agency seem to be dominant in these tales.

First, researchers describe how they put themselves on the line when initiating or deepening access to their worlds of inquiry and simultaneously reaping confirmation as researchers from that world. In Stephen Barley's first story, one can see that there is a moment when he wrestles with the choice of whether or not to take action in terms of crossing boundaries and directly helping the people whom he is studying. The daring to engage and *not* to engage in his two stories goes against expectations and is resolved through responses from the field that facilitate relief from anxiety as well as a deepening of his relationship with the people he is studying. Julka Almquist and John Paul Stephens tell how they dare to fully cross over into the world they research – entrepreneurs and choir singers, respectively – by becoming participants and growing their subjectivity to overcome inherited notions of objective distance. Tyrone Pitsis tells a parallel story in how he wrestles with

his role as a detached observer and dared to care for his research subject in literally offering a hug, a small act that opened up new worlds. For all three researchers, this is a move that turns out to enrich their ways of seeing and fortifies their self-worth as researchers. Grete Håkonsen Coldevin tells of how she dares to challenge her main contact at the firm she is studying, both in an opening conversation and by sending him a cactus – thereby facilitating the decisive first steps in their later frank and mutually rewarding interactions. In Julia Balogun’s account, which she labels “Daring to be different”, she is quite pointed about the fears of saving face or rescuing the research if the diary method she was deploying in her research did not work. It turns out to be an experience that seeded vocation and configured later engagement. Finally, Katherine DeCelles’ story demonstrates daring to venture into a rare and potentially hostile research environment with a new approach in the form of counter-typical questions. Each act of daring opens up vistas for interacting and understanding, affirming researchers’ engagement and self-conceptions.

A second noticeable pattern in these narrations is the researchers’ descriptions of themselves as preparing and persisting in the research process. Sometimes the preparing and persisting is described as essential for noticing or seeing the moment of change labeled as generative. For example, in Marlys Christianson’s account of moments of disconfirmation as generative, she constructs herself as having prepared to be surprised (and disconfirmed). Thus, when she and her colleagues listen to an interviewee’s account of how his or her organization responded to a crisis, and it completely violated previous expectations, her preparation is what facilitated the surprise being experienced as a generative moment. Both Michael Pratt’s and Kimberly Elsbach’s stories of breakthrough framings in their research also contain an account of readying oneself through repeated analysis of data, through reading and writing that prepare a researcher to experience a generative moment. Elsbach describes the moment of awakening in vivid terms: “Light bulbs went on, bells rang, red flags waved, and the Rocky theme song played in my head. This made total sense.” Similarly, Pratt describes his moment of new alignment between the research data and the data framing as energy. He suggests this moment would not have happened if the researchers had not done their homework: “We knew the data. We lived with it for years. We also knew our theories.” In Pratt’s account, it is the preparation that allowed for the research team’s receptivity to the idea. Their preparation had built a type of capacity for recognizing and realizing, which then permitted expansions in thinking.

Overall, these accounts are not unlike Pierce’s (Anderson, 2005) notion of readying oneself to let imaginative abduction happen: the all-at-once generation of new ideas and flashes of insight from fuzzy input. Conceived as such, certain generative moments when doing qualitative research can-

not be forced, but emerge often unexpectedly, from patient preparation and immersion in ideas and data. This form of preparation readies researchers for the serendipity that, notes Ann Cunliffe, so often marks generative moments. The immersion permits familiarity with what is known which in turn facilitates sensing when something unknown or new has been encountered and should be acted upon.

The third pattern in how researchers frame their agency continues from the second and speaks of daring to engage through modes of listening and receiving. When Haridimos Tsoukas describes being sensitive and receptive in conversations or Liisa Välikangas tells of being possessed by the idea of fools, the daring that goes on is not so much a venturing forth in pursuing one's own ideas as a maintaining of the openness and receptivity when encountering the ideas of others. This is even clearer in the tale of Carl Rhodes where he explicitly downplays and even negates his own agentic control of the process of writing, seeing himself as a receiver of "gifts from the world", whether the empirical field or intellectual traditions. The commentary by Joanne Martin picks up beautifully on the humble character of habits of openness and reception, even during late phases of research. It is a paradoxical humility in that it also speaks of self-reliance, echoing a famous statement by Ralph Waldo Emerson 150 years ago that "the greatest genius is the most indebted man" (Emerson, 1850/1995: 134). Ultimately, what we see here is a form of reversed agency where we as researchers dare to engage the voices and worlds of others and let them inhabit us without preset endpoints or purposes. One could say the same of how some of the contributors to this book frame coming to their engagement. Sally Maitlis dares to follow her passion to study the worlds of musicians, listening both to the call from their world and to her own passion. Mary Ann Glynn dares to listen to the calling of Martha Stewart's world, letting it radically change her engagement. Finally, Farzad Rafi Khan's story is remarkable in that it combines strands of receptive and persistent agency in research. In this account, it is the love of stories from the child laborers in the field, and their continued reception, that fortifies him against struggles and readies the eye of intuition. His receiving enables his continued daring.

Theme 4: Interrelating

Generative moments are rarely made alone. The stories are drenched with images of being in connection with others and they clearly convey the research process as a relational activity. The connectedness of moments of generativity shows up in at least four ways.

First, the relationality of the research process is underlined through frequent reference to moments in conversation with others which are the launching points for generativity. This is certainly the case in Haridimos

Tsoukas' story which portrays the variety and impact of sparkling conversations with others and their effects on the movements and transformations of his own understanding. Sally Maitlis describes how conversations with others (a colleague and an advisor) are what propelled her to move more closely to a research topic that is meaningful and generative. Karen Golden-Biddle describes three examples of moments in which her own thinking and the thoughts of her research colleagues were transformed through small moments of relationality in conversation with others which allow exploration of the unknown. In her story, experiences of generativity are constituted in and prompted by interactions in the everyday as we are called upon to explore what we don't know: "it was precisely in the turning toward this not knowing we began to cultivate the opportunity to come to see new lines of sight." As she richly describes the relationality in the process, she points to the importance of engagement and support as critical elements in the experienced mutuality (Miller & Stiver, 1997) that calls forth generativity.

Researchers often depict the interview process as a conversation that contains seeds of insight and understanding that instigate and sustain generativity. In these accounts, the quality of the connections built between people seems to fortify or strengthen the researcher in various ways (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Dutton & Dukerich, 2006). Libby Hemphill describes her conversation with interviewee, Kate, as deeply generative and wonders whether the creation of a safe discursive space is what enabled Kate to express and Hemphill to listen in a way that produced joint insights. Her observations contain echoes of Kahn's (1998) argument (building on Winnicott's (1965) idea of safe holding spaces) that conversations can be contexts for human growth, and in this case, personal vulnerability and idea exploration. Hemphill's sensemaking as regards why her interview with Kate was generative strikes a similar chord to what Grete Håkonsen Coldevin notes in her account of why conversations with CEO Victor in her dissertation research were so generative. Coldevin also talks about the importance of the quality of the connection, created through mutual trust and expectations, that she suggests provided a capacity to grasp the tacit meaning in each other's expressions and "parse and weave utterances together in time". John Paul Stephens focuses on a particularly generative interview with two fellow members of the choral group he was studying; describing how the conversation spawned rich insights but also "buoyed him up" to continue recruiting additional interviewees and pursue other tasks that challenge him in his dissertation research. His story illustrates the growth-in-connection (Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver & Surrey, 1991) that occurs while interrelating in authentic and mutual ways. Michelle Barton talks about the importance of empathy as a skilled relational practice (Fletcher, 1998) in interviewing that allows her to see and experience the humanity of the entrepreneurs she studies. Farkas emphasizes how, in a generative interview in which participants

make “successful sense together”, both interviewer and interviewee walk away from the interview enriched. In her account the mutual sensemaking extends beyond being heard and into the reaches of being tacitly known through a meaningful moment of human contact (Hallowell, 1999).

Other people also enable researchers to see in new ways. This pattern is explicitly noted in Karen Golden-Biddle’s story where she attributes Gladys, one of the people she is studying, with posing the question that gently prompts the researchers to reconsider how they have assembled and shared their data. In Elena Antonacopoulou’s story, a question arising from observations in a research feedback meeting unlocks three years of give and take between the researcher and the practitioner. In Ann Cunliffe’s commentary on the growing stories she notes that a question posed by a PhD supervisor many years ago prompted several years of working on her writing and “his comment still plays through every piece I write”. Echoes of conversations held with others in the past spill into the present, priming motivation and understanding that opens up possibilities of generativity. This was the case in the Michael Pratt story where a former advisor’s (Martha Feldman) shared wisdom that “doing qualitative research was like traveling a spiral ... you might be just around the bend from where you need to be”. This conversation, so many years ago, was a thread drawn on in the present that furnished him and his team with hope during a tough publication challenge. In the story by Martha Feldman, other people prompt new ways of seeing via a very different route. It is other people’s non-comprehension of her writing that provokes her to rearticulate and contextualize her research in ways that she experienced as generative. New seeing was prompted by others’ non-seeing, spawning a revision of her own work, but also the re-telling of this learning in future work with graduate students. In Bjørkeng’s account, the incomprehension of others’ actions and the inability to see clearly prompted doodling. At first the doodling seemed like a scribble, but later became a guide that directed her attention. The presence of a colleague helps her deal with the frustration of not seeing and prompts the drawing and pondering on the phenomenon she was trying to understand. Her relationship provided Bjørkeng with the safety to work through the breakdown, allowing her to focus through fresh eyes.

Third, the relationality of the generative moments shows up in how reciprocity and the motivation to help and be helped direct and open up possibilities in the research process. This theme jumps off the page in Tyrone Pitsis’ account of the opening up of a research process and entire research program that began with a hug. The hug of a participant symbolically and instrumentally broke open the research, moving the researcher and the process into what Pitsis calls “engaged reciprocity”. Similarly, Stephen Barley in his choice to be directly involved in the research process by saving the day and securing a critical catheter through a mad dash through Boston, trans-

forms his connection to the other technicians in the field, opening up new ways to view and understand his research site. In both cases, a single instance or moment of engagement with another transforms the trajectory of possible insight from the research, through altering the relationship between the researcher and the researched.

Another vivid example of reciprocity and its wake is revealed in Julka Almquist's story of her experience of being a full-time vendor in Venice Beach. In her account, numerous vendors reach out to her in small but significant ways that change her motivation and the trajectory of her research. The vendors' helping opens her up to the dream of creating her own small business with "a determination to improve it". In a different example, Julia Balogun describes how she gained the trust of the people she was studying. Together they created the type of generative partnership that recognized the mutual rapport and effort of both the researcher and the persons being researched. Both Almquist and Balogun discover an inherent reciprocity that feeds learning and growing in the research process, and opens up recognition that one's research can make a difference to others in the process of doing the research, not just in the outcomes of it.

The movement and motivation enabled through connection reveals itself in how connections enable working through the challenges of collaboration and cross-boundary communication. We see this vividly in Robin Ely's story where the complexities and dynamics of ownership and the authorship of ideas are further complicated by issues of race, gender and differences in career stage. In Ely's story, a fundamental act of pausing in a negative spiral, taking the eye of the other and rekindling mutual trust in the connection allow a series of conversations that deepen rather than shorten or narrow the collaborative possibilities of the future.

A different form of collaborative challenge is revealed in Karl Weick's account of how insights regarding deference to expertise were deepened and enriched through a relational engagement with firefighters who were wrestling with the immediate use of these ideas. During an open-mike session with firefighters, trying to learn from high reliability theory, there was a generative moment when the idea of deference to expertise was peeled open, fostering the basis for "co-generating more common ground for understanding". The dramatic opening up of the many layers of insight seemed to be possible because a gap in understanding was revealed and explored through the relational space set up by researchers and academics who cared to know about insights that mattered.

A fourth way that the stories convey generative moments as relational is through the portraits of the process as moments of co-creation or co-discovery. Some make co-creation explicit in their stories, while for others it is more implicit, but present nonetheless. For example, many of the stories of co-creation are narrated as occasions on which an outsider (e.g. reader,

new collaborator) pushes for deeper understanding through questions and other forms of inquiry. Jane Lé and Paula Jarzabkowski describe a vivid case of co-creation when a new collaborator read a first draft and came back with two pages of questions, forcing them to explain and substantiate what they “had assumed or generalized at times, rather than analyzed and evidenced”. They describe how this form of pushing fostered new ways of thinking and invited deeper engagement through encouraging face-to-face contact between the collaborators. We already referred to the similar story told by Martha Feldman who was “shocked” by a set of readers’ comments that suggested that they did not understand what she was trying to say. The push from others was a critical awakening that fostered new forms of writing. Laura Morgan Roberts, too, has her “breath taken away” by a question posed by a participant during a seminar where she is teaching. This question, posed by another who honestly wants to know the answer, pushes Roberts to “reach deeper” to search for an offering that “would be generative for someone else”. The prompt from another activates deeper inquiry that opens up a personal reckoning about the power of asking questions that display and resurrect one’s humanity as a researcher

In still a different kind of example Leslie Perlow pinpoints a moment in her research process where a sponsor raises the possibility of making 2008 “the year of predictability” for the Boston office; a moment that transformed the meeting into an inspirational session that spawned creative collaborative work to make the newly formed goal a reality. From that moment forward, mutual engagement by researchers and sponsors transformed the relationship into a more substantive working partnership. Joanne Martin points out that in this conversation a non-researcher helps the researcher engage a moment of intellectual humility. This type of humility also shows up in the story by Tord Mortensen, where he realizes that the researched (as opposed to the researcher) was better equipped to identify peak moments in the process he was studying. In all of these cases, the co-created, mutual participation of both researchers and the researched created a new project trajectory that engaged people in new ways, expanding and opening up future possibilities.

In Jane Dutton’s story, the co-creation of research collaborators is enabled by a technology that facilitates a visual representation of the progress and flow in the evolving mutual understanding of the research team. As in the Leslie Perlow story, the sense of productive opening up would have been far less, or perhaps not happened at all, without the contributions of multiple participants who engaged in a mutual unfolding process of co-creation. What is so striking in both Perlow’s and Dutton’s stories was that the co-creation was not intentionally designed but emerged unexpectedly and created outcomes that were felt and experienced as worthwhile by all participants.

In fact, a striking point is how the researchers, in reflecting on their sto-

ries and mindful of the generativity, willingly attribute the spark or transformation experienced in the generative moment to the words and actions of others. Sometimes the recognition goes to the people one is studying as when Sally Maitlis described the ways the musicians she is studying enrich her life. Michelle Barton notes how conversations with others in a research interview allow her to witness and partake in the reality of another, and through that process, her own “humanity is reinforced, revitalized”. Finally, other players at a research site or in a publication process or people who are colleagues are also duly noted as important contributors to the experience of generativity. Leslie Perlow describes her research sponsor as a source of imaginative thinking. Kjersti Bjørkeng notes that her research colleague helps her to move through a breakdown, while Michael Pratt credits his research colleagues as responsible for allowing the ideas to build, expand and grow.

In sum, relationality in generative moments is a theme that lights up the social connectedness involved in the research process. Some of the stories locate moments of connecting as moments of transformation, when the trajectory and momentum of a research process changes, opening up and propelling projects and persons forward. Other accounts affirm the importance of the quality of connection created among the participants, which alters the possibilities of growth in ideas and growth in self. Importantly, the stories write back in the sociality that is necessarily part of the research process. As Ann Cunliffe reminds us in her commentary, researchers doing this kind of work are never fully alone. In Joanne Martin’s commentary, she roots several of the manifestations of intellectual humility in the learning that takes place with other researchers and non-researchers. Both commentators echo the important theme that generative moments are rarely solitary but emerge in relation, in connection, in community with others.

Theme 5: Playing with artifacts

While the conduct of research is construed in textbooks as serious analytic business, moments of generativity reveal the playful aspects of the research experience, when people lose themselves to the life of the group (Sandelands, 2003; 2010). The playfulness is marked by a sense of creativity or feelings of engagement that help people suspend self-interest and engage in the flow of the moment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). As Calvin Morrill suggests, this playing with artifacts can help researchers lower the stakes and keep moving when stuck or encountering difficulties. The stories of generativity make visible the physical and materially substantive aspects of the research process and their connection to generativity. In the storied accounts of generativity, the physical nature of artifacts is often construed as facilitating the opening up of possibilities in connection with others, in idea generation or in person-

al transformation. The artifacts in use are typically physical objects, tools and devices that are incorporated into the researchers' practice and that enable the researcher to *see/feel/be* in a mode that is experienced as opening up, enlivening or creative. Many social scientists have noted the materiality involved in knowledge work, revealing how knowing is intimately tied to doing in the material world (e.g. Hutchins, 1996; Latour & Woolgar, 1979). Artifacts open up dialog in research conversations, facilitating the recognition and expression of knowledge.

Maria Farkas's use of a timeline in her interview with Sarah illustrates how physical objects can be essential parts of enacting a generative research moment. In her story the timeline functioned as a tool-in-action that opened up new ways for Farkas to understand Sarah's construction of her work identity. The timeline also cracked open Sarah's understanding of her own work-identity by allowing her to see and explain how aspects of her life interconnected. In this account, the timeline functioned as a boundary object (e.g. Carlile, 2002) in the sense of facilitating two people's conversation across boundaries that opened up multiple layers of understanding. At the same time, it also changed the future trajectories for deepening understanding that both people took away from the interview. Thus, while the physical world is part of the immediate generative moment, as a symbol and an instrumental object, its generative capacity cascades into the future

Jane Lé and Paula Jarzabkowi also weave the physicality of their collaborative experience into their account when they describe the use of a whiteboard and colored markers to "crystallize and illustrate each of our thought processes – to reveal our thinking and summarize ideas". The reader can feel the change in the excitement and energy in the collaborators' interrelating that is represented and propelled through their use and relationship to physical artifacts. Lé and Jarzabkowski play by touching data.

In each of these stories and in Bjørkeng's story, which illuminates the power of a intensely scribbled doodle she made on a napkin, we see how physical objects sometimes function as symbols that contain within them seeds of wonder (Carlsen's term). Generative moments are often catalyzed or enriched through the use of symbols that carry with them meanings that propel or alter understanding; perhaps this is because these symbols are able to capture and carry what Bjørkeng calls emotionally dense moments that can be unpacked and reflected upon at various points in time. Perhaps the symbols do more than carry – they evoke and motivate inquiry and re-understanding that opens up insights. In Bjørkeng's account she also suggests that symbols, when carrying emotionally dense moments, can act like a compass, pointing the way toward deeper inquiry into the tensions and challenges where insight and understanding are hovering.

Playing with artifacts can also unlock understanding or reveal new lines of sight when researchers are caught in the sometimes lonely quest of data

analysis. For example, Natalie Cotton describes experiencing generativity through newly-seen data patterns, opened up by playing with a data mapping technique that newly unveils the company she is studying and changes how she sees her analytical repertoire as a researcher. She describes the moment of new sight as also a moment of revelation when she remarks ... “so this is it – this is the company in miniature ... this is what I am trying to study”. In Cotton’s case this new company view is followed by new arrangements of the data and new playing in search of additional lines of sight:

Again and again, I played with it more, reconfiguring people into different positions [noting their tenure, age, job title and work function]. Each time, I was looking for new ways of seeing differences among people ...

Cotton used post-it notes and mapping techniques that created new physical and material representations which helped her explore uncharted waters in ways that opened up understanding and propelled her theory building.

Beyond unlocking knowledge and facilitating analysis, the physical material world encodes, represents and stores snapshots of understanding that can be revisited and reused during a research process. We see this use of physical artifacts in Victoria Johnson’s account of how she used colored document folders to organize and reorganize the mounds of documents that were part of her study of the Paris Opera. She describes how even “the briefest glimpse of color from one of those folders ... transports me instantly to the topic I know”. This simplistic encoding of knowing and being able to access knowing through simply a glimpse of a colored folder illustrates the dynamics of knowing in contexts that were facilitated through a researcher’s immersion and use of material artifacts. Accounts of generative moments remind us of the flexible utility of material artifacts and their role in facilitating knowing and re-knowing as essential parts of the research process.

A different connection between physical artifacts and generativity in research is laid open in Aina Landsverk Hagen’s vivid account of a moment of revelation enabled, in part by the juxtaposition of the neat and orderly material representation of architects’ model buildings interrupted by the entry of a female architect, and her bodily presence “striking a nerve that opens the why”. In her account, Hagen makes vivid the realizing and knowing enabled through the physical, concrete, material presence of human flesh that disrupts and creates a bodily sensation in the researcher. The physical body and the material world jut through the abstractions of research technique, helping to make the “immaterial thoughts physical”, deepening and opening up possibilities of understanding.

Our fifth theme helps us to imagine how the materiality of research practice is intertwined with the other themes we have discussed. Clearly, physical artifacts enable new lines of sight that characterize generative moments. At the same time, they can both activate despair and resolve tension by dis-

rupting and connecting researchers to their ideas and to other people. Like handy tools, physical artifacts activate and propel researchers forward in their thinking and doing, while disciplining their movement in particular directions. Finally, we saw the physicality of artifacts foster collaboration and connection between persons and ideas, helping to build the interrelating that was often essential for generative moments.

Conclusions

Across the stories of seeding, growing and harvesting in qualitative research there is a rich tapestry of insights regarding generativity revealed. The five themes highlighted and threaded through this chapter begin to pull apart and name some of the mysteries contained in the stories of life in a research moment, life as simultaneously manifest in movement and growth in ideas and in people. Each of the five themes identifies ways in which this intertwined pulsating of experience unfolds:

- Life revealed through *seeing with new eyes*, where a cascading of insights and actions (questions, combinatory efforts, conversational acts) helps researchers unearth new understanding as well as open up and explore new lines of inquiry and new worlds;
- Life revealed through *feelings of despair and movement* where researchers experience forms of bewilderment, tensions/release and a sense of wonder in encountering wisdom, surprise, gaps and beauty, enabling both embodied and aesthetic knowing;
- Life revealed through *daring to engage* where researchers put themselves on the line in accessing new worlds, persist through anxiety and resistance, and ready themselves to receive ideas and insights from the field or the intellectual traditions they are part of;
- Life revealed through *interrelating* where researchers create the basis for reciprocity, see and grow with others, receive questions and help from the field, and engage in sparkling conversations and co-discovery with interviewees, colleagues, reviewers and practitioners;
- Life revealed through *playing with artifacts* where researchers let themselves become possessed by ideas, lose themselves in social play where they touch data and materialize understandings – sketching, mapmaking, symbolizing, moving, coloring – in interactions with their own understanding and others’.

In all of these threads running through generative moments, researchers come alive when turning to not knowing. The seeing, feeling, daring, interrelating and playing that goes on is, without exception, coupled to a lack of understanding, a transition in understanding or a search for new under-

standing. The coming to life follows a path where the researcher falls into mystery. Rather than mirroring methodological ideals of detachment and objective analysis, researchers' experiences tend to be of connectedness and the active use of an embodied subjectivity when doing research. In these accounts, research inquiry is painted as a relational activity in terms of researchers being socially endorsed, helped and invited. Inquiry happens during conversational interactions with other researchers or practitioners in a process of stretching out towards new worlds, wondering about what they are like and why.

What, then, is the take-away for researchers wanting to foster generativity in their practice? Before summarizing practical implications from each story in the next chapter, an overall lesson is due. What emerges from the stories in this book is the importance of coming to see the small everyday acts and practices that may bring movement, openings and growth, and in so doing, becoming aware of the transformational power of everyday moves and encounters in research. In line with the inspirations from pragmatism that formed part of the backdrop for this work, the stories of this book speak of modalities of potentialities in the flow of everyday experience – the play of possibility in the present, often released by elements of doubt and surprise. Extending the pragmatist focus, many of the stories also convey how encounters with empirical contrasts, gaps in understanding, bewilderment, wisdom, beauty and questions from the field seed a sense of wonder that drives inquiry. Researchers find themselves not only surprised or in doubt in their imaginative efforts; they are moved, in love, possessed, charged with *ishq*.

In closing, and beyond the five themes, our own experience of editing this collection of stories may be indicative of the generative experience. Whether the story we heard was the first, or number 17 or 40, each one contained unique insights that has moved and inspired us in our work. Engaging the stories was like receiving 40 energy boosts. Each story left its mark on us as something we can draw on and further share with others, voices that can play through our own practice in the years ahead. And there is no reason to suspect that story number 41 or number 67 would not have similar effects. While generativity as a research subject may reach saturation at some point, the potential for life in the ceaseless presents of our research practices is endless. We have experienced 40 reminders that we are forever arriving.

The potential for generativity rests on the twin qualities of the relational humility and receptivity of researchers. Being generative involves humbly attributing the capacity to generate theoretical insights to people in the field and restoring agency to ideas outside ourselves so that we may be surprised, awed and moved. Generativity is thus something that is both *received*, in terms of being open to the revelations in the present, and *given*, in terms of doing the small acts that can bring life to our research and to others.

Ultimately, this receiving and giving will always take place in the threefold present. To seek generativity is to remember what brought life in the past, to be attentive and receptive to the seeds of generativity in the present and to move forward in search of what makes us come alive in the future.

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